

EUROPE.

ENGLAND.

A NIGHT SCENE ON THE NIGAR.

From the *Landers' Travels*—unpublished.

The Literary Gazette of February the 18th, has favoured us with the following interesting extract from the forthcoming work of the two brothers Landers, whose discovery of the estuary of the Niger, has distinguished them among a crowd of intrepid African travellers:—

We made no stop whatever on the river, not even at meal times, our men suffering the canoe to glide down the stream while they were eating their food. At five in the afternoon, they all complained of fatigue, and we might rest awhile, but we could find none; for every village we saw after that hour was unfortunately situated behind large thick morasses and sloughy bogs, through which, after various provoking and tedious trials, we found it impossible to penetrate. We were employed three hours in the afternoon, in endeavouring to find a landing at some village; and though we saw them distinctly enough from the water, we could not find a passage through the morasses, behind which they lay. Therefore we were compelled to relinquish the attempt, and continue our course on the Niger. We passed several beautiful islands in the course of the day, all cultivated and inhabited, but low and flat. The width of the river seemed to vary considerably, sometimes it seemed to be two or three miles across, and at others double that width. The current drifted us along very rapidly, and we guessed it to be running at the rate of three or four miles an hour. The direction of the stream continued nearly east. The day had been excessively warm, and the sun set in beauty and grandeur, shooting forth rays tinged with the most heavenly hues, which extended to the zenith. Nevertheless, the appearance of the firmament all glorious as it was, betokened a coming storm; the wind whistled through the tall rushes, and darkness soon covered the earth like a veil. This rendered us more anxious than ever to land somewhere, we cared not where, and to endeavour to procure shelter for the night, if not in a village, at least under a tree. Accordingly, rallying the drooping spirits of our men, we encouraged them to renew their exertions by setting them the example, and our canoe darted silently and swiftly down the current. We were enabled to steer her rightly by the vividness of the lightning, which flashed across the water continually, and by this means also we could distinguish any danger before us, and avoid the numerous small islands with which the river is interspersed, and which otherwise might have embarrassed us very seriously. But though we could perceive almost close to us several lamps burning in comfortable looking huts, and could plainly distinguish the voices of their occupants, and though we exerted all our strength to get at them, we were foiled in every attempt, by reason of the sloughs and fens, and we were at last obliged to abandon them in despair. Some of these lights, after leading us a long way, eluded our search, and vanished from our sight like *ignis fatuus*; and others danced about we knew not how. But what was more vexatious than all,—after we had got into an inlet, and toiled and tugged for a full hour against the current, which, in this little channel, was uncommonly rapid, to approach a village from which we thought it flowed, both village and lights seemed to sink into the earth, and the sounds of the people's voices ceased of a sudden, and when we fancied we were actually close to the spot, we strained our eyes in vain to see a single hut,—all was gloomy, dismal, cheerless, and solitary. It seemed the work of enchantment; every thing was as visionary as 'sceptres grasped in sleep.' We had paddled along the banks a distance of not less than thirty miles, every inch of which we had attentively examined, but not a bit of dry land could any where be discovered, which was firm enough to bear our weight. Therefore, we resigned ourselves to circumstances, and all of us having been refreshed with a little cold rice and honey, and water from the stream, we permitted the canoe to drift down with the current, for our men were too much fatigued with the labours of the day to work any longer. But here a fresh evil arose, which we were unprepared to meet. An incredible number of hippopotami arose very near us, and came splashing, snorting and plunging all round the canoe, and placed us in imminent danger. Thinking to frighten them off, we fired a shot or two at them, but the noise only called up from the water, and out of the fens, about as many more of their unwieldy companions, and we were more closely beset than before. Our people who had never in all their lives, been exposed in a canoe to such a huge and formidable beast, trembled with fear and apprehension, and absolutely wept aloud; and their terror was not a little increased by the dreadful peals of thunder which rattled over their heads, and by the awful darkness which prevailed, broken at intervals by flashes of lightning, whose powerful glare was truly awful. Our people tell us, that these formidable animals frequently upset canoes in the river, when every one in them is sure to perish.—These came so close to us, that we could reach them with the butt end of a gun.—When I fired at the first, which I must have hit, every one of them came to the surface of the water, and pursued us so fast over to the north bank, that it was with the greatest difficulty imaginable we could keep before them. Having fired a second time, the report of my gun was followed by a loud roaring noise, and we seemed to increase our distance from them.

