

severe punishments for desertion, are imperatively necessary, if troops are to be kept in this country. Soldiers are meeting persons every day, of characters and habits in no way superior to their own, who have realized more from three or four week's labour in the mines than is paid to them for five of the best years of their lives devoted to the service of their country. The people of California sympathize with the soldiers, and desertion with a majority of them is not looked upon as a stigma upon the character of the offender. With dazzling pecuniary prospects before them, and all the feelings of their associates to support them, the morals of the troops will rapidly deteriorate, until the military establishment is broken up by desertion. But if the mines of California are to be made a source of revenue to the government, measures like those above indicated become more and more important, as efficiency and fidelity among the troops will then be indispensable to the public interests."

THE LAST SUNDAY OF CHARLES II.

MACAULAY gives this vivid sketch of the scene at Whitehall, on the last Sunday on earth, of the Merry Monarch:—

"His palace had seldom presented a gayer or a more scandalous appearance than on the evening of Sunday, the first of February, 1685. Some grave persons who had gone thither, after the fashion of that age to pay their duty to their sovereign, and who had expected that, on such a day, his court would wear a decent aspect, were struck with astonishment and horror. The great gallery of Whitehall, an admirable relic of the magnificence of the Tudors, was crowded with revellers and gamblers. The king sat there chatting and toying with three women, whose charms were the boast, and whose vices were the disgrace, of three nations. Barbara Palmer, Duchess of Cleveland, was there, no longer young, but still retaining some traces of that superb and voluptuous loveliness which twenty years before overcame the hearts of all men. There too was the Duchess of Portsmouth, whose soft and infantine features were lighted up with the vivacity of France. Hortensia Mancini, Duchess of Mazarin, and niece of the great Cardinal, completed the group. She had been early removed from her native Italy to the court where her uncle was supreme. His power and her own attractions had drawn a crowd of illustrious suitors round her. Charles himself, during his exile, had sought her hand in vain. No gift of nature or of fortune seemed to be wanting to her. Her face was beautiful with the rich beauty of the south, her understanding quick, her manners graceful, her rank exalted, her possessions immense; but her ungovernable passions had turned all these blessings into curses. She had found the misery of an ill assorted marriage intolerable,—had fled from her husband, had abandoned her vast wealth, and, after having astonished Rome and Piedmont, by her adventures, had fixed her abode in England. Her house was the resort of men of wit and pleasure, who, for the sake of her smiles and her table, endured her frequent fits of insolence and ill humor. Rochester and Godolphin sometimes forgot the cares of state in her company. Barillon and St. Eyremond found in her drawing-room, consolation of her long banishment from Paris.—The learning of Vossius, the wit of Waller, were daily employed to flatter and amuse her. But her diseased mind required stronger stimulants, and sought them in gallantry, in basset, and in usquebaugh. While Charles flirted with his three sultanas, Hortensia's French page, a handsome boy, whose vocal performances were the delight of Whitehall, and were rewarded by numerous presents of rich clothes, ponies & guineas, warbled some amorous verses. A party of twenty courtiers was seated at cards round a large table, on which gold was heaped in mountains. Even then the king had complained that he did not feel quite well. He had no appetite for his supper: his rest that night was broken; but on the following morning he rose, as usual, early."

The introduction of the Roman Catholic priest by the Duke of York, and the last moments of the King, are thus described:—

"The duke's orders were obeyed: and even the physicians withdrew. The back door was then opened, and Father Huddleston entered. A cloak had been thrown over his sacred vestments, and his shaven crown was concealed by a flowing wig. 'Sir,' said the duke, 'this good man once saved your life. He now comes to save your soul.' Charles faintly answered, 'He is welcome.' Huddleston went through his part better than had been expected. He knelt by the bed, listened to the confession, pronounced the absolution, and administered ex treme unction. He asked if the king wished to receive the Lord's supper.—'Surely,' said Charles, 'if I am not unworthy.' The host was brought in.—Charles feebly strove to rise and kneel before it. The priest bade him be still, and assured him that God would accept the humiliation of the soul, and would not require the humiliation of the body. The king found so much difficulty in swallowing the bread that it was necessary to open the door and to procure a glass of water. This rite ended, the monk held up a crucifix before the penitent, charged him to fix his last thoughts upon the sufferings of the Redeemer, and withdrew. The whole ceremony had occupied about three quarters of an hour; and, during that time, the courtiers who filled the outer room had communicated their suspicions to each other by whispers and significant glances. The door was at length thrown open, and the crowd filled the chamber of death."

