

EUROPE.

ENGLAND.

CALAMITOUS FIRE—ARSON AND MURDER.

On Monday morning, about six o'clock, a fire broke out in the lower part of the house of Mr. Smithers, tobacconist, 398, Oxford-street, which was attended with loss of life, and has been otherwise of a most calamitous nature. It appears that a neighbour discovered a quantity of smoke and flame issuing from the lower part of the premises, and on proceeding to the spot, observed Mr. Smithers endeavouring to make his escape by the front area, at the same time calling out "fire." He in vain endeavoured to reach the street, and all the efforts of the persons on the spot to force the railing up proving fruitless, Mr. Smithers ran up the kitchen stairs, which were at that time in flames, through the shop into the street. He was very much burned in the face and hands, and was ultimately conveyed to the Middlesex Hospital. In a very short time the flames reached an alarming ascendancy, and before the inmates could be aroused to a sense of their danger, the house was filled with smoke and flames. The whole landing was on fire. At almost every window was to be seen some individual imploring aid with uplifted hands where it was impossible for the slightest assistance to be afforded them. The servant girl was about to throw herself out of the third floor window, but was impeded not to do so from so great a height, but to endeavour to reach the second floor. The poor girl, after making the best of her way through the dense smoke, reached the window on the second floor. Several men underneath ranged themselves to catch her in her descent. It was a few minutes before she had the courage to throw herself out, but finding the flames approaching her, she did so, and alighted on the shoulders of a man. The force of her fall knocked him down and seriously injured him; the young woman was also much hurt. The second floor was occupied by an elderly lady named Twamley, her two daughters, Elizabeth and Caroline, and a niece and an orphan boy about eleven years of age, nephew to the Mrs. Twamley. When this family became sensible of their danger, all hopes of escaping by the landing was impossible, and they ran from window to window in a state of mind bordering on distraction. Miss Elizabeth Twamley held the boy in her arms, and appeared more alarmed for his safety than her own. Not knowing what course to pursue, she lingered at the window until the flames reached them, and what clothes they had on had caught fire. The poor little fellow caught hold of the window and threw himself out, but before Miss Elizabeth, his aunt, could do so, the smoke appeared to have suffocated her, and she sunk immediately under the window a prey to the flames. The boy fell on his head, and was carried to the Hospital in a bleeding and apparently lifeless state. The elder Mrs. Twamley, her daughter Caroline, the niece, and Mrs. Smithers, after they had left the windows, found their way to the back of the premises, and from thence to the leads of some houses in Dean-street. The old lady was ultimately conveyed to a friend's in Pulteney-street, without any hopes of her recovery. The remaining inmates succeeded in effecting their escape. A number of engines were speedily on the spot, and the unceasing exertions of the firemen prevented the flames extending beyond Mr. Smithers premises, which were entirely consumed, and every article of furniture and stock in trade destroyed. After the fire had been extinguished, and the ruins somewhat cooled, the firemen went over the premises. They found the remains of Miss Twamley immediately under the window where she was seen to sink down, with some rafters on the body. The spectacle was most frightful; the arms and feet were burned entirely off, and her intestines protruded. Her remains were wrapped in sacks, and conveyed to the workhouse by the firemen.

On Tuesday a Coroner's inquest was held on the body of Miss Twamley, at the Golden Lion, Dean-street. Sarah Smith, one of whose arms was in a sling, and who appeared otherwise much injured, deposed that she was servant to Mr. Smithers. On Sunday evening the fire under her care were properly extinguished before she went to bed. There was no fire in the lower part of the house after seven o'clock on Sunday night, except the gas, which it was usual to keep alight all night. Witness went to bed about twelve o'clock, and did not awake until six in the morning, when she heard the deceased sister call out "fire." There was a great smoke, which smelt like wood smoke. Here the deceased described her leaping from the window, and being caught by the crowd, as detailed above. Henry Caddell, of 36 Oxford-street, described the breaking out of the fire—the situation of Mr. Smithers in the area, and the attempts of witness and others to enter the house for the purpose of saving the lives of its inmates. The flames ascended to the inside of the house like wildfire, and the whole was down by half past seven o'clock. The Bandle in attendance upon the inquest here said that Mr. Smithers was extremely ill in the hospital, and the medical attendants expressed a doubt of his ultimate recovery. Mrs. Smithers was here conducted into the room, and was for some time labouring under the most extreme agitation. As soon as she could speak, she said she knew nothing of the cause of the fire, except that she understood it originated in the kitchen. On Monday morning, very early, her husband was taken very ill, and went down stairs,

