

RIOTOUS ATTACK ON THE MAGISTRACY AT DEWSBURY.

If men's talents are to be estimated by the mischief they are capable of effecting, then must Messrs. O'Connor, Oastler, Stephens, and Co. be pronounced the most accomplished men of the present day. On the subject of the New Poor Law, they have spread an incalculable amount of delusion and error, and their advice to the people who have assembled to listen to them, in reference to it, has been such as in a greater or lesser degree to have been followed by acts of violence against both property and individuals, in different parts of this and the adjoining county of Lancaster. An instance of this kind occurred at Dewsbury on Monday last, where a mob composed of the lowest description of persons, influenced by the incendiary speeches of those men at that place on the previous Wednesday, made a fierce and cowardly attack on the Magistrates engaged in the enforcement of the New Poor Law, from which they narrowly escaped with their lives. A more disgraceful outrage than this it has seldom been our duty to record. Before, however, we enter on a narration of what took place on Monday, we shall briefly allude to the meeting held on the previous Wednesday, at which Messrs. O'Connor and Oastler attended, for the purpose of enabling our readers and the public to judge how far the opinions and sentiments there promulgated have any connection with the attack on the Magistrates.

The meeting was called by an unauthorised placard, and was held in the Market-place. The object of this assembling was to hear a detail of the treatment which the Guardians had received from the Chairman of the Board, J. A. Ingham, Esq., whose offence was understood to be his refusing to allow any question to be put, having for its purpose the frustration of the law, and the meeting was then to declare what course the Guardians should adopt. Mr. Morrill Matthews, formerly of Dewsbury, but now of Liversedge, and one of the Guardians for that township, was called to the chair. Mr. T. S. Brooke related the grievances before referred to, and was succeeded by Mr. J. Marsden, from Huddersfield. Mr. Oastler next delivered an oration, and during the course of it, made use of the following language:—
"The people have as much right to destroy Mr. Ingham's property and murder him, as he has to put the New Poor Law Act into force. A law which the Queen knows nothing about, the people have no right to obey." Again he said—
"The people have as much right to go to Mr. Ingham's house and burn it down and destroy his property, as he has to put the New Poor Law into force here." The meeting cheered these parts of the speech. That this language was uttered has been deposed to on oath by two highly respectable and influential gentlemen, resident in Dewsbury, who were listening to Oastler's harangue. One of these gentlemen heard Oastler repeat the first of the above passages several times, and make use of expressions equally violent. Mr. O'Connor delivered sentiments, in the opinion of the same witness, quite as exciting, but more equivocal in their meaning. Both the gentlemen we have referred to stated, in their depositions taken before the Magistrates, after the disturbance on Monday, that they considered the language of the speakers, and particularly that of Oastler, as inciting the people to acts of violence. They believed that Mr. Ingham's life and property were in danger, and they were not in the slightest degree surprised at what had occurred on Monday. In addition to this, Oastler was heard by other parties to recommend his hearers to procure some *fire-arms* for ornaments, and to take care that their wives kept them clean and ready for use! O'Connor likewise recommended the providing of arms. A number of resolutions were agreed to, one of which declared the inexpediency of putting the New Poor Law Act into force in the Dewsbury Union. It is perhaps only right to state that before the termination of these proceedings several persons went away evidently disgusted with their atrocity, still subsequent occurrences unapparently show that on the minds of far too great a number of those present the speeches had the desired effect. That effect, indeed, was obvious before the outbreak on Monday, for on the days following the above meeting, Mr. Pearson, chief constable of Dewsbury, in the discharge of his official duties, heard very violent language and threats used by the lower orders in various parts of the township, against putting the New Poor Law into force, but directed more particularly against Mr. Ingham. In consequence of this language Mr. Pearson felt it his duty to repair to Mr. Ingham's house, and inform that gentleman what he had heard. The latter, on receiving this unpleasant intelligence, communicated with J. B. Greenwood, Esq., a West-Riding Magistrate, and consequently an *ex-officio* guardian. Mr. Greenwood, as will be recollected, was recently a barrister on this circuit, but is now Magistrate at the Thames Police-Office, London. He is at present on a visit to his father in the neighbourhood, and from what passed between himself and Mr. Ingham, he thought it his duty to attend the meeting of Guardians on the following Monday.