There were two Bornou men among our crew, who were not so frightened as the rest, having seen some of these creatures before on Lake Tchad, where they say there are plenty of them. However, the terrible hippopotami did us no kind of mischief whatever; they were only sporting and wallowing in the river, for their own amusement, no doubt, at first, when we interrupted them; but had they upset our canoe, we should have paid dearly for it. We observed a bank on the north side of the river shortly after this, and I proposed halting on it for the night, for I wished much to put my foot on firm land again. This, however, not one of the crew would consent to, saying, that if the *Gevo Roua*, or water elephant, did not kill them, the crocodiles certainly would do so before the morning; and I thought afterwards, that we might have been carried off, like the Cumbre people on the islands Yaorie, if we had tried the experiment. Our canoe was only large enough to hold us all when sitting, so that we had no chance of lying down. Had we been able to muster up thirty thousand cowries at Rabba, we might have purchased one which would have carried us all very comfortably.—A canoe of this sort would have served us for living in entirely; we should have had no occasion to land, excepting to obtain our provisions; and, having performed our day's journey, might have anchored fearlessly at night. Finding we could not induce our people to land, we agreed to continue on all night. The eastern horizon became very dark, and the lightning more and more vivid; indeed, I never recollect having seen such strong forked lightning before in my life. All this denoted the approach of a storm. At eleven p.m. it blew somewhat stronger than a gale, and at midnight the storm was at its height. The wind was so strong, that it washed over the sides of the canoe several times, so that she was in danger of filling. Driven about by the wind, our frail little bark became unmanageable; but, at length, we got near a bank, which, in some measure, protected us, and we were fortunate enough to lay hold of a thorny tree, against which we were driven, and which was grown nearly in the centre of the stream. Presently we fastened the canoe to its branches, and, wrapping our cloaks round our persons, for we felt overpowered with fatigue, and with our legs projecting half over the sides of the little vessel, which, for want of room, we were compelled to do, we lay down to sleep. There is something, I believe, in the nature of the tempest which is favourable to slumber, at least so thought my brother; for though the thunder continued to roar, and the wind to blow, though the rain beat in our faces, and our canoe lay rocking like a cradle,—still he slept soundly. The wind kept blowing hard from the eastward, till midnight, when it became calm. The rain then descended in torrents, accompanied by thunder and lightning of the most awful description. We lay in our canoe, drenched with water, and our little vessel was filling so fast, that two people were obliged to be constantly bailing out the water, to keep her afloat. The water elephants, as the natives term the hippopotami, frequently came snorting near us, but, fortunately, did not touch our canoe.—The storm continued until three in the morning of the 17th, when it became clear, and we saw the stars sparkling like gems over our heads. Therefore, we again proceeded on our journey down the river, there being sufficient light for us to see our way; and, two hours after, we put into a small insignificant fishing village, called *Dacanie*, where we landed very gladly. Before we arrived at this island, we had passed a great many towns and villages; but, in consequence of the early hour at which we were travelling, we considered it would be imprudent to stop at any of them, as none of the natives were out of their huts. Had we landed earlier, even near one of these towns, we might have alarmed the inhabitants, and been taken for a party of robbers; or as they are called in the country *jacallees*. They would have taken up arms against us, and we might have lost our lives; so that, for our safety, we continued down the river, although we had great desire to go on shore. In the course of the day and night, we travelled, according to our estimation, a distance little short of a hundred miles.—Our course was nearly east. The Niger, in many places, and for a considerable way, presented a very magnificent appearance, and, we believe, to be nearly eight miles in width.

From the *Liverpool Mercury* of August 17.

COOK, THE MURDERER OF MR. PAAS.—The trial of this wretched criminal came on at Leicester on Thursday sen'night, upon which day the Court was crowded to excess. During the reading of the indictment the prisoner, who from the first displayed the greatest self-possession, took out a pocket Testament, and appeared to be engaged in reading it.

On being asked the question, "Are you guilty or not guilty?" he responded most audibly, "Guilty."

The Learned Judge, after a short pause, said, "I suppose you are aware of the consequences of that plea?"

He replied, "I am."

Judge—"And you make it deliberately and advisedly?"

Prisoner—"I do."

The prisoner again looked to the book, and the learned Judge, addressing him, said, "Attend to me now, not to the book; you may look at your books hereafter. Do you mean to adhere to the answer you have just given, and are you determined to persevere in it?"

Prisoner—"I am."

The learned judge then placed the black cap on his head, and, in a most impressive

speech, sentenced the prisoner to be hanged on Friday, and that he should be afterwards gibbeted."

