

A GEOGRAPHICAL DESCRIPTION

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OF

ALGIERS AND TUNIS,

WITH A FULL ACCOUNT OF THE ATTACK ON

ALGIERS,

By Lord Exmouth, on the 26th August 1816.



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1816.

ALGIERS, a strong city, capital of the whole country of Algiers. It is built on the side of a mountain next the harbour; and the houses appearing one above another, of a resplendent whiteness, make a fine appearance from the sea. The tops of the houses are flat, covered with earth, and form a sort of gardens. The streets are narrow, and serve to keep off the extreme heat of the sun. There are five gates, but no public places or squares of considerable extent. The larger mosques are seven, but there is nothing remarkable in their architecture; and the dey's palace is far from being spacious and extensive. The harbour is small, shallow, and insecure, and its entrance is incommoded with numerous rocks. The mole of the harbour is 500 paces in length, extending from the continent to a small island, where there is a castle and a large battery. The number of inhabitants is said to be 80,000 in which are included several thousand Jewish families. Their chief subsistence is derived from their piracies, for they make prizes of all Christian ships that are not at peace with them. The country about Algiers is adorned with gardens and fine villas, watered by fountains and rivulets; and thither the inhabitants resort in the hot season. Algiers has for ages braved the resentment of the most powerful states in Christendom. Emperor Charles V. lost a fine fleet and army in an expedition against it in 1541. The English burnt their vessels in the harbour in 1635 and 1670. It was bombarded by the French in 1688. In 1775, the Spaniards made a descent near the city with a formidable army, but were defeated with great slaughter. In 1784, they sent a powerful fleet to attack the forts that defend the harbour; but they were repelled by the Algerines, although they made eight successive attacks with great bravery. Algiers is 380 m w of Tunis. Lon. 3° 48' E. lat. 36° 40' N.

Algiers, a country of Barbarity, comprehending a great part of the ancient Mauritania. It is 600 m

from E to W, and 170 in breadth; bounded on the N by the Mediterranean, E by Tunis, S by Mount Atlas, and W by Morocco. The dey is an absolute monarch, but elected by the Turkish soldiers, and frequently deposed and put to death by them. The revenues of the government arise from the tribute paid by the Moors and Arabs, a detachment of the army being sent into each province every year to collect it; and the prizes they take at sea sometimes equal the taxes they lay upon the natives.

The principal inhabitants of the Kingdom of Algiers, are Arabians, Moors and Jews, estimated at about 200,000, who are Lorded over by 12,000 Turks.

Tunis, a city and the capital of the country of the same name, with a citadel on an eminence, and the fortress of Goletta on the side of a canal, which is the greatest naval military depot belonging to the bey. The city stands on the W side of a shallow lake, 9 m in diameter, which is entered from the port, or bay of Goletta, by a narrow passage between the S point of Cape Carthage and the opposite cape. It is an oblong square, 5 m in circuit, with a lofty wall, five gates, and 35 mosques. The number of inhabitants, including 30,000 Jews, is upward of 130,000. Tunis is built without any regularity; the streets, in general, are narrow and dirty; and there are few buildings of any magnificence, except the great mosque, the bey's palace, and a few others. The houses are all built of stone, though but one story high, and have flat roofs. Near the centre of the city is an extensive piazza, which is said formerly to have contained 3000 tradesmen's shops. The divan or council of state, assembles in an old palace, where the bey formerly resided. The Mohamedans here have nine colleges for students, and a great number of smaller schools. Tunis is a place of great trade, and has manufactures of velvets, silks, linen and woollen goods, fire-arms, sword, cutlery, Morocco leather, and red caps, worn by the common people. It is 320 m N N W Tripoli and 380 E Algiers. Lon. 10 6 E, lat. 36 45 N.

ACCOUNT OF THE ENGAGEMENT.

Algiers Bay, 28th Aug. 1816.

SIR—In all the vicissitudes of a long life of public service, no circumstance has ever produced on my mind such impressions of gratitude and joy as the event of yesterday. To have been one of the humble instruments, in the hands of Divine Providence, for bringing to reason a ferocious Government, and destroying for ever the insufferable and horrid system of Christian slavery, can never cease to be a source of delight and heartfelt comfort to every individual happy enough to be employed in it. I may, I hope, be permitted, under such impressions, to offer my sincere congratulations to their Lordships on the complete success which attended the gallant efforts of his Majesty's fleet in their attack upon Algiers of yesterday; and the happy result produced from it on this day by the signature of peace.

Thus has a provoked war of two days existence been attended by a complete victory, and closed by a renewed peace for England and her ally, the King of the Netherlands, on conditions dictated by the firmness and wisdom of his Majesty's Government, and commanded by the vigour of their measures.

The fleet, complete in all its points, with the addition of five gun-boats fitted at Gibraltar, departed in the highest spirits, and with the most favourable prospect of reaching the port of their destination in three days; but an adverse wind destroyed the expectation of an early arrival, which was more anxiously looked for by myself, in consequence of hearing, the day I sailed from Gibraltar, that a large army had been assembled, and that very considerable additional works were thrown up, not only on both flanks of the city, but also immediately above the entrance of the mole; from this I was apprehensive that my intention of making that point my principal object of attack had

been discovered to the Dey by the same means he had heard of the expedition. This intelligence was, on the following night, greatly confirmed by the *Prometheus*, which I had dispatched to Algiers sometime before, to endeavour to get away the Consul. Captain Dashwood had with difficulty succeeded in bringing away, disguised in midshipman's uniform, his wife and daughter, leaving a boat to bring off their infant child, coming down in a basket with the surgeon, who thought he had composed it, but it unhappily cried in the gateway, and in consequence the surgeon, three midshipmen, in all 18 persons, were seized and confined as slaves in the usual dungeons. The child was sent off next morning by the Dey, and as a solitary instance of his humanity, it ought to be recorded by me.

