

HO 42/192 fol. 73-5 Jer. Garnett, Manchester, to Home Office, 9 o'clock, 16 August 1819. See also TS11/1056.

Transcribed by Sylvia Kölling

Sir,

I am desired by Mr. Wright (who has sustained serious personal injury at the meeting this day) to communicate to you a brief outline of the very important transactions of ~~the day~~ that have taken place. In doing this I must necessarily be very brief; and I fear the hurry of my ideas will not permit me to arrange them in so clear a manner as would be requisite to give a [word deleted] idea of what has passed.

I remain, Sir,

Yours, most respectfully,
Jer. Garnett.

At an early hour this morning a placard was posted on the walls, signed by the Boroughreeves and Constables of Manchester and Salford, requesting "all well-disposed persons to remain in their habitations during the day, and to keep their servants and apprentices within doors." Soon after eleven o'clock, numerous parties of reformers, from the different country towns in the neighbourhood of Manchester, began to arrive upon the ground (the usual place of meeting, near St Peter's Church). All these parties were preceded by banners, bearing different inscriptions, and signifying the place whence they came; and most of them surmounted by caps of liberty. Several of the parties were also preceded by bands of music. A number of women were mixed with the men who came in the above manner; and most of the flags were borne by them. About half past one o'clock the number of persons on the ground was very great indeed. It was by far the most numerous meeting that has taken place here, perhaps the most numerous that has occurred in any part of England. The numbers of course are very differently estimated, probably 60,000 would be about the truth. (This is Mr. Wright's estimate.) At this time Hunt, arrived on the ground in an open carriage, accompanied by Johnson, Knight, Moorhouse of Stockport, and one or two others. A female, who sat with the driver of the carriage, bore in her hands a flag inscribed "Annual Parliaments, &c." and bearing a figure of Britannia, crowned by the cap of liberty. When Hunt mounted the scaffold erected for the meeting, the acclamations of such a vast number of persons rent the skies. The flags, 18 in number, were ranged in a line, across the ground, and made a most formidable appearance.

Hunt was called to the chair; and addressed the people in a short speech, in which he thanked them for the honour they had done him, said that their enemies had recently congratulated themselves on having gained a victory over them, by preventing the meeting convened for Monday last; ~~but~~ but their subsequent conduct showed that they had sustained a shameful defeat. By causing the postponement of that meeting they had at least doubled the numbers of the people attending it. He then alluded to the different placards respecting himself and the meeting, which he characterized as paltry and contemptible.

At this moment the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry appeared on the ground, and drew up on one side of the meeting. On seeing them, Hunt exclaimed, "Stand firm, my friends; you see they are in disorder already. Give them three cheers." Three cheers were accordingly given; but, (the Riot Act having been read in the interim) the Yeomanry began to clear the ground, and Hunt's firm supporters fled in all directions. A number of special constables followed closely behind the Yeomanry, and took into custody Hunt, Johnson, and all the rest of the worthies who were exhibiting upon the stage, having done which, they assisted the Yeomanry in clearing the ground. A strong party of the 15th Hussars, and of the

Cheshire Yeomanry, also lent their assistance. Out of the vast number of persons who were assembled, scarcely two remained together after three minutes were elapsed. The ground was strewn over with the tattered and broken emblems of sedition, and with fragments of the different musical instruments which had led the reformers into the town.

The expulsion of so many persons from the ground could not be effected without ~~many~~ some of them receiving personal injury; and ~~I am sure~~ many were accordingly wounded by the sabres of the Soldiery. It is to be hoped, however, that none of the wounds will prove fatal. ~~One~~ A special constable (Mr. Ashworth) was unfortunately ridden over, and is since dead. One of the Yeomanry also (Mr. John Hulme) was dreadfully wounded by a brick thrown at him, and his recovery is very doubtful.

Hunt and his colleagues were escorted through the streets by a party of Yeomanry, and a numerous body of special constables and were lodged in the New Bailey for the night. A strong party of soldiers was posted there to secure them.

During the evening a very riotous disposition was evinced in different parts of the town, and strong parties of cavalry patrolled the streets. Several persons were taken into custody by the special constables, charged with throwing stones and behaving otherwise riotously. Near the New Cross, where a party of the 31st foot was posted, it was found necessary to read the Riot Act and to fire upon the mob, several of whom were wounded ~~in the legs~~ severely, but none dangerously, The town is now, (½ past 10) tolerably quiet.

Postscript.— Mr. Wright has requested me to add an account of the manner in which he received his severe personal injury. ~~I was~~ Having myself accompanied Mr. Wright to the hustings, I was witness of a part of the treatment he met with. When the Yeomanry and Constables cleared the hustings, Mr. W. was unfortunately taken for a reformer, and received several severe blows to the head with a constable's staff, and a deep sabre-wound in his left arm.— It is most probable that the Constables and Soldiers had observed Mr. W. making notes, and supposed that they were for ~~the use of~~ a seditious newspaper published here. This may account for [the] severity with which he was treated. When taken into custody by the constables, he was conveyed to an adjoining house, where the Magistrates were assembled. From them, however, he received every attention, was immediately liberated, and dispatched in a coach to his inn. I am now writing by his bed-side; and am happy to say that he is tolerably composed. If the surgeon will permit him to travel, he intends being in London early on Thursday morning.

[Home Office annotations]

Manchester 16, Aug 1819.

Mr. Jer: Garnett

Pro Mr. Wright

R[ceived].18th

A[nswered] D^o]

Account of Proceedings at Manchester 16:

Hunt &c arrested.

Some lives lost

Henry Hobhouse, Esq.