

MARYLAND GAZETTE.

T H U R S D A Y, N O V E M B E R 18, 1784.

For the MARYLAND GAZETTE.

As the general assembly are now met, I shall respectfully submit to their consideration a few remarks on two laws, passed since the era of our freedom.

In "an act concerning marriages," passed February 1777, it is enacted, "That they shall be celebrated by ministers of the church of England, ministers dissenting from that church," &c. Dissenting from any church supposes the church dissented from to be established by law, as the episcopal in England, and the presbyterian in Scotland. In England presbyterians are dissenters, and their churches are called meeting-houses; whereas in Scotland the direct reverse happens, for there episcopals become dissenters, their churches are changed into meeting-houses, and both are described accordingly in the usual language of each country. But seeing we have no religious establishment in Maryland, and I am well convinced never will have one, there can be no dissenters here. What this act therefore calls the church of England, may with equal propriety be said to dissent from quakerism or presbyterianism, as they may be said to dissent from it.

In "an act for the establishment of select vestries," passed March 1779, it is enacted, "That the several vestries shall procure a fair table of marriages, and the same set up in their respective churches." If it appeared particularly necessary to spread the knowledge of the prohibitions contained in this law, a more extensive mode of information should have been adopted, that all, who were equally bound to obey them, might enjoy equal opportunities to become acquainted with them.

This act further directs, "that churchwardens shall be annually chosen in each parish," and imposes a fine of "ten pounds currency on every person who shall wilfully refuse to serve in said office," after being duly notified. As a churchwarden is not an officer of government, nor employed in the civil department, it seems hard to punish a man by law, for declining the service. If any religious societies desired to make such an appointment, they had ample authority for it of their own accord; and in every one of them through the state, there doubtless may be found a sufficient number of persons, able and willing to manage its concerns, without requiring the compulsory aid of fines.

By the same act and a supplement to it, the select vestries have legal possession of all church property, real and personal, belonging to "the people professing the religion of the church of England," for the benefit of the said church. No reasonable objection lies against this provision, as far as it goes; but why were not the same attention and care extended to other churches, which also had property, and needed its being in like manner secured?

Will it be alleged, that the church of England was adequately represented for the purpose, by having several members of its profession in the assembly? Other churches were in the same sense represented, and should, if there is weight in the observation, have been in the same degree considered. But religious distinctions do not chalk out the duty, nor affect the character of our legislators, provided they declare themselves christians; these distinctions proceed no further, constitute no part of their qualifications, are neither expressed nor implied in the constitution and laws.

There were perhaps among us, at that time, christian societies, which could not have mentioned a single member of their denomination in either branch of the legislature. Were they therefore partially or defectively represented, not in reason to expect similar privileges and advantages with their fellow electors of other persuasions? It will not be pretended. In this instance therefore the assembly were too confined in their views.

The act aforesaid likewise enacts, "That the vestrymen, or the major part of them, shall have full power and authority to employ a minister or reader of the church of England, to officiate" &c. Now the nature of the relation subsisting between a minister and his parishioners, the undoubted and acknowledged right of the latter to exercise their own judgment herein, left them to act entirely as they pleased.

This may be a very advisable and excellent way of electing a clergyman; but let those determine upon and prescribe it, who are immediately concerned in his ministrations, and hope to receive spiritual edification from his pastoral labours. The legislative authority, which, in the case before us, enjoined the mode, had as good a right to have also pointed out the men, and done other things of a similar kind, which would have produced many disagreeable effects. The time too may come, when some future legislature, encouraged by so dangerous an example, may venture upon making laws, which shall disturb the tranquillity, and destroy the liberties of the people.

Whoever examines the subject attentively will perceive, that the chief part of both laws was taken from former ones, passed under a government, and in circumstances very different from those of the present day; and the want of advertent to an essential difference in these respects has, I suppose, occasioned most of the improprieties observable in them. If these brief hints show the danger of such negligence, they may excite a desire, to remove its consequences, and prevent a repetition of it hereafter, which would amply gratify the author's wish, who has no design to give the least of-

ference, and who flatters himself, that there is nothing offensive in either his matter or his manner.

CATHOLIC.

S M Y R N A, (Turkey) August 5.

