

John Apple

HENRY HUNT:

AND THE MANCHESTER MONUMENT TO PERPETUATE HIS MEMORY.

The accompanying Engraving represents a monument, now in course of erection at Manchester, in Manchester, in the burial ground of the Chapel belonging to the Rev. Mr. SCHOLFIELD, in Every-street. It is raised, by means of a subscription amongst the working people of England, to perpetuate the name and fame of one of the most bold, most strenuous, most disinterested, and most able advocates of Labour's Cause, that that cause ever had to boast of.

He was a Leader before the mails of faction had been pared, or its teeth drawn! when it was rampant, insolent, and biting! The tact he displayed as a "general," and the devotion he evinced to the cause of the people, endeared him to the heart of every son of Labour; while it procured for him the inveterate hatred and bitter scorn of the entire upper and middle classes. With the working people, "Hunt and Liberty" was a watchword. They rallied around his standard—UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE; and, with him, they braved proscription, persecution, imprisonment, transportation, and even death!

HUNT was the first man in England who nailed the columns of UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE to the mast, as a candidate for a seat in the House of Commons. He was the first candidate who stood upon that principle in England! and this he did when he stood as candidate for Westminster, in 1817.

With the events of 1816 and 1817, Mr. HUNT's name was much mixed up. He was called upon to bear his full share of the persecuting power of the "strong" Government. Charges of conspiracy and treason, were hatched up against him plentifully enough, but his goodness and wisdom were so filled the attempts to entrap him. CASTLES, the noted spy, was specially set upon him, to induce him to commit himself. The fiend laboured hard to accomplish his purpose; but he failed!

Through the instrumentality of this infamous wretch, the "Spa-fields meetings" were held, which were attended by Mr. HUNT; and which meetings formed the main feature in the famous Green Bay conspiracy, which ended in the passing of GAOLING BILLS and DUNGEONING BILLS, by virtue of which hundreds of men were consigned to Gaol, kept there for months, and then turned out again without even being told why they had been incarcerated, or what was the nature of the charge against them! At these meetings, Petitions for Parliamentary Reform, based on UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE, were passed; and similar petitions were agreed to at immense and enthusiastic meetings all over the kingdom. These petitions were signed by more than a Million and a-half of men; and were in numbers more than three hundred. Parliament met on the 28th January, 1817; and there were deputations from the working people of all the considerable towns in the North, prepared to go in procession to carry the petitions to "the House." Great alarm prevailed amongst the tax-eating crew; and it was determined by the Government, not only to listen to the petitions of the people with any degree of attention, but to treat them as applications coming from conspirators, or intended traitors! They commenced this game by making the Prince Regent utter lies and calumnies from the throne; and they followed it up by the appointment of a Committee in each House, to report (after examining evidence) upon the designs of "the disaffected."

The secret committees very speedily reported; and a bill was brought in, Chapter 3, 5th of George the Third, "to empower his Majesty to secure and detain such persons as his Majesty should suspect of conspiring against his person and government?" that is to say, an act to authorize the ministers to take, and to put into prison, any persons whom they chose, in any prison that they chose, for as long a time as they chose, without any cause assigned, without regular commitment, without being confronted with their accusers, without ever being brought to any trial at all, or to have a hearing before any magistrate, and to turn them out of prison when they chose, without any power of obtaining legal redress for the injury!!!

This was the answer which the Parliament gave to the petition for Parliamentary Reform. The Ministers lost no time in availing themselves of the power: they seized upon numerous persons, dragging them, in some cases, two hundred and fifty miles from their home; imprisoned them in a manner that they could have no communication with wives, parents, or friends; shut many of them up in solitary cells, and forbade them the use of pen, ink, and paper; and never, from first to last, brought any man of them to trial, and never gave any man of them a hearing before any magistrate whatsoever! The law was adopted with a very feeble resistance on the part of the Whigs; a sham resistance; for, while they opposed the measure as unconstitutional, they admitted that the parties against whom it was levailed were very wicked men. They abused them in terms still stronger than those made use of by the ministers; and, while they pretended to oppose the measure, this perfidious faction; this base and detestable and cowardly and cruel faction; represented the persons against whom it was directed in such a light, and represented their designs as so full of horrible wickedness, that every one who read their speeches, and who believed what they said, must have regarded the measure as necessary to the safety of the country, though at the expense of the whole of the constitution! This is the uniform practice of this selfish, this greedy, this treacherous, body of men, who have made all the revolutions that England has known for the last two hundred years, and who have fattened on the spoil of every revolution!

