

The following petition "to the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty" by the jurymen who tried the indictment of "the Queen on the prosecution of Dr. Griffith against William Strahan, Sir John Dean Paul, and Robert Makin Bates" at the sessions holden at the Central Criminal Court, in the month of October, 1855, has been published:—

"That having read and carefully considered the printed petition of the said Robert Makin Bates to your Majesty, a copy of which is herunto annexed, we firmly believe that, had the contents of such petition been proved at the trial of the said indictment, we should have acquitted the said Robert Makin Bates.

"That it is a subject of extreme regret to your petitioners that the statements set forth in the said petition were wholly withheld from their consideration.

"That notwithstanding such omission, and in order that justice may be done, we humbly pray that the truth of the allegations contained in such petition may be inquired into, and, in the event of their proving correct, that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to accede to the prayer of the said Robert Makin Bates.

"And your petitioners will ever pray.

"STEPHEN GOWAR, Foreman.

"HENRY LOVIN.

"RICHARD MATTHEW HUTCHINSON.

"GEORGE LAWTE.

"JOHN LUCAS.

"JOHN EDMEADES.

"JOHN ODHAMS.

"STEPHEN PRENTICE.

"WILLIAM HOWARD LEWIN.

"CHARLES JORDAN.

"RICHARD HARGRAVE.

"WILLIAM THOMAS LYON."

THE SUSPECTED POISONING CASE at RUGELEY.

Mr. William Palmer, surgeon of Rugeley, who was arrested on Saturday evening last on the coroner's warrant for the wilful murder of Mr. John Parsons Cook, of Lutterworth, by poison, was removed to Stafford gaol on Monday last in a postchaise. The accused, who had been suffering from illness for upwards of a week, was allowed to recline on pillows; and he was in the custody of Chief Constable Hatton and Superintendent Wollaston. A large crowd of persons assembled round his house at Rugeley to see him leave, but, in consequence of the chaise being driven through the back streets, the majority of the crowd was disappointed, although numbers followed the vehicle to the outskirts of the town. On arriving at Stafford the same anxiety was manifested to get a sight of the prisoner, but the chaise was driven rapidly through the place, and on reaching the gaol passed through the large gates into the yard, instead of stopping at the lodge entrance, as usual. The prisoner took but little notice of the spectators, and since his confinement in gaol he has preserved the same determination to abstain almost entirely from food as he did during the lengthened proceedings connected with the inquest.

On Tuesday morning, at an early hour, a solicitor of Birmingham arrived at Rugeley, and demanded admittance into the house of the accused, in virtue of a bill of sale for 10,500*l.* given by the prisoner in the spring of the present year. The request was refused by Mr. Bergen, superintendent of police, who was in charge of the papers and other things in the house, and an entrance was subsequently effected by breaking a pane of glass and opening a window. The whole of the prisoner's stud of racehorses, and other property, are stated to be included in the bill of sale, which is said to have been given for negotiation to an assurance-office.

In consequence of the suspicious deaths of the prisoner's wife and brother, and other persons, the police authorities, in conjunction with the friends of the deceased Mr. Cook, determined to apply for an order to exhume the bodies. Since that determination the churchyard at Rugeley has been strictly watched by police officers every night; and on Wednesday Mr. Hatton went to London for the purpose of obtaining an interview with the Secretary of State, who, upon the representation made to him, issued an order for the exhumation of the body of the prisoner's wife and of his brother, Walter Palmer. Warrants have been since issued by the coroner for the disinterment of the bodies—the former having been interred about two years, and the latter nearly six months—and the remains of the stomach and intestines will be subjected to chymical analysis, for the purpose of ascertaining, if possible, whether death was caused by poison. The prisoner is said to have received the sum of 13,000*l.* from an assurance-office on the proof of his wife's death; and a similar insurance was effected on his brother's life, the policy, before his death, having been transferred to the prisoner in lieu of an alleged debt of 400*l.*

In compliance with the request of the Secretary of State, the bodies of Ann Palmer, wife of the prisoner, who was buried in September, 1854, and of Walter Palmer, his brother, who was buried in the same family vault in August last, were exhumed yesterday morning under the superintendence of Chief Superintendent Bergen, and were conveyed from the churchyard to the Talbot Inn, adjoining. At 1 o'clock a jury of 23 persons, principally tradesmen of Rugeley, was empanelled to investigate the case, Mr. W. Fowke acting as foreman. The body of Walter Palmer was encoased in a strong leaden coffin, but that of Mrs. Palmer, in an oak coffin only.

After being sworn, the jury proceeded to view the bodies, which were much decomposed, but the features of both were recognizable to a great extent.