THE great heats which were suffered for a fortnight past, are accompanied by an east wind, which by degrees purges the badness of the air. The plague begins to abate considerably in this city, inasmuch, that for some days past no accident has been heard of, many shops have been opened, and divers merchants have returned from the country to their houses here, and we flatter ourselves, that the general communication will soon be re-established. It is calculated that this terrible calamity has destroyed in this city, within three months past, exclusive of the surrounding villages, between 25 and 26,000 Turks, 2800 Jews, 400 Greeks, 400 Armenians, and very near 100 catholics: At Magnesia and Kerkaat, from whence our cotton comes, the mortality amounts to 30,000. We have not heard what ravages this shocking malady has occasioned at Colaba and its districts.

HAGUE, Aug. 27. We have accounts from Copenhagen, that a Russian Squadron, under vice admiral Borislow, is arrived at Cronstaut, consisting of 21 men of war, to which four sail of the line and four frigates from Archangel have joined themselves. His fleet, which is in all composed of 25 sail of the line and 10 frigates and transports, is said to be detained for the Mediterranean.

L O N D O N, August 25.

They write from Berlin, that the Imperial and Prussian courts are not upon the most cordial terms: How this may operate upon the Dutch, time will shew; but, according to present appearance, the emperor will not unite with old Frederick in taking those advantages of their present confusion, which he is seemingly aiming at.

Aug. 26. Dispatches were sent off last night from the secretary of state's office to Mr. Hailes, his majesty's envoy and plenipotentiary at Paris, in which were contained a summary of the complaints lately sent home by the governor of Newfoundland, relative to the French settlers' infraction of the treaty, as well in respect to the fishing bounds, as in building on the isles of Mi-quelon and St. Pierre storehouses, &c. Mr. Hailes is further instructed to add to the written verbal representation, and to procure an answer thereon as soon as possible, which he is to transmit home immediately.

Aug. 28. A very great revolution has taken place imperceptibly in Spanish America; the cautions taken by the court of Madrid to prevent a rebellion, in imitation of the English colonies, have been prudent and vigorous. Many grievances had been redressed, very able governors sent out, the fortifications every where repaired, and new ones erected; above 30,000 veteran troops sent there for garrisons; but the whole system occasions such an expence, that the American dominion on the new establishment costs so much, as to leave barely 400,000l. a year to Old Spain; this is enriching the colonies so greatly, that it is likely to have the contrary effect, growing slowly, that is expected from it. The people, though wealthy from the great sums spent among them, will be much readier and more able to throw off their yoke. Some of the best politicians of Spain have predicted this event.

Aug. 31. Don Barcello, according to the Lisbon letters, bids fair to be disgraced at the court of Madrid, as he is reported to have been very languid of success, and to have given assurances to the ministry before he failed, that he would not return without accomplishing the object he had in view.

The Portuguese ships, in the late attack in the Mediterranean, kept a very respectful distance—there was no waste of courage—no prodigy of spirit—they fought like men who were desirous of fighting again to-morrow.

Letters from Paris, dated August 18, mention, that Mr. Blanchard, who left Amiens with a friend and two ladies, attached to an air balloon, some days before, had arrived safely at Rennes, in the province of Bretagne. It is asserted these aerial travellers were carried by the elements at the rate of nine miles an hour.

Seven hundred and fifty miserable men are now stowed into the king's bench, among whom are hundreds who have actually been reduced to their present distress by fighting the battles of their country; many subaltern officers are there immured, who in the late severe struggle, were obliged, in the performance of their garrison duty, to involve themselves in debts, for which they are now excluded from society.

Sept. 2. A very elegant coach, made in London for a nobleman in Dublin, was landed at the custom house of this city about ten days ago. On its way to the nobleman's house it was stopped by a numerous mob, who smeared it over with tar, then feathered it, after which, having drawn it through several streets, they pulled it to pieces, and carried it off for firing.

Sept. 3. Among other circumstances that are reputed to be to Mr. Pitt, and probably will be beneficial to the best of Mr. Pitt, and probably will be beneficial to the common cause of both countries, is the mutual respect and good correspondence subsisting between him and Dr. Franklin, who immediately on the information of Mr. Pitt's refusal of the Pells, wrote a letter of panegyric to the minister, and at the same time sent formal congratulations to two or three public characters, of the virtues of that illustrious statesman.

