

CUSTOMS OF THE UNITED STATES.

LETTERS OF LILLIAN CHING, TO HIS BRETHREN IN THE ISLAND OF LOO-CHOO; WRITTEN DURING HIS RESIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES.

LETTER XI.

Mount Joy, 8th month, 1826.

Having stated to you the result of my inquiries respecting the religion established and recommended by the founder of christianity, you will be the less surprised when I frankly own that I am a Christian. Had I found the Gospel to be what might very naturally have been expected from the innumerable and bloody hostilities of Christian nations, I should have rejected it with abhorrence as far more dishonorable to God than the religion of Loo Choo. But the God which the Gospel reveals, is infinitely adorable, worthy of the esteem and homage of all intelligent beings. The Son whom he hath "sent to be the Saviour of the world" is "the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person." His doctrines, his precepts, and his examples are all benevolent, pacific, and admirably adapted to make men wise, virtuous, and happy, both in this world and in the world to come.

My understanding approves and my heart is delighted. This religion I can most cordially recommend to all my brethren and friends; and wherever, I may spend the residue of my days, I hope to evince the sincerity of my heart in the profession I have now made.

Do not, my brethren, indulge the least suspicion that, by becoming a Christian I am alienated from my brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh. Never were my feelings more tender towards them than at the present time. Nor have I become a despiser of those humane and beneficent principles and dispositions which have so exalted the Loo Choo people, and made them an honor to human nature. As much as I now admire the Christian religion, as instituted by the Messiah, I am free to own that the people of Loo Choo, as a people, are much better than the majority of those who are called Christians. It is said in the New Testament that a "meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God a great price." This leads me to hope for the salvation of a great portion of my countrymen, though they may have lived and died without seeing the gospel. By some care of the heavenly Father, they have been made to possess much more of the meek and quiet spirit than is generally seen among professed christians; and I cannot believe that God will cast away his Loo Choo children merely because they have not embraced a gospel which His Providence has seen fit hitherto to withhold from them. If I understand the gospel, it is the spirit exemplified by the Messiah which qualifies the soul to dwell with him in the world of glory. On this principle I cannot but regard the Loo Choo people as much better prepared for a heaven of love and peace, than fighting Christians. It must indeed be by the mercy of God that any sinners are saved. This mercy is revealed by Jesus Christ; and the gospel assures us that with God there is no respect of persons; and that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him. I have no doubt that a great number of my Loo Choo brethren now possess that humble and benevolent temper which prepares men to rejoice in Jesus Christ as the way, the truth, and the life; and that they will embrace him as soon as he shall be clearly known to them, whether it shall be in this world or in the future state. Such a temper is always pleasing in the sight of God. It prepares men to rejoice in Him, in Jesus their Mediator, and in the pardoning mercy by Him revealed to the sons of men. It also prepares men to delight in serving God, and in doing good to their fellow-men according to the will of their heavenly Father. Hence those who possess the spirit of Christ, are prepared for the rest that remains for the people of God. In that state of rest, my brethren, I hope to meet you and to rejoice with you forever in the redeeming and saving mercy of God which has been revealed in the gospel by his beloved Son, whom he hath sent to be the Saviour of the world.

L. C.

LETTER XII.

Mount Joy, 10th month, 1826.

Though I have become a Christian I am not the less affected with the inconsistencies of those who have been called by that name. The more I reflect on their religion and on their wars, the more I am astonished, and the more I see to lament; and as it is possible that I may not live to see you again in this world—and as it is also possible that Missionaries may be sent among you, who still retain prejudices in favour of war, I shall briefly mention some things which may be useful to you; and put you on your guard.

From much of the conduct of Christians since they became a warring people, and from the use which they have made of their Saviour's name and his religion, it would seem that many of them have regarded his death as designed to encourage men to engage in hostilities with one another. In ages past, when two armies were about to engage in battle, it was not uncommon to prepare them for the conflict, by administering to the officers and soldiers what is called the Lord's Supper, or the memorials of his dying love, and a symbol of the unity of his disciples. An image too of the cross on which he suffered for sinners, was used as the military standard of Christians, to encourage them to fight as soldiers

of a crucified Redeemer. In some Christian countries, the military banners have been consecrated by religious ceremonies, performed by bishops or ministers of Christ. To this day it is common for ministers of religion to accompany fleets and armies, to pray with the seamen and soldiers, and to stimulate them for the work of death. When victories have been obtained by the slaughter of many thousands, thanks have been offered to God, in the name of Jesus Christ, for his aid in enabling the victors to destroy their brethren of the opposing army. These celebrations of victories, it is said, are often associated with the most abominable revelling and drunkenness.

