

OPENING OF THE NEW LAW COURTS OF ENGLAND.

trance, where by this time the Royal party were arriving.

Here the grand procession was at once formed. So perfect was the order prevailing that no sooner had Her Majesty alighted than a second blare of trumpets announced her entry into the building. As the procession moved up the centre of the hall, to the strains of Mendelssohn's march in *Athalie*, played by an invisible band, the whole assembly rose and paid silent homage to the Sovereign, who graciously bowed to right and left in return. In the fore-front walked the builders and architects; next in order, the Attorney-General and Solicitor-General, the Judges, the Lord Chancellor, the First Commissioner of Works, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and then the Queen, attended right and left by the Lord Chamberlain and the Lord Steward. Her Majesty wore a walking dress of black silk trimmed with fur. Immediately behind walked the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Connaught, Prince Leopold, Prince Christian; and then the Princess Beatrice, the Princess Christian, and the Princess Mary of Teck. The Princesses were all in morning dress, the Princes in military uniform over which they wore their gowns as Benchers of the Inns of Court. The Home Secretary followed as the Minister in attendance, and the rear of the procession was brought up by members of the Royal Household. On reaching the dais, the Queen was conducted to a gilt chair of State by the Home Secretary, who placed himself at her side. The Princes and Princesses took up their position behind Her Majesty, and the Judges disposed themselves in a semi-circle on either side, the Lord Chancellor taking his place on the right. The formalities of the occasion were then proceeded with. The first of these consisted in the First Commissioner of Works offering the key of the building to Her Majesty, which he did in the following words:—

May it please your Majesty,—Your Commissioner of Works and Public Buildings has been charged with the erection of this building during the last eight years. It is now complete. It falls upon me to announce to your Majesty that it is ready to be constituted as "the certain place" in which, in accordance with the ancient laws of your kingdom, justice shall be administered in the future by your Majesty's Courts.

So saying, Mr. Shaw-Lefevre handed the key on a dark crimson velvet cushion to Sir William Harcourt, who in turn presented it to Her

Majesty. It was a large key of polished steel, bearing the monogram R. C. J. (Royal Courts of Justice), and a shield with the Royal Standard. After inspecting it a moment, Her Majesty passed the emblem of possession to Sir William Harcourt."

After this the Queen read a short address from manuscript, which was heard distinctly over the hall, and taking the key from the Home Secretary, handed it to the Lord Chancellor. He replied at some length, and after other addresses were read, and replies made, the procession reformed, and Her Majesty left the building. A deputation of the workmen then came forward and presented to her a short address, to which a gracious reply was given. The distinguished company that had gathered in the hall and rooms of the new Courts gradually melted away. Many of them making their way to the different Inns of Court, when they were entertained in the royal way that the Bar there, as well as here, know how when their minds are made up in that direction.

We make no apology for inserting at length the following article from the *Times*, which follows the graphic account of the opening ceremonies:—

"The occasion which brought to Temple Bar the Queen and chief officials of the realm was more than the simple opening of a building; it was more than the transfer of a great function of State to a more commodious home. It is the opening of a new era in the history of our English Justice, that civil institution which, of all others in the entire range of the modern world, has had the longest life in the past, whilst its splendid maturity promises it yet an almost incalculable future. On Monday last, for the first time since the rule of the Plantagenets, or rather of the early Angevins, the country saw consolidated in living and visible unity the heterogeneous mass of judicial bodies, each of which for so many centuries has had its own divergent history, and every link of which is bound up with the history of the State.

For the first time since the Norman Kings, the Sovereign held State in the Royal Court, not only as the fountain of justice in person, but as manifest head of the judicial system, of the ex-