

HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 30, 1787.

NORTHAMPTON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM BUTLER, A FEW RODS EAST OF THE COURT-HOUSE.

ON WHITEWASHING.

Said to be written by the Hon. F. H. Elgiva.
Copy of a Letter from a Gentleman in America to his Friend in Europe.

DEAR SIR,

THE peculiar customs of every country appear to strangers singular and absurd; but the inhabitants consider these very customs as highly proper, and even indispensably necessary. Long habit imposes on the understanding any thing that is not in itself immediately destructive or pernicious. The religion of a country is scarcely held in greater sanctity than its established customs; and it is almost as fruitless to attempt alterations in the one as the other. Any interference of government to reform national customs, however trivial and absurd, never fails to produce the greatest discontents, and sometimes dangerous convulsions; of this there are frequent instances in history. Bad customs can only be removed by the same means that have established them, viz. by imperceptible gradations and the constant example and influence of the higher class of people. We are apt to conclude that the fashions and customs of our own country are the most rational and proper, because the eye and the understanding have long since been reconciled to them; and yet the foreigner will defend his national habits with full as much plausibility, as we can our own. The truth is, that reason has very little to do in the matter, and nature less. All customs are arbitrary, and one nation hath as undoubted a right to its peculiarities as another. It is in vain to talk of convenience as a standard, for every thing becomes convenient by practice and habit. I have read some where of a nation, in Africa, (I think) which is governed by twelve counselors.—When they consulters are to meet on public business, twelve large earthen jars are set in two rows and filled with water; and each leaps into a jar, where he sets up to the chin in water; when the jars are all filled with counselors, they proceed to deliberate on the great concerns of the people.—This, to be sure, forms a very grotesque idea; but the object is to transact the public business. They have been accustomed to do it in this way, and can do no other. To them, therefore, it is rational and convenient. Indeed, if we consider it impartially, there seems to be no reason why a counselor may not be as wise in an earthen jar as in an elbow chair; or why the good of the people may not be as maturely considered, and as effectually promoted in the one as in the other.

The established manners of every country are the standards of propriety with the people who have adopted them, and every nation assumes the right of considering all deviations from their fashions and customs as barbarisms and absurdities. The Chinese have retained their laws and customs unaltered for ages immemorial; and although they have long had a free intercourse with European nations, and are well acquainted with their improvements in arts and modes of civilization, yet they are so far from being convinced of any superiority in European manners, that their government takes the most serious precautions to prevent the barbarisms of other nations from taking root amongst them. It employs the utmost vigilance and attention to ensure the benefits of commerce and at the same time guard against innovations in the characteristic manner of these people.

Since the discovery of the Sandwich Islands in the South Sea, they have been visited by ships from different nations; but the inhabitants have shown no inclination to prefer the dress and manners of foreigners to their own. It is even probable that they pity the ignorance of the Europeans they have seen, and hug themselves in the propriety of their own customs, and the superior advancement of their own civilization.

There is nothing new in these observations; and I had no intention of making them when I set down, but they obtruded themselves upon me. My wish is to give you some account of the peculiarities of these new States; but I am far from being qualified for the purpose, having, as you see, seen little more than the cities of New-York and Philadelphia: I have discovered but few national singularities amongst them. Their

customs and manners are nearly the same with those of England, which they have long been used to copy. For previous to the revolution, the Americans were, from their infancy, taught to look up to the English as patterns of perfection in all things. I have observed, however, one custom, which, for aught I know, is peculiar to this country. An account of it will serve to fill up the remainder of this sheet, and may afford you some amusement.

When a young couple are about to enter on the matrimonial state, a never failing article in the marriage treaty is, that the lady shall have and enjoy the free and un molested exercise of the rights of WHITEWASHING, with all its ornaments, privileges and appendances. A young woman would forego the most advantageous connection, and even disappoint the warmest wish of her heart, rather than resign this invaluable right. You will wonder what this privilege of white-washing is:—I will endeavour to give you some idea of the ceremony, and have seen it performed.

There is no season of the year in which the lady may not claim her privilege, if she pleases; but the latter end of May is most generally fixed upon for the purpose. The attentive husband may judge by certain prognostics when the storm is high at hand. When the lady is unusually fretful, finds fault with the servants, much of the malice of every thing about her, and she is not desirous; as they are not desirous to occur and go off again, without producing any further effect. But if, when the husband rises in the morning, he should observe in the yard a wheel-barrow with a quantity of lime in it, or should see certain buckets with lime dissolved in water, there is then no time to be lost—he immediately locks up the apartment or closet where his papers or private property are kept, and putting the key in his pocket, betakes himself to flight.—For a husband, however beloved, becomes a perfect nuisance during this season of commotion in the kitchen, becomes of more consideration and importance than him. He has nothing for it, but to abdicate, and run from an evil which he can neither prevent or mollify.