saying he should make some gruel. Witness smelt fire some time after, and escaped in her night dress by a back window. Witness lost a great deal of money and all her clothes. Did not know whether Mr. Smithers was insured or not. —Mr. George Giles, baker, of No. 23, Great Chapel-street, (one of the Jury,) deposed, that about a fortnight ago, Mr. Smithers called upon him, and asked if he could supply him with, or procure for him, two or three sacks of shavings. He afterwards desired a dealer in shavings to call upon Mr. Smithers and take his orders. Mr. Smithers last Sunday morning, called upon witness and borrowed an empty sack of him. —The inquest was adjourned.

At an early hour on Wednesday morning the firemen began to clear away the rubbish. At the inquest it was stated that two sacks of shavings were deposited in the vaulted cellar, and from the evidence of the servant, Sarah Smith, they were seen there by her late as five o'clock on Sunday afternoon. Now from the discovery made on Wednesday morning, it appears that the remainder of one of the sack and a few of the shavings, partly burnt, were found between the copper and the stair-case; but this is not all. In the vault which is apart from the kitchen, where the fire appeared to have first originated, there are evident marks of another fire, which had spent itself at the further end, where there is at least a chaldron of coals confined by a number of boards. The fire appears here to have been regularly laid and lighted, as there is a quantity of wood, which is burnt to charcoal, and at another place there is a small quantity of shavings and a layer of gunpowder, then a few shavings and some more gunpowder; near to which were a great quantity of wood, a number of old boxes, and by the side a quart bottle turned upside down, which had recently contained turpentine. About seven o'clock on Tuesday morning the mother of Miss Twamley was conveyed to the public house at the corner of Dean-street, having been carried down stairs and across the leads at the back of the house, without clothes, by her daughter. She was removed to 24, Great Pulteney-street, where, in about two hours, she died.

It was desired by the magistrates that Smithers should be conveyed to Marlborough-street office; but as he is lying in such a dreadful state, the surgeon did not think it right to allow of his removal, and sent a certificate to the Magistrates to that effect. An order was immediately given that no person should speak to him—not even his wife. Mrs. Smithers was at the ruins early in the morning, when her pocket, which she said had contained money, was found, but only some silver and copper were discovered. The premises, stock, &c., were insured in the British Fire office for £730, and £70 for some furniture belonging to one of the lodgers.

On Tuesday a Jury assembled at the Sun and 13 Cantons, Great Pulteney-street, Golden-square, to hold an inquest on the body of Mrs. Ann Twamley Twamley, on which occasion some exceedingly important evidence was adduced. A surgeon deposed that deceased had been long afflicted with chronic asthma, and in his opinion the fright, in her weak state, had caused her death. Two witnesses saw the deceased and her daughter fall from the coping stone of the second floor on some leads beneath—a depth of about ten feet—the daughter held her mother in her arms.

Henry R. Abraham, surveyor, was examined, and his evidence left no doubt in the minds of all present of the origin of the fire. The witness had a plan of the premises in their present state, and while giving evidence, pointed out to the Jury the particular situation of the place. His evidence was as follows:—Yesterday afternoon, at the request of several of the neighbours, I examined the premises of Mr. Smithers. I discovered in a back vault adjoining the kitchen a small quantity of gunpowder in a card, which was doubled up, to form a sort of trough or channel. The end of the card had been on fire, and a continuation of powder, in small portions was observable from the card until it reached the end of the shelf upon which the card was deposited. At the extremity of the shelf there was about half a hat-full of shavings conically arranged, under which was placed a piece of oiled or greased paper, on which gunpowder had been deposited and had exploded. The shavings had been only partially ignited, and it is my opinion that the blast of the gunpowder had extinguished the fire shortly after the shavings had become ignited. About 2 feet 6 inches from the shavings was a deal board on which a fire had been laid, and a communication from thence had been formed to a coal bin, which I should think contained about half a chaldron of coals. There was also a continuation of deal boards placed in a slaughtering direction along the west wall of the cellar, which divided the cellar and kitchen. This line was extended to a wooden partition, dividing the vault which remained unseared by the fire. A quantity of lumber, such as old baskets, boxes, &c., formed part of the line of communication. The vault is thirty feet long, and has a brick arch. I should say that the fire originated in, or close upon, the water-closet, or perhaps more immediately under the kitchen stairs. It was almost the only place ignited by the incendiary. In my opinion it is a most difficult thing to set a house on fire. Had the coals ignited, the fire would have been cut short for the want of air. There was about a quarter of an ounce of gunpowder not ignited. It is my firm opinion that the house was set on fire by some one. The following verdict was recorded:—"That the deceased being very aged, and in the last stage of chronic asthma, her death was