It was now late in the evening. The king seemed much relieved by what had passed. His natural children were brought to his bedside, the dukes of Grafton, Southampton, and Northumberland, sons of the Duchess of Cleveland, the Duke of St. Alban's, son of Eleanor Gwynn, and the Duke of Richmond, son of the Duchess of Portsmouth. Charles blessed them all, but spoke with peculiar tenderness to Richmond. One face which should have been there was wanting. The eldest and best beloved child was an exile and a wanderer.—His name was not once mentioned by his father."

During the night Charles earnestly recommended the Duchess of Portsmouth and her boy to the care of James; 'And do not,' he goodnaturedly added, 'let poor Nelly starve.' The queen sent excuses for her absence by Halifax. She said that she was too much disordered to resume her post by the coach, and implored pardon for any offence which she might unwittingly have given. 'She ask my pardon, poor woman!' cried Charles: 'I ask hers with all my heart.'

The morning light began to peep through the windows of Whitehall; and Charles desired the attendants to pull aside the curtains, that he might have one more look at the day. He remarked that it was time to wind up a clock which stood near his bed. These little circumstances were long remembered, because they proved beyond dispute that, when he declared himself a Roman Catholic, he was in full possession of his faculties.—He apologized to those who had stood around him all night for the trouble which he had caused. He had been, he said, a most unconscionable time dying; but he hoped that they would excuse it. This was the last glimpse of that exquisite urbanity, so often found potent to charm away the resentment of a justly incensed nation. Soon after dawn the speech of the dying man failed. Before ten his senses were gone. Great numbers had repaired to the churches at the hour of morning service. When the prayer of the king was read, loud groans and sobs showed how deeply his people felt for him. At noon on Friday, the sixth of February, he passed away without a struggle."

THE EXAMINER.

CHARLOTTETOWN, JANUARY 29, 1849.

THE LAND ASSESSMENT.

Although the customary notice was given for the payment of the Land Tax to be made by the 19th of December last, yet we believe that all, or nearly all the Proprietors of extensive estates have declined complying with it; because the Government had not the power to proclaim, at the recent sitting of the Supreme Court, the lands in arrears—the Act allowing six months to elapse, after it had received the Royal assent, before proclamation could be made, and that period not having expired up to the close of the last term of the Supreme Court. The Proprietors cannot, in justice, be censured for taking advantage of this circumstance; but we think the Government are liable to censure for not communicating the fact to the public at large—for, in short, telling the small freeholder and the poor tenant, that if their tax was not paid by the 19th December, their lands would be proclaimed. We cannot perceive that there is either sound policy or honesty in taking advantage of the ignorance of the country in this matter. If the Government could not have enforced payment of the tax within the specified time, they should not have demanded it within that time. The tenant or the freeholder with his fifty acres of land, had as much right to keep the amount of the tax in his breeches pocket as the owner of fifty thousand acres; and because he happened to be ignorant of the fact, that his land could not be proclaimed at the January Court, if the tax was not paid, the Government are not excusable in leading him to believe it would.

THE NEW AGRICULTURAL MOVEMENT.