Captain Dashwood farther confirmed, that about 40,000 men had been brought down from the interior, and all the janisaries called in from distant garrisons, and that they were undefatigably employed in the batteries, gun-boats, &c. and every where strengthening the sea defences.

The ships were all in port, and between 40 and 50 gun and mortar boats ready, with several more in forward repair. The Dey had closely confined the Consul, and refused either to give him up, or promise his personal safety; nor would he hear a word respecting the officers and men seized in the boats of the *Prometheus*. From the continuance of adverse winds and calms, the land to the westward of Algiers was not made before the 26th, and next morning at day-break the fleet was advanced in sight of the city, though not so near as I had intended. As the ships were becalmed, I embraced this opportunity of dispatching a boat, under cover of the *Severn*, with a flag of truce, and the demands I had to make, in the name of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, on the Dey of Algiers (of which the accompanying are copies) directing the officer to wait two or three hours for the Dey's answer, at which time, if no reply was sent he was to return to the flag ship; he was met near the mole by

the captain of the port, who, on being told the answer was expected in one hour, replied, that it was impossible. The officer then said he would wait two or three hours; he then observed, two hours was quite sufficient.

The fleet at this time, by the springing up of the sea breeze, had reached the bay, and were preparing the boats and flotilla for service, until near two o'clock, when, observing my officer was returning with the signal flying, that no answer had been received, after a delay of upwards of three hours, I instantly made the signal to know if the ships were all ready, which being answered in the affirmative, the Queen Charlotte bore up, followed up by the fleet, for their appointed stations; the flag, leading in the prescribed order, was anchored in the entrance of the mole, at about fifty yards distance. At this moment not a gun had been fired, and I began to suspect a full compliance with the terms which had been so many hours in their hands; at this period of profound silence, a shot was fired at us from the mole, and two at the ships to the northward then following; this was promptly returned by the Queen Charlotte, who was then lashing to the main mast of a brig fast to the shore in the mouth of the mole, and which we had steered for, as the guide to our position.

Thus commenced a fire as animated and well supported as, I believe, was ever witnessed, from a quarter before three until nine, without intermission; and which did not cease altogether until half past eleven.

The ships immediately following me were admirably and coolly taking their stations, with a precision even beyond my most sanguine hope; and never did the British flag receive, on any occasion, more zealous and honourable support. To look farther on the line than immediately round me was perfectly impossible, but so well grounded was my confidence in the gallant officers I had the honour to command, that my mind was left perfectly free to attend to other objects, and I knew them in their stations only by the destructive

effect of their fire upon the walls and batteries to which they were opposed.

I had, about this time, the satisfaction of seeing Vice-Admiral Van Cappellen's flag in the station I assigned to him, and soon after, at intervals, the remainder of his frigates, keeping up a well-supported fire on the flanking batteries he had offered to cover us from, as it had not been in my power, for want of room, to bring him in the front of the mole.

About sun-set, I received a message from Rear-Admiral Milne, conveying to me the severe loss the Impregnable was sustaining, having then 150 killed and wounded, and requesting I would, if possible, send him a frigate to divert some of the fire he was under.

There was awful moments during the conflict, which I cannot attempt to describe, occasioned by firing the ships so near us, and I had long resisted the eager entreaties of several around me, to make the attempt upon the outer frigate, distant about one hundred yards, which at length I gave unto, and Major Goffett, by my side, who had been eager to land his corps of miners, pressed me most anxiously for permission to accompany Lieutenant Richards in this ship's barge. The frigate was instantly boarded, and in ten minutes in a perfect blaze; a gallant young midshipman, in a rocket boat, No. 8 although forbidden, was led by his ardent spirit, to follow in support of the barge, in which he was desperately wounded, his brother officer killed, and nine of his crew. The barge, by rowing more rapidly, had suffered less, and lost but two.

Total killed and wounded—128 killed, 690 wounded.

The enemy's loss in killed and wounded is between 6000 and 7000

To his Highness the Dey of Algiers.

Algiers Bay, 28th Aug. 1816.

SIR—For your atrocities at Bona, on defenceless Christians, and your unbecoming disregard to the demands I made yesterday, in the name of the Prince

Regent of England, the fleet under my orders has given you a signal chastisement, by the total destruction of your navy, store-houses, and arsenal, with half your batteries.

As England does not war for the destruction of cities, I am unwilling to visit your personal cruelties upon the inoffensive inhabitants of the country, and I therefore offer you the same terms of peace, which I conveyed to you yesterday in my Sovereign's name; without the acceptance of these terms, you can have no peace with England.

If you receive this offer as you ought, you will fire three guns, and I shall consider your not making this signal as a refusal, and shall renew my operations at my own convenience.

I offer you the above terms, provided neither the British Consul, nor the officers and men so wickedly seized by you from the boats of a British ship of war, have met with any cruel treatment, or any of the Christian slaves in your power, and I repeat my demand, that the Consul, and officers, and men, may be sent off to me, conformable to ancient treaties—I have, &c.

EXMOUTH.

TREATY OF PEACE.

1. The abolition, for ever, of Christian slavery.
2. The delivery, to my flag, of all slaves in the dominions of the Dey, to whatever nation they may belong, at noon to-morrow.
3. To deliver also, to my flag, all money received by him for the redemption of slaves since the commencement of this year, at noon also to-morrow.
4. Reparation has been made to the British Consul for all losses he may have sustained in consequence of his confinement.
5. The Dey has made a public apology, in presence of his Ministers and Officers; and begged pardon of the Consul, in terms dictated by the Captain of the Queen Charlotte.

FINIS.