caused by fright in escaping from the late fire in Oxford-street."

Mrs. Twamley was in her 70th year; Miss Elizabeth Twamley, her daughter, was, we understand, one of the dancers at Covent-garden Theatre. She took a benefit there about five years ago. Her sister, Miss Caroline, remains dangerously ill; but her niece, Miss Thomasin, is fast recovering from the injuries she received. The poor boy at the Hospital is considered in a hopeless condition.

On Friday the Jury proceeded with the investigation of the death of Miss Elizabeth Twamley. The house surgeon of the Middlesex Hospital, deposed that Mr. Smithers was admitted into that establishment on Monday morning, in consequence of his having been burnt on the hands and face. The burns on the hands were of the ordinary nature, but those on the face were of a light blue colour. The eyebrows and eyelashes were burnt off. Witness could positively state that gunpowder was the cause of these burns. Mr. Hawkeworth, a plumber, deposed to the suspicious situation of the shavings in the kitchen, and to his finding a large quantity of salt-petre there. The fire had decidedly not originated in the grate—it was doubtful if there had been a fire there at all on the day in question. Mr. Davis, one of the lodgers in Mr. Smithers's house stated, that on the evening previous to the fire, he was let in by Mr. Smithers himself—an unusual occurrence. He asked Mr. Smithers for a candle to go down stairs to the closet. Mr. Smithers followed him down and desired him to be careful, as there were wood and shavings there. Mr. Smithers then made some uncalculated observations on the condition of the place, and stood waiting till witness came out of the closet, saying that he wanted to go there himself, but immediately on witness leaving the closet, Mr. Smithers followed him up stairs. Witness escaped from the fire on the following morning, by getting on the leads, and from thence descending a ladder into an adjoining yard. Mrs. Smithers was there, and on her husband appearing, she said to him—"You rascal, you have set fire to the house—you have not been in bed all night." He replied, "Hold your foolish tongue; don't you see how I am burnt." Richard Woolton deposed that he saw Mr. Smithers in the area on the morning of the fire; heard him call for help, and pushed open the street door—it was so slightly fastened that it easily gave way. Witness proceeded to the head of the stairs and looked down.

"I have not the least doubt that when he first called to me he could have made his escape with perfect safety up the kitchen stairs; it was, so as I before stated, a light fire, and would not have injured him. If the females, when they first made their appearance at the windows, had come down stairs when I called to them, they would also have escaped; the door however had been open only a few minutes before the flames rapidly ascended. It was my opinion at the time of the fire that it had been wilfully done. I considered it my duty to make known what I saw, and for that purpose I went to Marlborough-street police-office." E. T. Valentine deposed to finding a quantity of gunpowder in the vault, laid out in a train. Sarah Smith, the servant girl, stated some additional suspicious circumstances against her master. The coroner observed, that he had very little to say upon the subject. If they were of opinion that the house had been wilfully set on fire, then there would be a clear case of murder against the party.

The Jury having expressed a wish to be alone, all strangers were ordered to leave the room. After an hour's deliberation, they returned the following verdict:—"Murder, by wilfully setting his house on fire." The Coroner issued his warrant against Mr. Smithers, and all the witnesses were bound over to give evidence at his trial.