From facts like these—many more of which I could mention, it might be inferred that in the view of military Christians, the Messiah died to procure a dispensation for his disciples, that in time of war, they might murder each other with impunity, and that by dying for them he had cancelled their obligation to love one another. No works of benevolence have been in so high repute among Christians, as the works of hatred and successful strife; and no other men have been so much praised by christians as the most successful military conquerors—the greatest robbers and murderers of mankind.

Among the different sects of christians, there has been a great diversity of opinion, as to the design of the Saviour's death. All, I believe, have admitted that he died for sinners, "the just for the unjust that he might bring them to God,"—and that in some way, his death has an influence in favour of the salvation of all who obey him. Still there are various opinions on the subject, as to the manner in which his death avails for the salvation of men. I am not, as you may well suppose, sufficiently acquainted to decide with certainty or confidence on questions which have long divided men of the best talents. From the different forms of speech used in the gospel relating to the subject, I am inclined to think, that several important purposes were answered by the Saviour's death. But there was one design of his sufferings, pretty clearly expressed by an apostle, which seems to me to have been entirely disregarded by military Christians; that is, to show mankind what temper they should exercise under the trials, the insults, and injuries, which they experience from one another. The apostle says, "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps—who, when he was reviled, reviled not again—when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to Him who judgeth righteously." I do not say, nor do I think, that this was the only design of the Saviour's sufferings, but this surely was one, and one of great importance. If this idea had been duly embraced by Christians, thoroughly cultivated among them, and impressed on their minds, the world would never have read of the wars of Christians. For it is impossible for men to fight with such a submissive, benevolent, and forgiving temper, as the Messiah displayed during his ministry and on the cross. Had this sentiment been engraved on the minds of all Christians, even for the last thousand years, it would probably have prevented the untimely or violent death of more than a hundred millions of mankind! It would also have prevented those antichristian, disgraceful, and murderous prayers, which have been offered to God in the name of his Son, for divine assistance in the work of human butchery.

I may add, that I am still of the opinion which I expressed in a former letter, that there is as much need of missionary exertions to abolish human sacrifices in Christendom, as in Hindostan.

Affectionately Yours,

LILLIAN CHING.

EYES AND LIPS.

FROM THE COMMON-PLACE BOOK OF A BACHELOR.

An ingenious friend, who has a saturnine cast of complexion, maintains with great zeal, that dark eyes are indicative of a higher order of intellect than those of other colors. This doctrine meets with great favor from every one whose eyes are black, while those that are blue, hazel, or gray, kindle with indignation at such monstrous absurdity. Our friend borrows a very happy illustration from nature, and says, that the wildest and most vivid flashes of lightning burst from the blackest clouds, so do the most brilliant emanations of mind glare from the darkest eyes. Whether there be any truth in this doctrine, or not, it must be admitted, that our friend has the authority of the poets on his side. From immemorial time, they have been sonnetizing dark and black eyes, to the almost utter neglect of all others. Your novelists never, in painting a heroine, say she has gray eyes; but all their poetical fictions see with those that are large, languishing, lustrous, and dark.

The vividness of an eye's expression is not dependent on its color. The eye is most expressive, whose owner has the most thought and feeling. The eye expresses the language of the mind and heart; and whether light or dark, wherever there is strong emotion, it manifests it. A man is a better reader of the meaning of a woman's eye, than he is of one of his own gender; and a lady discovers more indications in the eyes of the opposite sex, than can the most scrutinizing man.

The eye is the most poetical of features; and ample testimony has been borne, in all time, to its superiority in this particular. There is much poetry in the smile of one we love; but there is more in the gleaming kindness of an eye from which the concen-

trated rays of feeling, thought, and sentiment, are looking forth. Did you never look into the tranquil depths of an eye, and see the shadows of thoughts winging their flight onward? Did you never read whole chapters about the sympathy of souls in them? If not, your observation has not been acute, nor your love very devout.