The Leicester Herald, speaking of this wretched man a few days previous to his trial, observes "that within the last ten days, the penitence and contrition shown by him is surprising. He says he had the murder in contemplation a week previous to committing it; that, on Mr. Paas coming into his workshop, he shut the door after him, and that he then paid him a small account, but denies that he struck him while writing the receipt; that Mr. Paas soon after took up a book that lay on the press, and, while examining the binding he walked behind him, and immediately struck him on the back of his head, his hat being off at the time, that Mr. Paas immediately put both his hands to his head and staggered towards the door, and, as loud as he was able, called out 'Murder!' that he (Cook) again struck him another severe blow on the top of his head, and finding it not quite sufficient, he dealt out a third, which brought him to the ground—he fell heavily on his side, and rolled over on his back, his arms gave two or three convulsive shakes, and all was still. He then locked the door and left. On returning in the evening, he stumbled over his victim on the floor, which shook his nerves dreadfully, but on commencing to cut up the body, he recovered his usual firmness, and was so little discomposed that he could have gone on with the horrid work much longer than he did, if there had been any necessity for it. He then declared, as a dying man, that he consumed every particle of the body, clothes and all, except what was found."

On Saturday, the 4th instant, hearing the bells ring on the Judges coming into town, he seemed very much agitated, and said it was a melancholy sound to him, but talked of his death with great firmness and composure. He was also visited by his father, who, perhaps, had better have remained away, for, on seeing his unfortunate son, he began to upbraid him, and asked him how he could think of doing such a dreadful deed; that he had brought disgrace on the family, and that he never was before a magistrate in his life, except on this account. This conversation was soon, however put a stop to by the arrival of the chaplain. The old man then left, but did not seem much distressed. In the evening he was again visited by Miss Payne, of Sulby, who had several placards printed to stick up in his cell, with Scripture mottoes, "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," &c. The penitent state of feeling on the part of the criminal, was brought about chiefly by the impression made upon his mind by Miss Owston and Miss Payne, who have attended him in his cell, and read religious works to him frequently.

THE EXECUTION.

Cooke was executed on Friday, at Leicester. As early as five o'clock a great crowd began to assemble round the county gaol, and their number kept increasing until ten o'clock, when they amounted to near 40,000. Since his condemnation on Thursday, he appeared quite prepared for his fate. The time appointed for his execution was half past nine o'clock, about a quarter of an hour previous to which time the Under Sheriff (Mr. Berridge) and retinue arrived at the gaol. At about half-past nine the culprit, preceded by the Under Sheriff and clergyman, followed by the town and county gaoler, walked with a firm step to the drop. On coming out on the scaffold, the unhappy culprit gazed intently round, and waved his hand in recognising several former acquaintances. He appeared totally engaged in prayer, and uttered the following pious ejaculation, "Lord, remember me when thou comest to judge the world." The rope was then placed round his neck, and he immediately threw away a white cambric pocket handkerchief. The drop fell, and he was very soon no more. He struggled violently for the space of about two minutes.

A KEY TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

A very thick, a very cheap, and a very useful volume has just been published under the above title. It was announced twelve months since as the "Parliamentary Pocket Book;" but the work extending to the size of a Bible, the title was changed to one more appropriate.

The volume embraces information which every one ought to know, but which, nevertheless, is known to very few. It contains the history of ancient parliaments; is written with great research and clearness; details the usages, privileges and customs of both Houses with great minuteness; and to the list of peers appends their rank, connexions, office, honours, and influence. The late state of representation is recorded, and will be useful as a record; and to the list of members is annexed a fair description of the constituency that returned them. These are the leading features of the book; but there are many minor points which must render the work indispensable to every one who wishes to know the way in which things are managed in Parliament. It is true, the change of system renders many of the statements now only things of history; but still the principal details will be found always useful. As the work, though comparatively cheap, will, from its size, be confined to the more opulent class of readers, we purpose, for the information of the less affluent, to condense such parts as are of more immediate and general interest.

Manner of sitting in the Lord's House.

When the King is present in Parliament, he sits at the upper end of the House of Lords, in a throne or chair of state; having a crimson velvet canopy, or cloth of state, over his head; on his right (if

he have children or brother so named) sits the Prince of Wales, on his left the Duke of York;—both under the same canopy.

Farther off, on the right hand, and somewhat in advance, are placed, on a form, the King's Vicar General, (if such an office be in existence,) and the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. Below these, on another form, are seated the Bishops of London, Durham, and Winchester; then, the rest of the Bishops, according to their priority of consecration.