To accompany this act, there was another, forbidding the people meeting together to discuss political matters; and authorizing the magistrates so to interfere with publications as to destroy whatever there remained of the liberty of the press; and thus was every vestige of political liberty and of personal security taken away from the people of England. These bills were brought into the House of Lords by HENRY ADDINGTON, called Lord Viscount Sidmouth, who was an Englishman by birth; and into the House of Commons by Sir ROBERT STURTEVANT, called Lord Castlereagh, who was an Irishman, and whom we shall by-and-by see cutting his own throat and killing himself, at North Cray, in Kent. These acts remained in force until 1818, when they were suffered to expire; and on the 17th of March in that year an act was passed to indemnify, or bear harmless, every person, and all persons, who should have violated or gone beyond even these acts. So that, even if they had violated these acts on the persons whom they had seized and imprisoned, whatever they might have done to such imprisoned persons, they were by this act, chapter 6, 5th year of Geo. III., indemnified and borne harmless. Talk not of the cruelties and ferocity of those who destroyed the liberties of France! After this, talk not of any such things! Talk not of "constitution" and "order" and "the laws"; show anything equal to this, done by any other people in the world, calling themselves a government and legislative assemblies!!!

During all this time Mr. HUNT was not idle. He defied the proscribed, and upheld the persecuted. He procured himself to be subpoenaed to the trial of Messrs. WATSON, THISTLEWOOD, PRESTON, and HOOPER, who were charged with high treason for occurrences in connection with the famous "Spa Field meetings"; and his evidence respecting CASTLES, the main, indeed, the only witness against the prisoners, was so conclusive as to the infamous character of the spy, and of his hell-designed attempts to drag him (HUNT) into the mess, that the Jury, after a trial of seven days, acquitted the prisoners!

The persecuting and dungeoning of the Reformers, however, did not put down the cry for Radical Reform. It only broke the spirits of the people. On the con-

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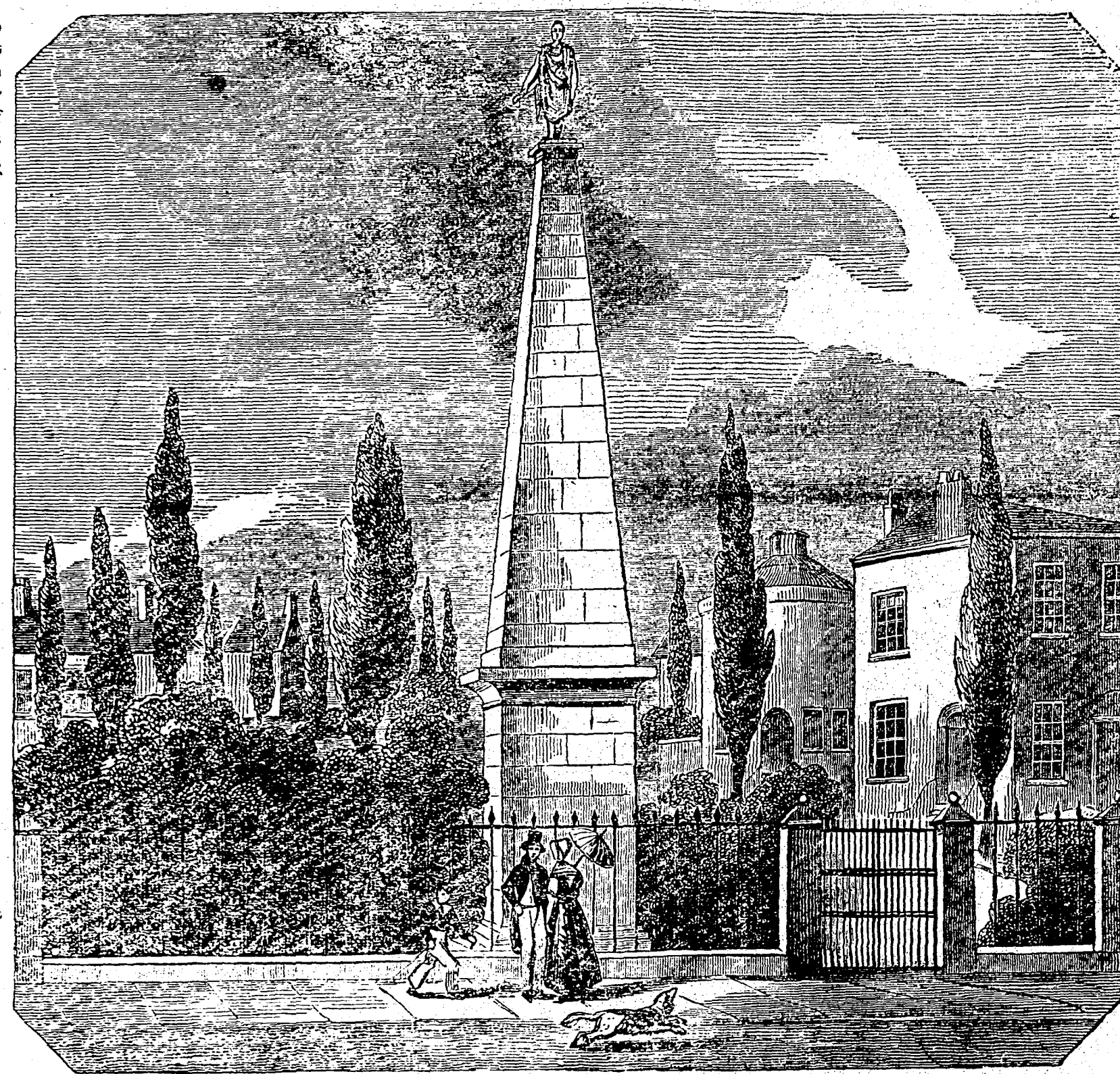
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PRICE FOURPENCE HALFPENNY or Five Shillings per Quarter.