The sublime science of astrology, which once commanded the faith of the learned, has been laughed at by the wisdom or scepticism of more modern times. The doctrines and the devotion of those old readers of the stars have been discarded; and to the human eye the only relic of astrology now on earth has been confided. Lovers are the sole inheritors of the romantic doctrines bequeathed by elder astrologers to posterity. They do not cast devout looks towards the bespangled firmament, at night; but to them, the brow of a beloved being is a heaven, and the eye is the star that unfolds to them the shadows of their coming destinies. Their ancestors read the decrees of fate in the glittering watchtowers of the night-season, and they foresee the mysteries of the future, in the expressions which shift and play upon the eye. If the eye of his mistress sparkles at his approach, it is the precursor of after joy. If the murky shadow of a frown rests upon it, it is the foreshadowing of the woe to come. To the lover, the eye of his mistress is ever eloquent, of hope or fear, of triumph or defeat. It is the polar star of his hope, the cynosure of his faith; and the complexion of the future changes, as her eye waxes into shadow, or waxes into the light of day.

A wholesome lip is a thing to be loved. People are too much in the habit of regarding lips as mere appendages to the human face divine—ornaments, like ear-rings, to set off its beauty. This is to detract from their true use and excellence. They serve other purposes, and are indices of character.

A wholesome lip is of the complexion of a morello cherry. It points like a rosebud, and might lead a bee astray, as the grape of Zeuxis did the birds. When kissing was in fashion, gallants of taste showed a flattering preference for lips of this kind. There was a flavor about them—ambrosia, on which young Love fed and grew fat. The disciple of Socrates was feminine in the matter of lips, for bees hovered over them; and the judgment of a bee, in this respect, is scarcely inferior to that of a bachelor under thirty.

In general, people are disposed to think their noses of more importance than their lips, and many saucy noses seem to be of the same way of thinking; since we see them turning up with an expression of high disdain, as if the lips were so inferior as to merit scorn. No genteel, well-behaved nose, is guilty of such dastardly effrontery.

Our maiden aunt Sally wore a lip, which, like her matrimonial chances, was rather shrivelled. It was a mere streak along the horizon; an indistinct margin along an ocean of mouth; a strip to tell you where her teeth were. My aunt died husbandless. If she had wedded, her bridal kiss would have been interesting. She saluted my cheek once, when, like Fanny, I was "younger than I am now, and prettier—of course!" I thought the sensation like a gentle bite. Instead of soft, spongy flesh, her lips seemed like scraps of flesh, iron-bound. Sometimes she puckered them up like the orifice of her reticule; and this was an infallible precursor of a coming storm. Xantippe had a thin, bluish, unwavering lip. Beware of such!

My nurse was a negro woman; and her gift of underlip was stupendous. It poured down, a real cataract of lip. It was without model, although not without shadow. She was deficient in chin, and her lip circled over her lower jaw-bone, in shape and size resembling a half-grown grey-hound's ear. At a distance, you might have mistaken it for an extra allowance of tongue, which her mouth could not contain. It was awful! That is, to think of kissing such a thing! When the old woman bustled about, it shivered like a sheep in shearing-time; and when she jumped, it flapped over her under-jaw like the wing of a squat pigeon.

Among the ladies, there are two orders of lips—the nectarine and the vinegarish. The former swell out like the heave of a deep sigh; the latter are sharp, and make you smack your mouth when you look on them. The first denotes amiability, the second acidity. Everlasting spring lives in the blossoms of a nectarine lip, and eternal winter dwells upon the vinegarish, along which no rill of blood ever strays.

The lips of one's sweet heart are a volume of poetry. Smiling a ray like the flush of morning upon them, and they are glorious in their brightness. They are an oracle, and from them comes the voice of destiny. They are a shrine, and around them the breath of inspiration ever lingers.

SHAKESPEARE.—If Shakspeare were stripped of all the bombast in his passions, and dressed in the most vulgar words, we should find the beauties of his thoughts remaining; if his embroideries were burnt down, there would still be silver at the bottom of the melting pot: but I fear, (at least let me fear it for myself) that we who are his sounding words, have nothing of his thought, but are all outside; there is not so much as a dwarf in our giant's clothes.