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# The Standard.

## NEW-BRUNSWICK.

Volume G.

SAINT ANDREWS, SATURDAY, MAY 11, 1839.

Number 19.

ST. ANDREWS and ST. JOHN  
MAIL STAGE.

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WAY FARES.  
From St. Andrews to St. John, 7s 6d  
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Singular Custom of White-Washing among the Americans.

Dear Sir.—My wish is to give you some account of the people of these new States, but I am far from being qualified for the purpose, having as yet seen little more than the cities of New York and Philadelphia. I have discovered but few national singularities among 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 into the matrimonial state; a never failing article in the marriage treaty is, that the Lady shall have and enjoy the free and unmolested exercise of the rights of white-washing, with all its ceremonial privileges and appurtenances. A young woman would forego the most advantageous connection, and even disappoint the warmest wish of her heart, rather than resign the invaluable right. You would wonder what this privilege of white-washing is: I will endeavour to give you some idea of the ceremony, as I have seen it performed.

There is no season of the year in which the Lady may not claim her privileges, if she pleases; but the latter end of May is most generally fixed on 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, is discontented with the children, and complains much of the fithness of everything about her—these are signs which ought not to be neglected, yet they are not decisive, as they some times come on and go off again without producing any other effect. But if, when the husband rises in the morning, he should observe in the yard a wheelbarrow 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 is 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 female rage; his authority is superseded, his commission is suspended and the very scullion who cleans the brasses in the kitchen, becomes of more consideration and importance than him. He has nothing for it, but to abdicate and run from the evil which he can neither prevent nor mollify.

The husband gone, the ceremony begins. The walls are in a few moments stripped of their furniture, paintings, prints, and looking-glasses, lie in a tumbled heap about the floors; the curtains are torn from the testers, the beds crammed into the windows; chairs and tables, bedsteads and cradles, crowd the yard; and the garden fence bends beneath the weight of carpets, blankets, cloth cloaks, old coats and ragged breeches. Here may be seen the lumber of the kitchen, forming a dark and confused mass: for the foreground of the picture, gridirons and frying-pans, rusty shovels, and broken tongs, spits and pots, joint stools and trapezoidal remains of rush bottom chairs. There a closet has disgorged its bowels, cracked tumblers, broken wine glasses, phials of forgotten physic, papers of unknown powders, seeds, and dried herbs, handfuls of old corks, tops of tea-pots, and stoppers of departed decanters;—from the rag hole in the garret to the rat-hole in the cellar, no place escapes unrummaged. 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 themselves, and might with some alteration, be made strictly applicable.

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"Let the great gods  
That keep this fearful padder near our heads,  
Find out their enemies now, trouble them wretch,  
That hast within thee undivulged crimes  
Unwhipt of justice!"

This ceremony completed, and rooms tholy evacuated, the next operation is to smear the walls and ceilings of every room and closet with brushes 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 stone cutters sand. The windows by no means escape the general deluge, a servant scrambles out upon the pent-house, at the risk of her neck, and with a mug in her hand, and a bucket within reach, she dashes away innumerable gallons of water against the glass-panes; to the great annoyance of 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 suit of clothes spoiled by this operation; but after long argument it was determined by the whole court that 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-suited; for he lost not only his suit of clothes, but his suit at law.

These smearings 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: recollect if you can the hurry, bustle, confusion, and noise of such a scene, and you will have some idea of this cleaning match. The misfortune 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 engraving is laid flat on the floor; smaller prints are piled upon it, and the superincumbent weight cracks the glasses of the lower tier; but this is of no consequence, a valuable picture is placed leaning against the sharp corner of a table; others are made to lean against that, until the pressure of the whole forces the corner of the table through the canvas 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 cleaned and the frame shine, it is sufficient; the rest is not worthy of consideration. An able arithmetician has made an accurate calculation, founded on long experience, and has discovered that the losses and destruction incident to two whitewashings are equal to one removal, and three removals equal to one fire.

The cleaning frolic over, matters begin to wear 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 farther effects: For two or three weeks after the operation, the family are usually afflicted with sore throats or sore eyes; occasioned by the caustic quality of the Lime; or with severe colds from the exhalations of floors or damp walls. There is however an alleviation of the husband's distress; he generally has the privilege of a small room or closet for his books and papers, the key of which he is allowed to keep. This is considered as a privileged place, and stands like the land of Goshen amid the plagues of Egypt. But then he must be extremely cautious, and ever on his guard. For should he inadvertently go abroad and leave the key in his door, the house-maid who is ever on the watch for such an opportunity immediately enters in triumph with buckets, brooms, and brushes; takes possession of the premises, and forthwith puts all his books and papers to rights: to his utter confusion and sometimes to his serious detriment.

There is also another custom peculiar to the city of Philadelphia, and nearly allied to the former. I mean that of washing the pavement before the doors every Saturday evening. I at first took this to be a regulation of the police, but on a further enquiry find it is religious rite preparatory to the sabbath, and is I believe the only religious rite in which the numerous sectaries of this city agree. The ceremony begins about sunset and continues till about ten or eleven at night. It is very difficult for a stranger to walk the streets on those evenings; he runs a continual risk of having a bucket of dirty water thrown against his legs. But a Philadelphian born is so much accustomed to this danger that he avoids it with uncommon dexterity. It is from this circumstance that a Philadelphian may be known any where by his gait.