One of the American houses lately stopped payment in the city, has been found on inspection, to have sufficient to answer every demand, and a surplus of more than 30,000l.

Sept. 14. A daily paper says, from an anonymous correspondent, that a treaty of defensive alliance was signed at Paris on the 27th of last month, between France, Holland, Prussia, Sweden, Spain, Naples, and Sardinia, to counteract the ambitious views of the courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg, who were joined by the king of Denmark. This alliance (to which prince Henry of Prussia put the finishing hand) will in all probability preserve at least for some years, the general peace of Europe, which was upon the point of being disturbed by the claims which the emperor had lately set up against the Dutch.

Sept. 16. Advices from Paris say, that some unlooked for difficulties have arisen respecting the treaties of commerce between France and the United States of America, and that great opposition is made to it by the French merchants.

The present conduct of France, in the league against the emperor, shews how little permanent interest is gained by marriage, and what slender connexion the policy of states has with the affinity of princes. So true is the old observation, "though kings may marry, kingdoms never do."

A letter from Portsmouth says, that orders are come down there for several frigates to be got ready for sea immediately, which are to sail as soon as possible, to protect the Scotch fishery from the encroachments of the Dutch, French, and Flemings, who have for years deprived the Scots of the benefit of the fishing trade, and supplied the London markets.

Sept. 20. The American Dr. Franklin is said to have been more than ordinarily methodical in the preparation and arrangement of all the state papers relating to transactions in which he had been at all engaged. Not only duplicates and extracts, but copious annotations and memorandums being annexed by him to the event of each occurrence, and in such a manner as seems to indicate what we hope may be the fact, a design of posthumous publication.

Various are the advantages with respect to real happiness, which republics and limited governments have over absolute monarchy. The latter may perhaps be more calculated for secret determinations, speed, vigour, and offensive war. But unanimity can give to limited governments all the strength of monarchy, preserving at the same time, its own peculiar advantages and invaluable blessings. Assisted by this elastic spring, this animating principle, and nerve of political life, a minister may design and execute purposes, which no despotic ruler could conceive, or would wish to put in practice. Purposes deserving the praise of men who are born free, and claiming the applause even of future ages.

Letters from the Hague by Saturday's mail say, that on the communication made to the court of Brussels of the resolution of the States General of the 20th of August last, the government general of the Austrian Low Countries continue not only to persist entirely in the emperor's declaration respecting the opening of the Escaut, and the free navigation to the East and West-Indies, but the prime minister, the count de Belgiojoso has further declared very seriously, in a conference respecting the duties which Austrian ships used to pay on passing before the fort of Lillo, that the first shot that should be fired by the commandant of the said fort for that purpose would be taken on the part of his imperial and royal majesty for a declaration of war.

A letter from Wolfenbuttle brings advice, that a great number of artificers and husbandmen have obtained leave of the prince of Brunswick to emigrate to America with their families, having been told by those troops of the country, who were there during the war, that they may soon acquire a fortune, though they were informed by others that they will wish themselves at home again; but this advice they pay no regard to.

Extract of a letter from Wilby, September 13. "A matter of a sloop arrived here from the Orkney islands reports, that in the latitude of the scaw, he fell in with seven Russian men of war, who were steering for the English channel; he spoke a sloop of that nation, by whom he gained the above intelligence."

Sept. 21. It was yesterday reported, that the emperor of Germany had prohibited the importation of English stuffs into any part of his dominions, and that the reason assigned for this measure was, that our acts lately passed to lower the duties on teas, and render smuggling less practicable, were likely to be of the utmost detriment to his subjects all along the coasts of Flanders. We hope this matter is merely matter of report, and not well founded, as if true, would prove of the most serious consequence to the English stuff manufactories at Norwich and elsewhere.

The treaty of alliance entered into between the states of Holland and the French, will effectually secure the republic from any design the emperor may have entertained of forcing them to comply with his demands; for should he make any movement with his army, the French have such force at hand, that before any relief could arrive, the whole of the Austrian Netherlands could be laid in ruins, by the troops in garrison at Lille, Dunkirk, and Mons, from each of these places there being an easy entrance to the Austrian possessions.

The rage for air balloons, it appears, still continue to animate most ranks of people in Paris. M. Le Rofire rose from Versailles on Monday last night at three quar-