On Monday, in pursuance of previous notice, the Guardians, to the number of 16 or 18, met in the Parochial School-room for the dispatch of business, to which the public, as usual, were admitted,—a privilege not approved of by Mr. Greenwood, as he felt it might possibly lead to disorder and prevent deliberation. Mr. Ingham occupied the chair, and he was assisted in the duties of Vice-Chairman by Mr. Rhodes, a guardian. There was one other *ex-officio* guardian present, namely, John Hague, Esq. For a short time the discussion went on harmoniously, and the people were tolerably quiet. At length the opposition Guardians, who have uniformly exhibited a disposition to frustrate the object of the meetings of the Board, submitted a series of propositions, the purport of which was to adjourn the consideration of all questions relating to the Act till some future period, and, in the mean time, to forward to Lord John Russell a number of questions on those clauses to which they entertained the greatest repugnance. These resolutions the Chairman was requested to put to the meeting. This, however, he declined to do, conceiving, with Mr. Greenwood, that they were quite irrelevant, and opposed to the object for which the Guardians had been convened. Mr. Ingham, moreover, informed the movers and seconders of these propositions, that questions and remonstrances similar to those which they now wished to address to the Home Secretary had been forwarded from other Unions in the Riding, but that his Lordship had refused to send any answer, save that the Government were determined to enforce the law. The persons composing the meeting still called upon the Chairman to put the resolutions, which, for the reasons before assigned, he positively declined to do. This was the signal for the commencement of a general disturbance. The mob exhibited the greatest violence of temper, and immediately made a rush towards that end of the room where the Guardians were assembled, exclaiming "pull 'em out, pull 'em out." Several stones were thrown, one of which Mr. Ingham caught in his hand. The scene now became so alarming that the Chairman, with the full sanction and approbation of Mr. Greenwood, read the riot act. This, however, served only to inflame the minds of the anti-poor-law party, and two or three fellows called out "Ingham ought to be murdered—he ought to have his soul pulled out." The Guardians who were in favour of enforcing the law of course found it utterly impossible to proceed with business, and the meeting was declared to be adjourned. The three Magistrates, with much difficulty, then left the room, and were followed by the mob, which gradually augmented to between 1,500 and 2,000 persons, nine-tenths of whom appeared to belong to the lowest grade of society. There now seemed to be strong manifestations on the part of the persons composing the mob to resort to further violence, and to do personal injury to Mr. Ingham, whereupon Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Hague decided that he should walk between them, thinking that the violence of the populace might thereby be diverted from him. They proceeded thus for about twenty or thirty yards, when they were so hemmed in by the crowd as to be unable to make any further progress, and while pressed against a wall, were pelted with mud and stones, which flew in all directions. Seeing their situation to be one of danger, they made a vigorous effort to force their way to the Man and Saddle Hotel, but were driven back by the mob, some of whom exclaimed "throw 'em into't beck", and used other expressions denoting the most horrible intentions. One ruffian rushed upon Mr. Ingham and endeavoured to drag him to the ground, but happily did not succeed in his murderous purpose. In the scuffle that ensued Mr. Ingham lost one of his shoes, which was snatched away by another man, and thrown into the rivulet running near the place. It was afterwards taken out of the water and restored to its owner. The shower of stones and mud increased, and a heavy missile was thrown at Mr. Greenwood's head, which luckily produced no further injury than damaging his hat and causing a momentary stub. Mr. Greenwood was now separated from Mr. Hague and Mr. Ingham, and driven up an adjoining passage. The latter gentleman was evidently the main object of vengeance, as Mr. Greenwood, while surrounded, heard several of the mob say among themselves—"Let him alone: he's a stranger, and has nought against us: it's Ingham we run look after." In the mean time, Mr. Pearson, the constable, used every entreaty to induce the crowd to refrain from further violence, but his expostulations were only met by a savage determination that they would murder the Magistrates if they could get hold of them. Mr. Pearson then solicited the co-operation of the respectable inhabitants in protecting the Magistrates, but they declined to interfere, on the ground that, being shopkeepers, they feared the loss of custom, or were apprehensive of personal injury. After Mr. Greenwood had been forced up the passage, the mob became more scattered, and Mr. Hague, in some manner made his escape into a private house. Mr. Ingham ran towards the Man and Saddle, and Mr. Darwent, the landlord, seeing his object, unbolted the door, (which had previously been fastened owing to the riot), and the Magistrate providentially succeeded in sheltering himself from further attack. On entering the house, however, he was struck on the back with a large stone, which for a time completely bereft him of his senses. One of the gentlemen whom we have before spoken of, who saw the escape of Mr. Ingham, literally trembled with fear for hours afterwards, for he was convinced that the mob intended to kill him, and he believed that but for his fortunate admission into the hotel his life would then have been sacrificed. Mr. Greenwood was now the only Magistrate left to the vengeance of the mob. The men who had surrounded him in the passage left him to search for Mr. Ingham, and he availed himself of the opportunity of making his way to the New Inn, situate a short distance from the spot where he was separated from Mr. Ingham and Mr. Hague. He was shown into a private room on the ground floor, where he thought himself secure. After being there a few minutes, however, he heard a noise proceeding from the populace, accompanied by shouts of "where is he? where is he?" and one of the party attempted to force open the door. Finding that he had no chance of escape, Mr. Greenwood opened the door himself, and immediately several men rushed into the apartment. He said to them, "If any of you want me, here I am. What is it you do want?" These words were scarcely uttered when a man seized him by the collar, and dragged him out of the room into the passage of the house, and from thence into the street. He there received several violent blows on the head and a severe cut on the lip. For some time his hat protected him from the effect of the attack, but this was at length knocked off, and he then exclaimed to the cowardly vagabonds "spare my life." This entreaty was disregarded, and an attempt was made to drag him to the ground. Mr. Greenwood, however, ran towards a door on the opposite side of the way, which was opened by the inmates, and he received the best protection and assistance from the occupant, whose name, for the reasons before alleged, we do not deem it prudent to publish. Mr. Greenwood was shortly afterwards enabled to reach the Man and Saddle, where

he found Mr. Hague and Mr. Ingham. The latter and Mr. Greenwood were much disordered in their apparel by the dirt thrown at them and the scuffles they had undergone, but we are happy to say that the blows they received are not likely to be productive of any serious inconvenience.