Evidence was afterwards taken before the coroner as to the identity of the bodies—a young man named Woollams identifying that of Walter Palmer, and a woman named Rowley that of Ann Palmer.

The *post mortem* examination was made by Dr. Monokton, assisted by one or two medical assistants, and the contents of the stomach and intestines were subsequently sent to Dr. Taylor, of Guy's Hospital, for analyzation.

The inquiry was then adjourned.

The KING of SARDINIA and the DISSENTERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Congregational Library, Blomfield-street, Dec. 20.

The Rev. J. Kennedy, Secretary of the general body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers, takes the liberty of forwarding to the Editor of *The Times* a copy of an address to the King of Sardinia, and of the reply of his Excellency, the Sardinian Ambassador. The address was agreed to on the day preceding His Majesty's visit to the city, but it was found too late to make arrangements for presenting it to him in person.

"ADDRESS OF THE PROTESTANT DISSENTING MINISTERS TO THE KING OF SARDINIA.

"To His Majesty Victor Emmanuel II., King of Sardinia.

"May it please your Majesty,—The general body of Protestant Dissenting Ministers of the three denominations (Presbyterian, Independent, and Baptist), residing in and around the cities of London and Westminster, a body from its earliest origin identified with the maintenance and progress of religious liberty, and enjoying the privilege of admission to the presence of the successive Sovereigns of these realms, hail the visit of your Majesty to this metropolis as the honoured guest and ally of our Sovereign, Her Majesty Queen Victoria, and regard it as an assurance of continued amity and the free intercourse of the people of both nations in promoting commerce, liberty, and the best interests of society.

"We have been warmly interested in the recent history of the kingdom over which your Majesty has been called to reign. To Italy, her kingdoms and republics, has the civilized world looked as the early homes of learning, refinement, and liberty. But Sardinia, under your Majesty's reign, has alone generously responded to the expectations and necessities of the times. Her people and their rulers have with a calm moderation sought her prosperity. The establishment and administration of constitutional government, the recognition of the independence of the churches of the Waldenses, and of the freedom of conscience and worship of all your subjects; the emancipation of your people from the wide-spread influence of monastic establishments and the maintenance of civil government unrestricted by ecclesiastical domination, have been regarded by the members of this body as auguries of the highest good for all Italy and Europe; and they would thus express their admiration and gratitude for the noble and persevering adherence to the principles of liberty evinced by your Majesty.

"We have not been unmoved by the severe afflictions which, under the providence of a gracious God, your Majesty has been called to endure, and our prayer is that prolonged life may be granted to your Majesty for the welfare of your people and the prosperity of your kingdom; that your Majesty's reign may be prosperous, and that your heart may be cheered by the purest consolations of true religion as revealed in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Signed by order and on behalf of the general body, this 3d day of December, 1855.

"J. HOWARD HINTON, M.A., Chairman.

"JOHN KENNEDY, M.A., Secretary."

REPLY FROM THE SARDINIAN AMBASSADOR.

"Londres, le 17 December, 23, Park-lane.

"Monsieur le Président.—En accordant le Statut à nos Etats le Roi Charles Albert a voulu établir une parité parfaite et l'émancipation civile de toutes les croyances religieuses.

"Son successeur a dignement suivi son exemple. Je crois, donc, me rendre l'interprète des sentimens du Roi en vous remerciant des félicitations et des souhaits que vous lui adressez à l'occasion de sa venue en Angleterre, et je suis persuadé que c'est avec beaucoup de satisfaction que Sa Majesté a vu cette ligne d'impartiale tolérance qu'il s'est proposée depuis le commencement de son règne aussi complètement approuvée par l'opinion publique de ce pays-ci.

Veuillez agréer, Monsieur le Président, l'expression de ma haute considération.

"Le Ministre de Sardaigne,

"Marquis D'AZEGLIO.

"Monsieur le Président de la Corporation Générale des Ministres Protestans Dissidens."

(Translation)

"TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GENERAL BODY OF DISSENTING MINISTERS, &c.

"Mr. Chairman,—In granting to his States Constitutional Government, King Charles Albert intended to establish the perfect equality and the civil emancipation of all religious professions.

"His successor has worthily followed his example. I am satisfied, consequently, that I convey to you the sentiments of the King in thanking you for the congratulations and good wishes which you have addressed to him on the occasion of his visit to England; and I am confident that it is with great satisfaction that His Majesty has seen the course of impartial toleration which, from the commencement of his reign, he has proposed to himself, so perfectly approved by the public opinion of this country.

"Be pleased to accept, Mr. Chairman, the assurance of my high consideration,

"Marquis D'AZEGLIO, the Minister of Sardinia."

ERRATUM.—The final dividend of the Stourbridge Bank is fixed for the 13th of February, and not the 13th of September, as stated yesterday.