MONUMENT TO THE MEMORY OF HENRY HUNT.



(Erected in the Chapel Yard, Every Street, Manchester, by the Working People.)

trary, they seemed to add to both. And in 1818, the "mild and merciful" Government found itself compelled to hatch plots and conspiracies; to get up "risings" and "riots," to enable it to further coerce the nation. For this purpose they employed a set of atrocious miscreants, of whom OLIVER was one. Through their instigations, BRANDRETT, TUNNAR, and LUDLAM, of Derby, were induced to take part in a "rising" and a "riot," which put them in the power of the "mild and merciful" administrators of the laws; and they furnished three heads to be added to the long, long list of these which rolled from the scaffold in the reign of GEORGE III.!!!

In this case, too, Mr. HUNT did his best to save the martyrs. He collected sums of money for their defence, and attended the trial himself, as great personal risk; for the Power-of-Imprisonment-Law was in full force. His efforts, however, were vain. The pleading of the leading counsel for the defence, Mr. CROSS, sealed the doom of the prisoners! With the best answer to the charge in the world, he admitted their guilt, and began to whimper about their being the dupes of such seditions and treasonable writers as COBBETT and CO. The men were executed and buried; and Counselor CROSS was immediately made a King's Sergeant-at-Law, being presented with a silk gown!!!

The hanging and beheading of these men did not deter the working people from seeking for Radical Reform. With HUNT at their head, they persisted in their demand, holding meetings at which petitions were agreed to, praying for the adoption of UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE. These meetings were attended by almost the entire working population of every district, particularly in the North. At length, in the month of August, 1819, a sort of aggregate meeting was determined on, to be held at MANCHESTER, at which Mr. HUNT engaged to be present. The meeting was originally called for Monday, the ninth day of August. The Magistrates, however, having issued hand-bills, denouncing the intended meeting as illegal, and cautioning all persons to abstain, at their peril, from attending it, the promoters of it looked over the steps they had taken in convening it, and examined the wording of their advertisement, to discover wherein the "illegality" consisted. Not content with their own judgment, they took the opinion of an eminent counsel who happened to be at Liverpool. He pointed out to them that one of the advertised objects of the meeting, that one which was to the effect, that the meeting would consider the propriety of electing a representative, or legislative attorney for Manchester, was against law, and might bring them into peril if persisted in. The requisitionists, therefore, issued a notice that the meeting on the 9th would not be held; while at the same time another requisition, of which the following is a copy, was laid for signature at two places in the town for one day only; and it received the names of upwards of 700 inhabitant householders in a few hours. Here is the requisition to the Boroughreeve and Constables of Manchester:—

"We, whose names are hereunto subscribed, request that you will convene a meeting as early as possible, to consider the propriety of adopting the most legal and effectual means of Reform in the Commons House of Parliament."