Yesterday, Mr. Allen, the Vestry Clerk of St. Ann's, Soho, waited upon Mr. Conant, at Marlborough-street, for the purpose of knowing whether he wished to have the witnesses before him who had given evidence on the Coroner's Inquest relative to the deaths of the two females by the fire at Smithers's house, Oxford-street. Mr. Conant said he thought there was no necessity for rehearsing the case, as a very minute inquiry had taken place before the Coroner, who had bound over all the witnesses to appear at the Sessions; at the same time he should wish to know who would prosecute. Mr. Allen replied he was not prepared to answer this question. The parish officers had certainly not made up their minds to come forward, nor would the Fire Office, as no claim had been made on it by Smithers for the insurance. Mr. Conant said that he should strongly recommend the parish to become the prosecutors, for Smithers had not only committed arson, but had been the cause, by that offence, of the deaths of two individuals. At this juncture, Mrs. Smithers, the wife of the accused, entered the office to request to be allowed to visit her husband daily during the time he should remain in the Hospital. Mr. Allen said that as far as he was concerned, he should have no objection to her seeing him daily during his being under the medical attendance of the House Surgeon. The Coroner's warrant for the accused's commitment to Newgate was handed to Mr. Plank, the chief officer, in whose custody he will remain for the present.

LONDON, JUNE 20.

ASSAULT UPON HIS MAJESTY AT ASCOT.—Yesterday was the first day of the Ascot Races, and it will be memorable for a most atrocious assault committed on the person of His Majesty. Just as the first race had concluded and the royal party were standing at the centre window of the Grand Stand, a ruffian, in the garb of a sailor, of most wretched appearance, with a wooden leg, suddenly flung a large flint stone directly at the King; his aim was as accurate as the effect of the blow was severe; the stone struck our venerable Sovereign on the forehead, just above the rim of his hat, which was fortunately on his head at the time. The sound was so loud that the moment the stone reached its destination, it was distinctly heard throughout the room. The King was either stunned, or so much astonished at the moment, as to fall back two or three paces, and exclaimed—"My God! I am hit!" At this instant the same ruffian threw another stone, which struck the wood-work of the window, and fell to the ground. Lord Frederick Fitzclarence was close to his Royal Parent, and taking him by the hand, led him to a chair, inquiring with the utmost agitation if he were injured? The Queen, Lady Errol, and all the other ladies were equally alarmed and horror-struck. Happily His Majesty soon relieved his anxiety, and taking off his hat and placing his hand on the spot where the blow had fallen, declared with a smile that he was unhurt!—Providentially his Majesty's hat preserved him from consequences which might otherwise have been most serious. The first moment of surprise and alarm being over, his Majesty received the affectionate congratulations of the Queen and those by whom he was surrounded, while the Countess of Errol (his daughter) burst into an agony of tears, and (bowed with difficulty) perspired that there was no further danger to be apprehended. While this painful scene was exhibited in the Royal Stand, the attention of the populace was directed to what was going on beneath. The ruffian had scarcely thrown the stone, which was the work of a moment, when he was seized by a gentleman who afterwards proved to be Captain Smith, of the Royal Navy, and by another gentleman named Turner, who had been a witness to the transaction. The Bow-street officers, who were on the spot, rushed to their assistance, and Taunton and Gardiner conducted the now passive prisoner to the Magistrates' room under the Stand, contiguous to that of the King, where he was retained in proper custody till the subsequent examination.

The intelligence of the painful occurrence spread in all directions, and a dense crowd was soon collected in front of the Royal Stand, anxiously inquiring into the state of the King, and asking information respecting the outrage which had been committed. In the midst of this confusion, and in little more than three minutes after the occurrence, the King rose from his chair and presented himself at the window. The moment it was seen his Majesty was unhurt, a simultaneous shout of joy burst from all quarters, which was repeated when the Queen and Lord Frederick Fitzclarence also presented themselves at the window. Three distinct cheers were then given with such enthusiasm that the feeling of the populace could not be mistaken; there was a heartiness and sincerity in their expression which left no doubt of the horror and indignation with which they viewed the dastardly attack which had been made, although they were as yet but imperfectly acquainted with its nature or extent. Similar sentiments pervaded all classes, and repeatedly, during the remainder of the day, the like demonstrations of loyalty and attachment to the King's person were manifested whenever he exhibited himself at the window. On the first burst of these national and loyal sensations, the King was deeply affected, and could scarcely refrain from shedding tears, while most of the female group by whom he was surrounded could not suppress that participation in the joy of his subjects.