The husband gone, the ceremony begins. The wall-paper, in a few minutes stripped of their furniture,—paintings, prints, lie in buddled heaps about the floors, the curtains are torn from the rollers, the beds crammed into the windows, chairs and tables, bedsteads and cradles, crowd the yard, and the garden fence beads beneath the weight of carpets, blankets, cloth cloaks, old coats and ragged breeches.—HARR may be seen lumbering in the kitchen forming a dark and confused mass; for the fore-ground of the picture, gridirons and frying-pans, rusty shovels and broken tongs, spits and pots, joint-stools and the fractured remains of rush-bottom'd chairs. THERE a clover has disgorged its bowels, rivited plates and dishes, halves of china bowls, cracked tumblers, broken wine glasses, phials of forgotten physic, papers of unknown powders, seeds and dried herbs, handfuls of old corks, tops of teapots, and foppers of departed decants; from the rag-hole in the garret to the rag-hole in the cellar, no place escapes unarranged. It would seem as if the day of general doom was come, and the utensils of the house were dragged forth to judgment. In this tempest, the words of LEAR naturally present, and might, with alteration, be made strictly applicable.

“Let the great Gods,
“That keep the dreadful padder o'er our heads,
“Find out their enemies now.
“Tumble thou wretch,
“That hast within thee unwhipped crimes—
“Unwhipt of justice!”

Close pent up guilt
“Rise your concealing continents, and ask
“These dreadful summoners grace!”

This ceremony completed, and the house thoroughly evacuated, the next operation is to smear the walls and ceilings of every room and closet with brooms, dipped in a solution of lime, called WHITEWASH; to pour buckets of water over every floor, and scratch all the partitions and wainscots with rough brushes wet with

soap-suds, and dipped in floss-cutter's sand. The windows by no means escape the general deluge. A servant scrabbles out upon the pavement her hand and a bucket within reach, the dash away innumerable gallons of water against the glass panes, to the great annoyance of the passengers in the street.

I have been told that an action at law was once brought against one of these water nymphs by a person who had a new fur of cloaths spoiled by this operation; but, after long argument, the action would not lie; inasmuch as the defendant was in the exercise of a legal right, and not answerable for the consequences; and so the poor gentleman was doubly non-sued; for he lost not only his fur of clothes, but his suit at law.

These smearing and scratchings, washings and dashings, being duly performed, the next ceremonial is to cleanse and replace the distracted furniture. You may have seen a house-raising or a ship-launch, when all the hands within reach are collected together—coolieed, if you can, the hurry-bullie—confused—and noise of such a scene, and you will have some idea of this cleaning-match—the mistortune is, that the sole object is to make things clean: it matters not how many useful, ornamental, or valuable articles are mutilated or suffer death under the operation; a mahogany chair and carved frame undergo the same discipline; they are to be made clean at all events; but their preservation is not worthy of attention.—For instance, a fine large picture is laid flat upon the floor; (smaller pictures are piled upon it until the superincumbent weight cracks the glasses of the lower tier; but this is of no consequence.—A valuable picture is placed against the sharp corner of a table; others are made to lean against that, until the pressure of the walls forces the corner of the table through the canvass of the first.—The frame and glass of a fine print are to be cleaned, the spirit and oil used on this occasion are suffered to leak through and spoil the engraving—no matter, if the glass is clean and the frame shines, it is sufficient; the rest is not worthy of consideration. An able arithmetician has made an accurate calculation, founded on long experience, and discovered that the losses and destruction incident to two white-washings are equal to one removal, and three removals equal to one fire.

The cleaning frolic over, matters begin to resume their pristine appearance.—The storm abates, and all would be well again; but it is impossible that so great a convulsion in so small a community, should not produce some further effects. For two or three weeks after the operation, the family are usually afflicted with sore eyes or sore throats, occasioned by the caustic quality of the lime; or with severe colds from the exhalations of wet floors and damp walls.

