

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES xli (1819-20) 1180-3. House of Commons Thursday 16 Dec 1819 .

Mr. Brougham said, he held in his hands a petition from a person of the name of Thomas Redford. He had not any acquaintance with this person, nor could he vouch for the accuracy of the statements in the petition, but it was couched in respectful language.

The petition was brought up and read. It purported to be the petition of Thomas Redford, of Middleton, in the county palatine of Lancaster, hatter; and sat forth,

That for the purpose of agreeing to an address to his royal highness the Prince Regent, and of adopting such resolutions as might seem fit, the petitioner, with many others of his fellow townsmen, attended a meeting at Manchester, on the 16th day of August in the present year, which meeting was legally convened by public advertisement according to the form prescribed by a law recently passed in the House, and sanctioned by the other branch of the legislature, as well as by the executive power of the land; but though guarded by the solemn enactments of the legislature, though acting under, and confiding in, the stern mandate of the law, which saith to the ruthless and violent, 'so far shalt thou go with impunity, and no further,' though rudeness or insult had not been known that day, by the petitioner or his neighbours, nor outrage expected, yet, in the very commencement of their peaceable and constitutional proceedings, they were interrupted by an armed force, denominated the Manchester Yeomanry Cavalry, professing an extraordinary share of loyalty, which in the humble judgment of the petitioner is only to be found in a due observance of the law; by men thus circumstanced, disguised in military accoutrements, and with implements of death in their hands, was this sacred enactment broken, and the blood of his majesty's liege subjects shed without cause without warning of any kind, and apparently without remorse; for it be known to the House, that the men disguised as aforesaid, rushed without delay into the crowd, cutting and bruising with their sabres, and trampling under the hoofs of their horses, the miserable victims of their fury, who were unable, through the intense pressure, to open a way before them, and after they had secured several persons as prisoners who were upon the hustings, even after this professed object of their interference had been accomplished, they suddenly wheeled round upon the astonished and defenceless multitude, and with a rage violent as it was unmanly and unprovoked, commenced anew the work of terror and destruction: in this moment of danger the petitioner was driven by the crowd towards some timber which lay upon the field, where, hemmed in on all sides by the military, and unable to escape, he received from one of the Manchester yeomanry Cavalry, named Alexander Oliver, a severe cut by the sabre, which separated his shoulder-blade, and penetrated deep into his back; that for this violent outrage and breach of the laws, the petitioner has not been able to bring the delinquent to the bar of his country, in consequence of the refusal of the local magistracy to receive depositions respecting the aforesaid transactions; therefore, to the justice and to the humanity of the House the petitioner now appeals, and humbly though earnestly, claims from it that indemnification which the law would award, but which is vainly sought for in the courts, and that protection from similar

outrages to which every Englishman is entitled, but which the petitioner is convinced can only be obtained by the prompt interference of the House, in investigating the inhuman transactions of which he complains.