The Meeting of the 18th instant, called together with the view of projecting a new Agricultural Society, developed no incident worthy of particular comment. Many good speeches were delivered—much anxiety was evinced for the advancement of Agricultural Science in this Island, and some lamentation indulged for the inefficiency of the old Agricultural Society, because of the inadequacy of its funds to carry out its views. It is but just, however, to observe, that the projectors of the new movement disclaimed any wish to supersede or

weaken the old Society—their professed object is to give it a better constitution and more money; if it will not take the former, it shall not get the latter. That it stands in need of both, we are not prepared to deny; but why was not reform, if it be necessary, proposed within the pale of the old Society; and if it were rejected, then was the time to organize a new one? With reference to the money part of the business, it must be admitted, that some of the gentlemen who attended the meeting subscribed liberally, but, we regret to add, they thought proper to saddle their subscription with the condition, that the money would not be paid unless the Legislature granted annually a sum equal in amount to the aggregate of their subscriptions. Judging from the disposition heretofore evinced by many members of the House of Assembly, on the subject of making money grants for the encouragement of Agricultural Societies, we are almost inclined to think that the condition will not be fulfilled; although, if the public revenue could, by any means afford it, it would be worth while for the Legislature to make the gentlemen subscribers "keep their word of promise to the ear," by granting the sum required, and thus deprive them of an opportunity for "breaking it to the hope." We certainly think, however, that the promoters of the new movement would have a far stronger claim to sincerity, if they subscribed and paid their money without waiting for the Legislature to back their subscriptions. It is a hopeless way to procure the accomplishment of a good object, to wait for others to assist you in it.

THE CHOLERA.

The following observations respecting the progress and course of the Cholera, are taken from a late No. of Blackwood's Magazine:

"Its visitation in England was remarkable for its mildness, for its limitation to peculiar districts, and for its singularly capricious seizure of individuals. At Newcastle, while it fell heavily on one-third of the town, the other two districts comparatively escaped. In London the seizures were chiefly in the narrow parts of the city, and the suburbs stretching along the river side. The only characteristic of the disease yet distinctly ascertainable is, that it exists with almost unfailing power in the vicinity of great rivers.—Beggary, squalidness, nakedness, and intoxication are all in danger of attack. But damp and discomfort in the neighbourhood of great rivers appear to render its ravages almost inevitable.

"From the North of Germany it divided into two branches, one taking its course to England, and one sweeping to the south—the central provinces of Germany suffered heavily, and Vienna lost a vast number of its poorer population.—From Vienna, again, returning to the North, and crossing the Rhine, it entered France, passed through the provinces with comparatively slight mortality, but fell upon Paris with redoubled venom. The disease then seemed to pause. It suddenly started up in America, transferred none know how. After ravaging the United States, it crossed the Lakes and the St. Lawrence, and spread terror through Canada. From Canada it made its way through the forests, and destroyed a portion of the Indian population, which might have seemed to defy the infections of Europe in their unfathomable solitudes. But the cholera was not to be escaped, and the mortality was deeply felt among the thinned tribes of the vast country stretching in the rear of the United States.—Thence, by a sudden spring, it fell upon Mexico, the Havana, and the Spanish settlements south, finally wandering away into the deserts, until life went out, and disease could slay no more. It then crossed the Atlantic again, and threw Europe into new alarm at a disease which thus seemed to be marked for a perennial scourge of the earth. But its visitation, as it passed along, was now slight, until it reached the confines of Mahometanism. There it swept all before it, as if kindled from some new furnace of wrath—it devastated Egypt by thousands and tens of thousands. From Egypt it ascended to Constantinople. There it rivalled the plague. Multitudes perished. It then partially returned to Russia and Germany. In the Polish War it fearfully increased the miseries of that time of wretchedness and blood. Constantine, the Archduke, closed his half insane and tyrannical life by it; and Diebitsch, the famous passer of the Balkan, with a large share of the Russian army, were carried to the grave along with him.—Spain, Portugal, and Italy still had escaped, and the world was asking by what means this singular preservation was effected, when the cholera broke out in Lisbon—from Lisbon it passed to Madrid, from Spain to Italy. In Italy it is now raging. The east coast has been seized within these few months, and Greece, the nearest shore, is tremblingly adopting measures of precaution. Bosnia, and the wild country bordering on the north of her kingdom, is already seized, and thousands are perishing day by day. When the science and comforts of civilized countries have been so ineffectual what