I know a gentleman here who is fond of accounting for every thing in a philosophical way. He considers this which I have called a custom, as a real periodical disease, peculiar to the climate. His train of reasoning is ingenious and whimsical; but I am not at leisure to give you a detail. The result was, that he found the disease to be incurable; but after much study he conceived he had discovered a method to divert the evil he could not subdue. For this purpose he caused a small building, about twelve feet square, to be erected in his garden, and furnished with some ordinary chairs and tables, and a few primas of the cheapest fort were hung against the walls. His hope was, that when the white-washing phrenzy seized the females of his family, they might repair to this apartment and scrub and scour, and smear to their heart's content—and so spend the violence of the disease in this out-poll, whilst he enjoyed himself in quiet at headquarters. But the experiment did not answer his expectation—it was impossible it should, since a principle part of the gratification consists in the lady's having an uncontributed right to torment her husband at least once a year, and to turn him out of doors, and take the reins of government into her own hands.

There is a much better contrivance than this of the philosopher's; which is to cover the walls of the house with paper—this is generally done; and tho' it cannot abolish, it at least shortens the

the residue of the said tax in specie, be paid within the time aforesaid.

Whereas it is to be presumed that the Loan-Office aforesaid, will be able seasonably to pay the Certificates for interest, which are now due to the citizens of this Commonwealth, no further indulgence in the payment of the said taxes, will be given.

Sent down for concurrence.
SAMUEL PHILLIPS, jun. President.
In the House of Representatives, April 27, 1787
Read and concurred.

ARTEMAS WARD, Speaker.
Approved—JAMES BOWDOIN.
A true Copy.
Attest JOHN AVERY, jun. Sec'y.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
In the House of Representatives, April 28, 1787.

RESOLVED, That in liquidating and settling the accounts which may be exhibited against this Commonwealth, by persons who have performed services, or furnished supplies, quarters, &c. for the Army employed by the government in the present rebellion, the following rates of charge be observed, viz.

Quarters and fuel, 24 hours, 3d. per man.
Quarters only, 24 hours, 1d. per man.
Wood 7l. per cord.
Horse keeping at hay, 10d. per night.
Indian corn, 2l. 10d. per bushel.
Rye, 3l. per bushel.
Oats, 19p per bushel.
One man, two horses and sleigh, 6/ per day, if the public furnished them with ration and forage, otherwise 11/ per day.
One man, two oxen one horse and sled, 4s per day, if found with rations; and other wife 8/ per day.
One man, two oxen, one horse and sled, 6/ per day, if found as aforesaid; and other wife 11/ per day.
One man, four oxen and sled, 6/ per day, if found as aforesaid, otherwise 11/ per day.
One man, two oxen, two horses and sled, 7/ per day if found as aforesaid, otherwise 12/ per day.

Provided the drivers were not soldiers, nor made up in the muster-roll of any company as such; in which case one shilling and four pence per day is to be deducted from the above rates. Provided also, the above rates shall not operate in cases where special contracts have been made with towns or individuals, by the proper officers for that purpose.

Resolved, That the Selectmen of the several towns, who have been employed in supplying the army with provisions, &c. agreeably to the militia law, upon their exhibiting proper accounts thereof, be allowed and paid out of the Treasury of this Commonwealth, four shillings per day, for the time they were actually employed in that business. All the above-mentioned services, supplies &c. to be paid in the same manner as is already provided for the payment of the militia employed in suppressing the present rebellion.

Sent up for concurrence.
ARTEMAS WARD, Speaker.
In Senate, May 3, 1787.
Read and concurred.
SAMUEL PHILLIPS jun. president.
By the Governour
Approved—JAMES BOWDOIN.
True Copy.
Attest JOHN AVERY, jun. Sec'y.

HARTFORD, April 23.
ORDERS for disbanding the Federal Troops.

REGIMENTAL ORDERS.
Barracks, Springfield, April 17, 1787.

CONGRESS having deemed it expedient not to retain in service any of

the troops ordered to be raised by their resolution of the 20th October 1786, excepting two companies of Artillery, consequently the third Regiment of Infantry, commanded by Col. Humphreys, is to be disbanded.

The companies at the barracks to be mustered to-morrow morning at ten o'clock.

Colonel Humphreys has it in command, from the Secretary at War, to present his thanks to the officers for their industry and attention in the recruiting service—the Colonel is happy in adding his own to both officers and men, for the soldier-like conduct exhibited on every occasion; particularly to the recruits for completing the fortifications and making so rapid a progress in acquiring knowledge of military exercise and manoeuvre. He thinks he is justified in saying, that greater proficiency has not been made in the same space of time, and that he has never seen, in any service, a corps superior in the composition of its men, to the regiment he has had the honour to raise. Indeed the character of the officers, the appearance and behaviour of the men, afforded the most solid expectations of their future utility, had their continuance in service been judged necessary.

