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THE VOYAGE OF THE "CHARMING NANCY,"
1776.

By Colonel F. A. WHINYATES, late R.H.A.

DURING the American War of Independence an Army under General Burgoyne, in the spring of 1776, was sent from England to Canada with the object of driving the rebels from that Province, and moving down the River Hudson to co-operate with the British troops in the neighbourhood of New York under the command of General Sir William Howe. Six companies of Royal Artillery accompanied Burgoyne's force, and one of them, under Major Griffith Williams, made the voyage across the Atlantic in the Ordnance transport the "Charming Nancy." The officers on board by mutual consent drew up a code of rules for observance during the passage. They are written in a little paper-covered book, at the other end of which is the diary of the voyage to the St. Lawrence in 1776. The cover is signed "George William, 27th March, 1776," and gives the routine account of weather at sea in April and May, 1776. On 30th May, the transport made the Island of Bic in the mouth of the St. Lawrence.

The rules referred to, which are both quaint and amusing, may be of interest to readers of the JOURNAL, and run as follows:—

Regulations of the United Assembly on board the "Charming Nancy," 3rd April, 1776.

The United Members of this Assembly hereby severally enter into a solemn engagement to forget and bury in eternal oblivion all animosities, biquerings, piques, sarcasms, witticisms, griping, or whatever tends or may tend to sow the seeds of discord, or disturb the harmony of this Assembly, and as the only means of preserving the mutual welfare of the whole, now come to the following Resolutions, binding themselves severally at the same time not only to observe the regulations at the peril of several weighty and severe penalties, but to see these penalties inflicted on the offending members according to the strictest sense of the following Resolutions:—

Resolved I.

That whatever Member presumes either designedly or wilfully to say any crooked word so that it should gripe brother Member, and should the griping member retort in such a manner by words or gestures that it should appear to this Assembly that he himself is very much griped, he is to be purged by gravel administered to him by the Carpenter.

Resolved II.

That no word shall be adjudged a crooked one till determined so by the general voice of this United Assembly, and if then a griping or griped Member shall not acquiesce in the general determination—Coventry dead.

Resolved III.

That as it appears conducive both to the order and health of this Assembly that no one be abed after eight o'clock (except he is much indisposed), at that hour all hammocks are to be struck and the cabin cleared by nine; after that hour no washing, shaving, or shifting to be allowed. The Officer of the Day is to see the cabin clean and decent both before and after breakfast, which he is to administer a quarter after nine at furthest, with the politeness of Sir Clement Cotterel. The said Officer is likewise to administer either tea or coffee at half-past five o'clock in the afternoon; he is likewise after each repast to see the several utensils washed and laid in the cleanest manner. Any Member offending against the regulation—Coventry dead.

Resolved IV.

That no one is to be allowed to make a riot or disturb the repose of any Member before eight o'clock, on pain of being stuffed with gravel.

Resolved V.

That no one is to presume to make punch as long as the Master is willing to make it, and that an account of all wines and sea stock in general to be kept by Old Tapeater.

Resolved VI.

That this Assembly are not to exceed four bottles of wine at dinner, and two at supper without the permission of Old Tapeater.

Resolved VII.

That no Member be permitted to hang out, put out, or produce anything indecent in the cabin, on penalty of a severe reprimand from the President for the first offence, for the second offence to be drenched with salt water, and the third—Coventry dead.

Resolved VIII.

That if it appears to this Assembly that any one Member is in coske-cutting stile he shall be first drenched with a bottle of salt water, and if it should appear then that he is griped, the Carpenter is to administer him a dose of gravel; if that won't cure him—Coventry dead.

Resolved IX.

That no Member finding himself ill disposed, or unfit for company, be permitted to hang up his cott and retire (without) having made an apology to the company.

Resolved X.

That no game or rubber be begun after nine o'clock at night without the general consent of the United Assembly.

Resolved XI.

That any Member be permitted to relate a merry story, and that the other Members may laugh at him and his story without the least impeachment either of his character or veracity; and should it appear that he is any ways griped after the expiration of five minutes, he is to be asked if he chooses gravel or anything to scour his maw; but should he return to his former good humour, the Assembly will receive him with open arms.

Resolved XII.

That Old Tapester be appointed keeper of the records.

By Order of the General Assembly,

G. WILLIAMS, President.

D. DURNFORD, Secretary.

Present: Major Williams, president; Captain Day, Commissary; Lieutenant Durnford, Engineer; Clieland, Cox, Remington, Lieutenants of Artillery; George Williams, Volunteer; John Bell, Master.

A few words concerning those mentioned will add to the interest of the rules of the General Assembly. Major Griffith Williams (131)¹ distinguished himself during Burgoyne's campaign, especially at the action of Still Water, 7th October, 1777, upon which day he kept his guns in action until the Artillery horses were all destroyed, and his men either killed or wounded, and he himself taken prisoner. Lieutenant Molesworth Clieland (460) was killed in the action at Skenesborough, 6th July 1777. Lieutenant Remington (Samuel Rimington) (477) died a general officer in 1826. Lieutenant William Cox (485) left the R.A. in 1778, and joined the 21st Regiment. Lieutenant Desmaretz Durnford, R.E., served for two years in North America, and subsequently at the Cape and in India. George Williams, volunteer, was a nephew of Major Griffith Williams; he carried the flag of truce from General Burgoyne to General Gates on 13th October, 1777, previous to the capitulation of the British force. After his return home he entered Parliament, was member for Ashton-under-Lyne, and J.P. for Lancashire; died 1805. Sir Clement Cotterell, son of Sir Charles Cotterell, Master of the Ceremonies, succeeded his father in that appointment, and was vice-president of the Society of Antiquaries, and well skilled in matters of proceeding and ceremony. He took the added name of Dormer. The Cotterell-Dormers are still in existence.

¹ The numbers against the names of the Artillery officers are those by which they are known in Kane's List of R.A. officers, which dates from 1689 up to the present time.