On the King's left hand, upon forms, are seated the Lord Chancellor, or Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, the Lord Treasurer, (when such office is not in commission,) the Lord President of the King's Privy Council, and the Lord Privy Seal:—although only barons, these sit above all Dukes, except those of the royal family.

On the same side sit the Dukes, Marquesses, and Earls, according to the dates of their creation.

On the first form, across the house, before the woollacks, sit the Viscounts; and upon the next, the Barons: all in the order of their creation.

The Lord Great Chamberlain of England, the Lord High Constable, the Earl Marshall, the Lord High Admiral (when such office is not in commission) the Lord Steward of the King's Household, the Lord Chamberlain, and the principal Secretaries of State, sit above all others of the same rank of nobility with themselves; and if any of them be Bishops, above all Bishops not invested with any of the said offices.

The Lord Chancellor, or Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, when the King is not present, sits on the first woollack, in front of the throne; his Great Seal and Mace being placed before him. This is the place, as Speaker of the House of Lords; but whenever the House is formed into a Committee; or whenever the Chancellor is desirous of speaking on any question, he takes his seat among his Peers according to his proper rank of nobility.

On the other woollacks sit the Judges, the King's Council at Law, and the Masters in Chancery: these not being Barons, have no suffrage in Parliament: they sit in the House of Peers merely to give their advice when the same is required.

When the King is absent, the Lords at their entrance do reverence to the throne or chair of state. On such occasions, the Judges may sit, but may not be covered till the Chancellor, or Lord Keeper, signify to them the leave of the Lords. The King's Council and Masters in Chancery sit also, but they are never covered.

Manner of sitting in the Commons' House.

The Commons sit in their house promiscuously: the Speaker has a chair or seat fixed at the upper end; and the Clerk, with his assistants, sit near him at the table, just below the chair. The members of the House of Commons never had any robes, except the speaker and clerks, who, always in the House, wear gowns, as professors of the law do in term time; also, the four members for the city of London, who on the first day of every new Parliament wear scarlet gowns, and sit altogether on the right hand of the chairs, next to the speaker.—Each member, as he enters the House, makes his obeisance to the speaker by raising his hat; which he immediately replaces, however, as he goes to his seat.

Previously to debates upon great public questions, it is customary for the members to take their places at an early hour in the afternoon; this is done by writing their names upon a piece of paper, and wafering it upon the back of the seat which they were desirous of securing. This intimation is generally respected. His Majesty's ministers and the leaders of Opposition are alone exempt, by courtesy, from this ceremony: they sit on the front benches next the table; the ministers on the speaker's right hand, and the Opposition on the left. The favourers of each party, generally, sit on the benches behind their respective leaders: this is always the case when questions of moment are to be discussed: both sides being anxious to display the collective strength of their partizans.

Manner of voting and speaking on Questions.

In the Lords' House, the peers give their votes, or suffrages, by beginning with the lowest baron; and so on with the rest, *seriatim*, until all have expressed their opinions; each one answering apart "Content," or "Not Content." If the affirmatives and negatives should happen to be equal in number, the question is invariably presumed to be in the negative, (*semper præsumitur pro negante*), and the Not Contents have the effect of an absolute majority.

In the House of Commons, the members vote by "Ayes" and "Noes" altogether; but if it be doubtful which is the greater number, the House divides. If the question be whether any Bill, Petition, &c. is to be brought into the House, then the "Ayes," or approvers of the same, go out; but, if it be upon any thing which the House is once possessed of, the "Noes" go out. Upon all questions where the House divides, the Speaker appoints four tellers,—two of each opinion; who, after they have told or numbered those within, places themselves in the passage between the bar and the door, in order to tell those who went out; who, till then, are not permitted to re-enter the House. This being done, the two tellers who have the majority take the right hand, and all four placing themselves within the bar, make three reverences as they advance towards the table; where they deliver the written numbers saying—"The Ayes that went out are so many; the Noes who remained are so many;"—and *vice versa*, as it may happen. This the Speaker repeats, declaring the majority.

In a Committee of the whole House, the way of dividing is by changing sides; the Ayes taking the right and the Noes the left hand of the Speaker's chair. On such occasions there are but two tellers.

In the House of Commons the Speaker never speaks to any question, except the House be in a Committee; nor does he even vote, unless the number of votes on both sides of the House be equal; when his casting vote decides the majority. In the Lords, if the Chancellor be desirous of giving his opinion, he must leave the woollack, and go to his place among that rank of nobility to which he belongs. If he be not a peer he may neither speak to the question, nor vote upon it; but if a peer, he has a vote on every question.

