

New Dominion Monthly.

SEPTEMBER, 1875.

THE TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF CHARLES I.

FROM A CONTEMPORANEOUS REPORT.

BY JOHN READE.

Through the kindness of a literary friend, I obtained, some time ago, the loan of an old and curious book, of which the following is the somewhat lengthy title:—

“England’s Black Tribunall, set forth in the Triall of K. Charles I. at the Pretended Court of Justice at Westminster Hall, Jan. 22. Together with his Majesties speech, immediately before he was murdered on a scaffold erected at Whitehall Gate, Tuesday, Jan. 30, 1848. Also the Dying Speeches of the Nobility and Gentry, as were inhumanly put to Death for their Loyalty to their Sovereign Lord the King, from 1642 to 1658. London. Printed for J. Playford, 1660.”

As this book is entitled to consideration for more reasons than its age, and as it is undoubtedly rare, a brief account of it may not be without interest to the readers of THE NEW DOMINION MONTHLY. The date of its appearance, the year of the Restoration, suggests at once that Mr. J. Playford was a wise man in his generation, and, no doubt, his book had

many eager purchasers. It is divided into two parts, the first of which has to do with the trial and execution of the King; the second part, containing the “Dying Speeches of the Nobility and Gentry,” bears marks of being an after-thought, as, though it is paged in succession to the first part, its title is somewhat different (apart, of course, from the absence of the King’s name), and the publisher’s name is omitted. Between these two parts occurs an “Elegie on the Sufferings and Death of K. Charles I.,” which is as bad poetry as could be desired, but is valuable as containing a reference to the *Eikon Basilike*, which, after all, may not have been fabricated by naughty Bishop Gawden. This, however, is probably past finding out.

The “Black Tribunall” has doubtless been ransacked by the dry-as-dust tribe, but although we recollect having seen it quoted from more than once, we have not at hand the means of ascertaining by what writers of English history it has been made use of. The account of the King’s trial and execution is substantially