It must be acknowledged that the ablutions I have mentioned are attended with no small inconvenience; but the women would not be induced from any consideration to resign their privilege. Notwithstanding this, I can give you the strongest assurances that the women of America make the most faithful wives, and the most attentive mothers in the world; and I am sure you will join me in opinion, that if a married man is made miserable only one week in a whole year, he will have no great cause to complain of the matrimonial Bond.

I am, &c.

THE ENGLISH PACKET.—The arrival of H. M. Packet "Lyrian," has given us an opportunity of laying extracts from English Papers

before our readers, which we accordingly do in succeeding columns.

The items are not many or important. The Maine affair will, it appears, all blow over without any thing of consequence resulting. All parties seem inclined to treat the matter lightly, and to be more anxious to explain away difficulties than to exaggerate. When this is the case, not much fear need be entertained of war, except one party act most wrong heartedly. This is matter of rejoicing,—war, between such nations as Great Britain and America, would be a "great war" indeed, and as great an evil,—it would lamentably retard all the great blessings of civilization, would fan most unholy feelings into a fierce flame, and would cause vast sufferings as regards person and property.

The Chartist agitation seems subsiding, although large bodies of the people are still inflamed by speakers, who address themselves to all the more violent propensities of their audiences.

The Ministry appears still firm, and politicians assert that there is not much apprehension of any thing like immediate change. All parties were preparing for a trial of strength in the House of Commons, on the subject of the inquiry into the administration of Justice in Ireland. *Novascotian.*

An extract of a letter from a valued correspondent in Falmouth, whose sources of information are first rate, says, respecting a Commission on Naval affairs:—

"The Commission has finished its sittings, and are preparing the report for Parliament. The last account was, that a large retirement was to take place from the different grades, and that from the Captain's list with rank of Admiral so low down as 1810, and others of sixty years of age as low down as 1816, with an increase of half pay. A number of old commanders with the rank and half pay of captains and Lieutenants with that of commanders.

Lieuts. and Masters full pay to be increased, a large promotion of passed Mates. Captains to have table money during peace. Engineers, Artillery, and Marines, to be allowed to buy and sell, as the rest of the army, the juniors to undergo an examination previous to advancement.

Another extract, from the same hand, dated Falmouth April 6 says: "There will be no war with America—no change of Ministers. On the 15th they expect a majority in their favour of at least twenty, which will be a good return to the Lords with their five majority on Lord Roden's motion."

By the following article it will appear that what was sauce for the goose is not sauce for the gander.

JAMAICA.—There was "no House" on Tues. a, when really an important question stood for discussion. Mr. Labouchere had put a notice on the paper for leave to bring in a bill to provide for the temporary government of Jamaica. The suspension of the Colonial Legislature was the scope of his measure for the Jamaica Assembly, though composed of High Church and King gentlemen, and in close connexion with English Tories, is as unmanageable as the suspended or defunct Assembly of Lower Canada was, and treats her Majesty's representatives with a degree of

insolent contempt which Papineau and his confederates never equalled. It being found impossible to 'work' the Colonial system in Jamaica, mild Mr. Labouchere was to substitute for it a good, wholesome, and vigorous despotism. But it happened that the Jamaica proprietors in England, a formidable and pugnacious body, saw nothing just or agreeable, in applying to their English colony the rule which under a similar state of affairs they imposed upon French Canada. So Lord St. Vincent, Lord Seaforth, and a considerable number of persons connected with Jamaica, held a meeting and concerted measures of opposition to the measure. It is conjectured that the cause of there being "no House" on Tuesday may be found in these proceedings. But Lord John Russell, the next day, innocently begged permission to set aside the regulation which requires a fresh notice to be given for a "dropped order," and hoped his honourable friend would be allowed to introduce his bill without notice. With this request Sir Robert Peel could not comply; it was, he said, no slight matter—the suspension of the Jamaica constitution; and due notice must be given. Most readily did Lord John acquiesce in the refusal, and the very day of the Jamaica Bill is put off.

ALL vessels are to be moored N. W. and S. E. during the Summer season—and in the Winter months N. E. and S. W. when swinging within twenty-four hours after casting Anchor at St. Stephen. All vessels with Main Jib, or Spanker booms to have the same rigged in. No vessels to be left at night without some person on board. All vessels to be kept moored with their Bower and Stream Anchor and to have good buoys and buoy ropes attached to their anchors. Vessels having Rafts of timber astern, to keep the same as close to the Ship as possible. The Harbour-Master is to direct where the Ballast is to be laid, and no Ballast may be landed in the Harbour, otherwise than by his permission and direction, and at the time of discharge, a tarpauling to be laid between the Ballast-port or Gunwale of the Vessel discharging, to prevent any part falling into the water, under the penalty of Forty Dollars. No Anchor to be laid between the lines of high and low Water mark. Any Master or Commander of any Ship or vessel who shall refuse or neglect to obey or conform to the directions of the Harbour-Master, shall forfeit and pay the sum of Five Pounds for each refusal and neglect. The Harbour-Master shall be entitled to demand and receive from the Master, Commander or Consignee of every Ship or Vessel (Coasters excepted) which shall anchor at St. Stephen, one dollar for all vessels above Fifty tons; and not exceeding one hundred tons, and two dollars for all vessels above one hundred tons as Harbour Master's Fee.

JOHN BRAY,  
Harbour Master.