The mob, notwithstanding that the Magistrates had made their escape, did not at all diminish in numbers, but remained in front of the Hotel, hooting and hissing and venting all sorts of imprecations against the objects of their vengeance. They did not, however, attempt to effect an entrance into the inn, although they were aware that the Magistrates were concealed in some part of the premises. There was a manifest disposition, however, to proceed to further acts of aggression, and an order signed by Mr. Greenwood, Mr. Ingham, and Mr. Hague, was despatched to the barracks, at Leeds, requesting the assistance of the military. In the meantime, police-officers were sent round the town, instructing publicans and beer-shop keepers to close their houses, and not to open them again during the day on penalty of being fined for a breach of such order. Mr. Greenwood, the magistrate, Mr. Pearson, the constable, Mr. Rylah, and another respectable inhabitant who wishes his name not to be published, then made depositions of the facts of the outrage; and it is from these depositions that the above statement has been faithfully compiled. The depositions were sent the same evening to Lord John Russell, accompanied by the following letter from Mr. Greenwood:—

"MY LORD,—
 "I have the honour to transmit for your Lordship's perusal and information, a series of depositions taken at this place this afternoon, relating to a serious riot and disturbance which has occurred here to-day, arising out of the excited feelings of the lower classes, in consequence of the determination of the Commissioners under the Poor Law Amendment Act to enforce the provisions of that law in this district. The depositions are sent to your Lordship in a very rough state, but I trust I shall be excused by reason of the shortness of the time now at my disposal. Since they were taken a party of about forty of the 9th regiment of Lancers have come very promptly to our assistance from Leeds, and we have directed the public houses and beer-houses to be closed. The populace do not seem to me inclined to leave the streets, though I must say I hope much of their original violence and excitement has evaporated for the present. It is, however, the opinion of my brother magistrates and myself, that they are much exasperated against the enforcement of the law, and we fear that a repetition of their violence will take place at the next meeting of Guardians. Mr. Ingham, while I am writing, begs me to add that he craves your Lordship's protection, as he does not consider either his life or property safe, by consequence of the violent threats held out towards him. It seems to me that Mr. Ingham has in no degree exceeded his duty, or acted with any intemperance of manner or feeling in endeavouring to enforce the law.

We shall feel obliged to your Lordship for any directions which you may think proper to furnish us with as a guide to our future conduct in endeavouring to enforce the law, and to preserve the peace of this very populous district.

"I have the honour to be, my Lord,
 "Your Lordship's faithful Servant,
 "JAMES BESWICK GREENWOOD."

"Dewsbury, 6th August, 1838.

"TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD JOHN RUSSELL, &c. &c."

The soldiers arrived in Dewsbury soon after five o'clock, and drew up in front of the hotel. Several of the mob ran off on seeing their approach, but a greater portion of them remained, apparently much taken with the novelty of the scene. They expressed their disapprobation at their presence, by an occasional hiss, but prudently abstained from anything further. About seven o'clock a heavy shower of rain fell, which considerably thinned the numbers in the streets, and the mob did not afterwards assemble in any formidable strength.

About half-past seven, Mr. Ingham, Mr. Greenwood, and Mr. Hague, left the hotel for their respective residences. As they were going, Mr. Ingham was hit by a stone near Church-street end, Dewsbury, which cut through his hat, and severely cut his head. One person was immediately turned upon by the soldiers, and pinned in a corner; but Mr. Ingham not recognizing him as the person who threw the stone, he was suffered to go. The party had not gone far before they were attacked with a shower of stones, and had to make the best of their way towards Dewsbury Moor, to the house of J. B. Greenwood, Esq., being pelted all the way from the hill sides with stones. The soldiers have had to protect the house and premises of Mr. Greenwood every night since. On Mr. Ingham leaving Mr. Greenwood's, he had to cross down a bridle road to Blake Hall, his residence, with three soldiers with him, and got out of the way of a party who had crossed the fields from Daw Green to Mirfield, only about two minutes before, the mob saying it was their determination to murder him. Deep and heavy are the threats thrown out against the magistrates, particularly against Mr. Ingham.

At half-past eight o'clock, when our Reporter left, the soldiers remaining in the town had retired to their quarters, and the streets were beginning to assume their wonted tranquillity.

There is one remarkable circumstance connected with this affair, namely, that the magistrates were not enabled to identify any of the parties by whom they were attacked. Active steps, however, will doubtless be taken to make them out, and sincerely is it to be wished that they may be punished.

The town of Dewsbury has been quiet ever since Monday, and the soldiers are ordered to stay some time longer.

The magistrates were to meet yesterday at twelve o'clock, to swear in a number of special constables.