The Speaker of the Commons is prohibited, by the rules of the house, from persuading and dissuading the Members in the passing of any Bill; his duty is merely to make a plain and short narrative of his object.

When any member of the House of Commons is desirous of speaking on a Bill before the House, he stands up in his place, uncovered, and directs his speech to the Speaker. In the House of Peers, on the contrary, the orator addresses himself to the Lords generally, only, in either case he may remain on his legs for an indefinite length of time; using whatever arguments, and entering into as many details, as he pleases; but having once sat down, he is not permitted, unless personally reflected on, to speak again on the same day, to the same matter; or on the same reading of the same Bill, even although his arguments be confuted by another member; but if the whole House should be turned into a Committee on any business, than any member may reply as often as he pleases, or as the Chairman of the said Committee may judge expedient.

Petitions and motions to bring in Bills.

To bring a Bill into the House of Commons, if the relief sought by it be of a private nature, it is necessary to prefer a Petition; which is presented by a member and usually sets forth the grievance desired to be removed, or the object desired to be obtained. And if the Petition be founded on facts that may in their nature be disputed, it is then referred to a Committee of Members, who examine the matter alleged, and report their opinion of the same to the House; and then (or otherwise, upon the mere petition) leave is given to bring in the Bill.

With respect to the public Bills, they are introduced by way of motion to the House, without any petition; and it is usual, first of all, for a member to give notice of his future intention to move for leave to bring in a Bill.

Franking Letters.

The franking of letters is a privilege common to the Members of both Houses. The very great and necessary privilege being formerly grossly abused, is now so restricted by statute, that no individuals can frank "more than ten, nor receive more than fifteen letters in any one day;" and "no letter or package so franked or received may exceed one ounce in weight;" also, "if any person be convicted of forging or counterfeiting the superscription, or of altering the date of any letter or packet, in order to avoid the payment of the duty of postage, he shall be transported for seven years."

Privilege of Peers.

Peers of the Realm are the hereditary Counsellors of the Crown; and may, whenever they consider it necessary, demand admittance to the King's presence to advise with him on affairs of moment.

By the law of *Scandalum Magnatum*, any person convicted of spreading scandalous reports respecting a Peer, or Bishop, *no matter whether true or false*, is subject to fine and imprisonment.

The persons of Peers are for ever sacred and inviolable from arrest and imprisonment for debts, trespasses, &c. and they cannot be outlawed in any civil action; nor can any attachment lie against their persons. This freedom from arrest extends to their families, servants, and followers, as well as to all persons necessarily employed about their estates or persons during the session of Parliament, as well as for twenty days before and after each session.—This privilege, however, does not in any case extend to Solicitors or Attorneys employed by Peers; nor in their own persons, to breaches of the peace, (particularly where they refuse to give security to keep the same), treason, or felony, or indeed any indictable offence whatsoever; neither is their property exempted from sale or sequestration.

To assault a Peer, or his menial servant, is a high contempt, and may be punished with great severity.

Peers can qualify a certain number of chaplains: viz. a Duke, six; a Marquess or Earl, five; a Viscount, four; and a Baron, three.

They have the privilege of sitting covered in Courts of Justice; and are further entitled by their rank to a seat with the Judge on the bench.

A Peer cannot lose his nobility but by death, or attainder for high treason. It has been said that if a Baron or other Peer waste his estate, so that he be not able to support his rank, the King may degrade him, but it has been expressly held by authority of the Parliament itself, that a Peer cannot be degraded but by Act of Parliament.

The last, but not the least, privilege of the Peerage was granted by Act of Parliament, in the first year of Edward VI. chap. 12. It is equivalent to the privileges, or benefit of clergy, formerly possessed by the ecclesiastical body in England. In the latter case all persons who were clerks or who could read, were exempted from the punishment of death, for first offences in cases of petit treason and capital felonies; whilst persons actually in holy orders were amenable only to ecclesiastical censure and jurisdiction, and owed no responsibility to secular judges, except in case of high-treason, petty larceny, and misdemeanor. These privileges have, however, been greatly abridged by various Acts of Parliament, and a recent one (6th Geo. IV. c. 25.) provides that clerks in holy orders, being convicted of clergyable offences, are liable to the same punishment as lay persons would be in similar situations. By the above act of Edward, however, Peers, even although they should not be able to read, have their privileges for all offences clergyable at that period, also for the crimes of house-breaking, highway-robbery, horse-stealing, and