

Gay and exciting as was the state of things outside, the scene within the walls of Parliament was, of course, of a more calm and dignified character, but at the same time one of extreme splendour. In the House of Lords, all the seats, with the exception of the front row, reserved for Peers, and that portion of the house where the Right Rev. Prelates usually sit, but now appropriated for the accommodation of the Diplomatic Corps, were occupied exclusively by ladies, among whom were several Peeresses, as were also the galleries which run along each side of the house, whilst the "strangers' gallery," at the extreme end fronting the throne, was set apart for the reception both of ladies and gentlemen having the proper tickets of admission issued by the Lord Chamberlain. The eldest sons of Peers had places assigned them below the bar, on each side of the space reserved for the Speaker and Members of the House of Commons.

About twelve o'clock, the usual prayers were read by the Bishop of Hereford, the junior Bishop in the House. At this time there were but few Peers present, the great proportion of the vast and magnificent arena of the House of Lords being occupied by the fairer sex. The number of Peers soon considerably increased, and clothed in their state robes of scarlet and ermine, they occupied the first bench on either side of the house. Among those present we observed the Duke of Cambridge, the Lord Chancellor, the Marquis of Lansdowne, the Marquis of Clanricarde, the Earl of Minto, the Earl of Auckland, Earl Granville, the Duke of Wellington, who previous to robing entered the house in a military uniform, with a short blue cloak dropping from his shoulders, the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Earl of Hardwicke, the Earl of Lovelace, the Earl of Cardigan, the Earl of Harrowby, the Earl of Mountcashell, Lord Beaumont, Lord Monteagle, the Bishop of Hereford, and the Bishop of Manchester. In all upwards of two dozen Peers assembled, and occupied in pretty equal proportions each side of the House. The only one of the Judges present was Chief Justice Wilde, who, clothed in his Ceremonial Robes, sat on the Woolsack immediately facing the Throne. The Members of the Diplomatic Corps generally appeared in some uniform or official attire. Among them were Baron Brunow, the Chevalier Bunsen, M. de Beaumont, Count Kielmansegge, M. Van de Weyer, Count Reventlow, Baron Rehausen, Count Ludolf, Count Andrian, Baron Koller, and many others. Between the Diplomatic Tribune and the Foot of the Throne, stood the Princes of Joinville and Nemours, and the Prince of Hesse.

Past and passing events imparted a peculiar interest to the ceremony. Since the commencement of the present year, occurrences of the most momentous importance have taken place on the Continent of Europe. There a dynasty and a throne have been entirely swept away, and violent and bloody convulsions have marked the career of many of the continental nations. An epoch so brief has been fearfully fertile in tremendous vicissitudes, and therefore it must be a subject of just congratulation and pride to all who live under the mild sway of the British Monarchy, that one Sovereign, at least, ruling over a free people, and removed from the din of governments overthrown and the crash of empires, is enabled to go down peaceably, unless when the loyal acclamations of the people greet her course, to the grand council of the nation, and in the presence of Her Parliament, and of the representatives of nearly all the nations of the world, emphatically declare, with an accuracy that cannot be contested, that "the strength of our institutions has been tried, and has not been found wanting."

Shortly after one o'clock, the Lord Chancellor having received an intimation of Her Majesty's approach, retired, together with the Marquis of Lansdowne and the Duke of Wellington, to one of the ante-rooms, in order to be in readiness to receive the Queen, and at a quarter past one o'clock the sound of cannon and the flourish of trumpets announced Her Majesty's arrival at the House. In five minutes afterwards Her Majesty and Prince Albert, accompanied by all the customary Officers and forms of State, entered the House, and ascended the Throne. On Her left stood Prince Albert and the Duke of Wellington, the latter bearing the Sword of State; and on Her right the Earl of Shaftesbury with the Cap of Maintenance, the Lord Chancellor with the Purse and Seals, and the Marquis of Lansdowne with the Crown on a crimson velvet cushion, the Prince of Wales's chair, on the right of the Throne, remaining unoccupied. At the moment of Her Majesty's entrance the whole assembly, composed of Peers in their robes of state, the Diplomatic Corps with their various and glittering costumes, the great functionaries of State, the Military Officers in attendance, among whom the Officers of the Life Guards were discernible by their superb uniform, and last, but undoubtedly not least, the fairer occupants of the seats on the floor of the House and in the galleries, amounting in number to some hundreds, and exhibiting in their features and varied attire a rare and most harmonious combination of beauty, elegance and taste, stood up, and the spectacle thus afforded, conjoined with the splendour of this gorgeously decorated hall, with the magnificence of the Throne, the rich colours of the stained windows, and the brightness of the gilded and frescoed walls, formed a scene of grandeur and fascination not to be surpassed.