It is, however, a flattering circumstance for the commanding officer, and an instance so novel in the military history of our country, that he takes a conscious pride in having it known, that although the substantial part of discipline, which regards subordination and promptitude in obedience to orders, was never more firmly fixed in any veteran corps, on any permanent establishment; yet there is not a man belonging to the regiment, who has received corporal punishment by the judgment of a Court Martial, or a blow from any of his officers. Nor, for ten months past, since the institution of a disgraceful punishment for drunkenness, has there been a single instance of intoxication.

Before the dissolution of the corps, the arms and accoutrements (which have been kept in the best possible order) together with the camp utensils of every kind, are to be returned into the public store.

As soon as all the necessary arrangements can be made, and the two companies of Artillery shall have arrived to take charge of the Arsenal and Magazines; the Officers, non-commissioned officers & privates, are to be discharged from the Federal service. Colonel Humphreys takes an affectionate leave of them, and most sincerely wishes every species of happiness may attend his fellow-soldiers: He flatters himself that they have not passed their time altogether unprofitably; that they will carry the germ of discipline into civil life with them, and that, should the exigencies of the public (which heaven avert) demand their military services, and should their present officers be honoured with a command, they would have no reluctance to repair again to the standard of their country.

Tappan and Fowle,

Have just received a good Assortment of
ENGLISH GOODS,
Which they will dispose of, at their Shop opposite the Court-House in Northampton, at the most reasonable terms.
May 16, 1787.

THE Partnership of WOODBRIDGE & DICKINSON, being this day, by mutual consent, dissolved, they request all persons that have accounts unsettled with them, to make an immediate settlement, with the subscriber.
OBADIAH DICKINSON
Northfield, May 8, 1787.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
By his Excellency JAMES BOWDOIN,
Esq. Governour of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

A BRIEF, for a Charitable Contribution.
WHEREAS by the permissive Providence of GOD, a great number of families in the town of Boston, have, from ease and affluence, been suddenly reduced to extreme poverty and distress, by a destructive Fire, which took place on the evening of the twentieth instant; and their distressed situation having been represented to the General Court by the Selectmen of that town, the Court have requested me to issue a brief for the procuring a charitable Contribution, to be made through the several towns and districts within this Commonwealth, for the relief of the sufferers:

In pursuance, therefore, to the request of the General Court, signified by their Resolution of this day, I do most earnestly recommend to the good people of this Commonwealth, to exercise their Christian benevolence, by contributing to the relief of those who have greatly suffered by that disastrous event; and whose distress must excite the sympathetic feelings of every benevolent and humane heart. And agreeably to the said Resolution, I do desire, that all sums of money, or other charity, which shall be collected upon this occasion, may be paid or delivered into the hands of the Selectmen and Overseers of the Poor of the town of Boston, to be by them distributed, as they in their discretion shall judge proper. And the said Selectmen and Overseers, are by the said Resolution required to lay before the next General Court, an account of such Contribution, and of the manner in which they have distributed it.

And I do request the Ministers of the several Churches and religious Societies within this Commonwealth, to read this Brief to their respective Congregations, upon the first Lord's day after they shall receive the same; and to notify the next Lord's day following, as the day of contribution.

Given at the Council Chamber in Boston, the 28th of April, in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty seven, and in the eleventh year of the Independence of the United States of America.

JAMES BOWDOIN,
By his Excellency's Command,
JOHN AVERY, jun. Sec'y.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
In SENATE, April 27, 1787.

WHEREAS a resolve passed the General Court, November 15, 1786, authorizing and directing the Collectors of the tax granted March, 1786, to receive one third part of the said tax in Certificates issued from the Loan Office, for interest on the liquidated debt of the United States, Provided they were paid with a sum in specie equal to one half of such Certificates, on or before the first day of April, then next: And whereas the Loan-Office of this Commonwealth, has not been sufficiently furnished with Certificates for interest due to the citizens thereof for the payment of the said interest:

Therefore Resolved, That the Collectors aforesaid, be and hereby are authorized and directed, to receive one third part of the said tax, in the Certificates aforesaid, provided, they are paid, with a sum in specie, equal to one half of such Certificates, on or before the first day of July next: Provided also, That the other third part of the tax aforesaid, which is to be paid in Army notes or certificates issued therefor, from the Treasurer of this Commonwealth, and