[The prisoner proved to be a man calling himself Dennis Collins, and said he had long been in his Majesty's service, as a seaman in the Navy. He had been admitted a pensioner at Greenwich Hospital, but for a misdemeanor was discharged. He subsequently petitioned the Admiralty and His Majesty for his pension, and in both cases was unsuccessful. After examination he was committed to Reading Goal, and was to undergo a second examination.]

The Magistrates did not seem to have agreed upon the character of the crime of the prisoner; but the general impression was that it amounted to High Treason. There is no doubt, from the spirit which the prisoner displayed, and the hostility which he expressed, that had he been able to procure a more deadly weapon than the stone which he used, he would have had no hesitation in using it towards the Royal Person. That he had not the means, and that his abominable intentions were not more seriously carried into effect, must be a source of congratulation throughout the country.—*Morning Chronicle.*

In the House of Lords, on Wednesday night Earl Grey proposed that an humble address be presented to his Majesty from both houses of Parliament, expressive of their sense of horror at the sagacious attack which had been made on his Majesty, and to congratulate his Majesty on having suffered no serious personal injury. The motion was unanimously agreed to.

Attack on the Duke of Wellington.—As the Duke of Wellington was riding along the Mile End Road on Monday the 18th inst. just as he arrived at the Bow Church, he was recognised by the foot passengers, and he was immediately assailed with groans and hisses, to which, however, his Grace paid very little attention, but continued moving along at a slow pace. As he passed along Cheapside his pursuers increased in number, and he was pelted with mud. The affair in a short time assumed such a serious aspect that it was deemed advisable by some persons to send to Bow-street for the assistance of the New Police, and as on Monday mornings there are generally a number of them in attendance to support their charges, they were immediately sent off to his Grace's assistance, and the business of the office was suspended. His Grace then proceeded to the Chambers of Sir C. Wetherell, in Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, followed by the mob. He alighted at Sir Charles's Chambers, and remained there for some time, during which period a body of two hundred of the New Police arrived, accompanied by Mr. Thomas, the Superintendent. After leaving Sir Charles Wetherell's, the horse on which his Grace was riding was surrounded by the Police, and a number of men, who said they had fought with the Duke at Waterloo, and would die in his defence. At the south entrance of Carey-st. the police, after letting the Duke pass, made an attempt to block up the entrance of the street, and prevent the mob from following, but they succeeded in heading the Duke again, by running through the other streets, and one man actually laid hands upon his Grace, with the intention of pulling him off his horse, but he was immediately taken away by the police. His Grace was then escorted by Mr. Thomas and the police under his direction, as far as St. James's street, when they were joined by a large number of the police who escorted the Duke to Apsley House.—*Courier.*

From the Glasgow Free Press, July 4.

LONDON, Sun. Even., half-past 7.

Yesterday evening it was very confidently stated on Change that Don Pedro had effected a landing in Portugal. The intelligence was said to have been brought by a telegraphic des-

patch, and the report created the liveliest anxiety among the Portuguese refugees, especially those who look forward with confidence to Don Pedro's success, and to return to their long oppressed and long suffering native country. We have not to-day heard any thing further, but to-morrow we expect a confirmation of the news. The merchants and others connected with Portugal, give full credit to the report, and the delay in the arrival of the Lisbon steam boat, goes certainly to corroborate its correctness. It is said that Don Pedro landed immediately below Lisbon, and without meeting with any thing beyond a show of opposition from the forts. So generally was the report credited on Change, that immediately the demand increased for the new Regency scrip, and also for Portuguese bonds, each advancing 1 to one per cent. before the close of the market. I am inclined to credit the intelligence, and cannot doubt that the measures taken by our Government to secure the neutrality of Spain, will give a speedy triumph to the constitutional party. Connected with the events in Portugal, we have to notice that the indefatigable and intrepid Spanish Chief of Misa is hovering on the Spanish frontier, ready to take advantage of the first movement of a popular nature that may occur. A change of affairs in Portugal must unquestionably lead to a change throughout the whole of the Peninsula. Of this the Spanish Government is well aware; and it is possible, therefore, that the rumours circulated a few days ago, of orders having been given to the Consul in Spain, for the reception of ten sail of the line from Russia, have been founded in fact. The Cabinet of Russia has often shown great uneasiness at the prospect of freedom gaining a footing in the Peninsula, and I consider it as a very likely case, that Russia will make an early demonstration in favour of Ferdinand, in the hope of preserving to despotism its present ascendancy in Spain. Russia knows that the Peninsula once free, all hopes of the Continental powers acting with success against France, would be entirely at an end; and besides, in such a case, the liberation of the whole of Italy would not long continue problematical. Much, very much, undoubtedly depends on the success of the liberal party in Portugal.