Her Majesty having signified Her desire that the Lords should be seated, they, together with the rest of the assembly, resumed their seats, and Sir A. Clifford, the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, was directed to require the attendance of the Members of the House of Commons. In a short time, the Speaker of the House of Commons, accompanied by several Members, appeared at the bar of the House of Lords; and

The SPEAKER addressed Her Majesty in the following Speech:—

"Most Gracious Sovereign,

"We, Your Majesty's faithful Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, attend Your Majesty, after a protracted and laborious Session, with our last Bills of Supply.

"After a most patient and careful examination of the estimates, which by Your Majesty's commands were laid before us, we have made every practicable reduction in the public expenditure. At the same time that we have had regard to the financial state and prospects of this country as affected by the commercial embarrassments of the past year, and by the interruption of trade consequent upon the late political events in Europe, we have taken every precaution to secure the efficiency of all departments of the public service.

"In obedience to Your Majesty's most gracious recommendation, which was communicated to us by the Lords Commissioners at the commencement of the Session, our attention has been specially directed to measures relating to the public health. It is impossible to overrate the importance of a subject so deeply affecting the comfort and happiness of the poorer classes; and we confidently hope that if the Bills which have been passed are carried out in the same spirit in which they have been framed, they will greatly tend to lessen the amount of human suffering, and to promote the moral improvement as well as the contentment of the labouring population in dense and populous districts.

"Not unmindful of the condition of Ireland, or of the distressed state of its poor, owing to the limited demand for labour, we have provided additional funds, arising from the repayment of previous loans, to be expended on public works; and we have removed the impediments to the sale of encumbered estates in order to encourage, as much as possible, the application of capital to the improvement of land.

"The spirit of insubordination which has prevailed in various parts of the country, especially in Ireland, has forced upon our consideration topics of a far more grave and anxious character. We have cordially concurred in those measures which have been thought necessary to secure obedience to the laws and to repress and prevent outrage and rebellion.

"Deeply sensible of the value of those institutions under which we have the happiness to live, no effort on our part has been wanting to preserve them from the evil designs of misguided men, who taking advantage of a season of temporary distress, have endeavoured to excite discontent and insurrection.

"We have witnessed with gratitude and proud satisfaction the unequivocal expression, on the part of the great mass of the people of these realms, of attachment to their Sovereign and respect for the law; and we, as their representatives, participating to the fullest extent in those feelings, now tender to Your Majesty the sincere expression of our devotion and loyalty."

The Right Hon. Gentleman then handed in to the Deputy Clerk of Parliament, for Her Majesty's Royal assent, the Consolidated Fund (Appropriation) Bill and the Exchequer-bills Bill.

The above Bills, together with the Slave Trade (Muscato); the Copper and Lead Duties; the Local Acts; the Fever (Ireland); the City of London Sewers; the Savings Banks (Ireland); the West India Colonies and Mauritius; and the Taxing Masters, Court of Chancery (Ireland) Bills, then received the Royal assent with the usual formalities.

The Lord Chancellor, kneeling, then presented the Queen with a copy of the Royal Speech, which Her Majesty proceeded to deliver in a full, clear and melodious tone, rendering Her words perfectly audible in the farthest part of the large area, where so many practised orators have already failed of success in this respect. The following is a copy of the Royal Speech, as delivered by Her Majesty:—

*My Lords and Gentlemen,*

I am happy to be able to release you from the duties of a laborious and protracted Session.

The Act for the Prevention of Crime and Outrage in Ireland, which received my assent at the commencement of the Session, was attended by the most beneficial effects. The open display of arms intended for criminal purposes was checked, the course of justice was no longer interrupted, and several atrocious murderers who had spread terror through the country, were apprehended, tried and convicted.

The distress in Ireland, consequent upon successive failures in the production of food, has been mitigated by the application of the Law for the relief of the poor, and by the amount of charitable contribution raised in other parts of the United Kingdom.

On the other hand, organized confederacies took advantage of the existing pressure, to excite my suffering subjects to rebellion. Hopes of plunder and confiscation were held out to tempt the distressed; while the most visionary prospects were exhibited to the ambitious. In this conjuncture I applied to your loyalty and wisdom for increased powers; and strengthened by your prompt concurrence my Government was enabled to defeat, in a few days, machinations which had been prepared during many months. The energy and decision shown by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in this emergency, deserve my warmest approbation.

In the midst of these difficulties you have continued your labours for the improvement of the Laws. The Act for facilitating the Sale of Incumbered Estates, will, I trust, gradually remove an evil of great magnitude in the social state of Ireland.