We have additional rumours relative to Holland, but little that can be relied upon as authentic. All accounts concur in stating that the Dutch King has refused his adherence to the terms prescribed in the last Protocol, and that he is resolved to resist the force of the allies in carrying the Protocols into effect; that is, should such resistance on his part be necessary. We are now told on the one hand, that the evacuation of the citadel of Antwerp is yet to be delayed; and on the other it is said that it is proposed to give up the citadel to the English, and Venloo to the Prussians, till affairs are settled. I doubt this last item of intelligence, and incline to my former opinion, that the King of Holland acts upon a good understanding with more than one of the Continental Powers—with Russia especially. I have seen nothing to induce me to change my sentiments of this Protocol business, and conceive that every thing is rapidly approaching to that war which seemed at the first as the most likely termination which the affair would end in.

From France we have important news, for which I refer you to the Standard's Express of last evening. On all hands it seems apparent that the citizen King will have a short reign.

In consequence of the arrival yesterday of Baron de Tinn with important despatches from France, the whole of the corps diplomatique assembled at the Foreign office, and held a long conference. Two Couriers also arrived from St. Petersburg. We are yet uninformed of the nature of the intelligence brought.

To-morrow Lord Durham sets out on his mission to Russia. The objects of the noble Lord's journey are said to be the obtaining of terms for Poland, and the prevention of the invasion of France, which it is said is in contemplation.

Many rumours are circulated relative to the dissolution of Parliament. It is said it will sit till August, meet again in November, and be dissolved in February. The General opinion I believe is, that Parliament will continue sitting till November, when the dissolution will most likely take place.

Consols closed yesterday at 85 1/8.

Glasgow, July 4, 1832.

IMPORTANT FROM FRANCE.

At length the point may be said to be reached in France, which besides the fate of Louis Philip's Government! The Court of Cassation, the French Judicial Tribunal of Last Resort, has declared the late system of military law, and the Courts Martial held under it, to be illegal and a violation of the charter; so that Louis Philip has now no resource but to abandon his present system, and allow his ministers, and perhaps himself, to be impeached, or attempt still to rule by the sword alone, and submit to the inevitable consequences.

For this important information we are indebted to the Standard newspaper, which in a second edition dated Standard last, at midnight, and forwarded here to its agent, Mr. Phnu, thus details the recent judicial proceedings in the French Capital?—

Standard Office, Midnight, Saturday.

SPECIAL EXPRESS FROM PARIS.

The state of Siege declared illegal by the Court of Cassation.

We have just received by extraordinary express, the Paris Journals of yesterday, which contain important news. The Court of Cassation has decided in the case of Geoffry, the painter, who appealed from the sentence of the First Council of War, that the whole proceedings are null and void; that the second Council of War, in decreeing their competency to try ordinary cases, have violated Art 53 of the Charter, and the sentence is therefore quashed and Geoffry is remanded to take his trial before the ordinary tribunals.

The strength of the different parties in France is therefore now about to be put to the proof. The Ministers must either follow up the present system, *coute qui coute*, or there will be a total change of administration, and the war or movement party will come into power.

In a few days we may expect important events to take place in France.

From our Parisian Correspondent.

Paris, Friday Night, June 29.

I am aware at the time I write that you cannot possibly receive this letter in time for your first or second Editions of Saturday, but I send it you nevertheless, it is so transcendently important.

The Court of Cassation has decided that the state of Siege is illegal; that the individuals brought before the military tribunals cannot be tried by them, that the accused Geoffry has been illegally tried—and that the Ordinances signed by the Minister of the Interior are, therefore illegal!!!

This is the most important event which has happened for many years—and of other matters and things I shall not say a word. God knows where it will end!

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