This requisition, when signed, was presented to the authorities, and no answer having been given to it, after waiting a reasonable time, the requisitionists proceeded to call the meeting themselves, for the above objects, set forth in the above words. They fixed on Monday, the 16th day of August, at twelve o'clock at noon, as the day and hour at which the meeting would be held; and the place of meeting was an open area near to St. Peter's Church, called St. Peter's Field.

The Magistrates did not issue other notices respecting this meeting, denouncing it as "illegal." They suffered all the necessary arrangements to be made without warning or caution as to the consequences they had in store! Thus lulled into

into security, the meeting was held. It was attended by 70,000 persons. As soon almost as the proceedings had commenced, the Manchester and Cheshire Yeomanry Cavalry were let loose upon the assembled thousands, without notice or warning of any kind! HAVOC and SLAUGHTER was the consequence! "The heroes" had been made drunk, to string them up to the work they had to do; and their sabres were newly ground to enable them to do more execution! This attack was wholly unprovoked! There was no riot; no violence of any sort; and there had been no riot, and no violence. Yet, this multitude, thus peaceably assembled, for a lawful purpose, and thus purposefully made known before hand, was slaughtered without the slightest provocation!!!

The following are details connected with this atrocious and horrible outrage. They are not culled from Radical or Chartist publications, but they are extracted from the Leeds Mercury newspaper, of August 24th, 1819. They are copied from the Messrs. BAINES's own office file, which they have been kind enough to lend us for this purpose; and whose courtesy in so doing, we thus publicly acknowledge. The facts, as narrated, were witnessed by Mr. EDWARD BAINES, Jun. He was on the hustings at the time the charge was made; and it is his account that the reader is now presented with:—

MANCHESTER REFORM MEETING. "DISPERSSION OF AN ARMED FORCE. MONDAY, AUGUST 16TH, 1819.

Before we proceed to detail the occurrences of this fatal day, it may be proper to premise that this meeting was intended to have been held on Monday, the 9th instant; but that the magistrates having denounced it as illegal, on the ground of one of the objects stated in the requisition being to elect a person to represent that town in Parliament, it was considered, after taking Counsel's opinion, expedient to postpone the meeting to afford time to call another, to which no such objection could apply. The object of this second meeting was stated in the notice to be "for the purpose of taking into consideration the most effectual legal means of obtaining a Reform in the Representation of the House of Commons." To this meeting, publicly announced through the medium of the newspapers and placards, no official objection was made by the magistracy on the ground of illegality; though the B. U. H. V. S. and Constables of Manchester and Salford, expressing in oblique terms their dislike of the proposed meeting, published a notice, which was couched in the following terms:—

"The Boroughreeve and Constables of Manchester and Salford, most earnestly recommend the peaceable and well-disposed inhabitants of those towns as such as possible to remain in their own houses, during the whole of this day (Monday, Aug. 16), and to keep their children and servants within doors."

"At ten o'clock on Monday morning, the magistracy who, probably, at that time, had not determined upon adopting any measure either to prevent or disperse the meeting, assembled a considerable number of special constables in the vicinity of the place of meeting, which was fixed upon to be in a large open space of ground near St. Peter's Church; and the different military companies, resting on their arms, prepared to see at a moment's notice if their services should be deemed necessary."

"The Reformers, who seemed determined to make this a splendid day, were equally on the alert, not indeed to prepare arms, for of these they were totally destitute, but in preparing flags and small bands of music, and in arranging matters for the approaching meeting. It is evident, however, from the great number of females who were present, that the magistracy were not ignorant that nothing was anticipated that could involve them in the least degree of peril; and an immense multitude gathered together, relying with confidence on each other's peaceable intentions, and certainly not expecting that the precautions taken by the magistracy to preserve the peace, would be employed to destroy it, and convert a peaceful assembly into a scene of terror and alarm, danger and death."

"Mr. Hunt, who had the residence of Mr. Johnson, at Smedley-Cottage, about twelve o'clock, in an open carriage, in which were also seated Mr. Johnson, Mr. Knight, and Mr. Canille, and on the box with the coachman, was a female of the name of Waterworth carrying a white flag. The procession, which consisted of many thousands, passed through Shude-Hill, Hang-ine-Ditch, Old Mill-Gate, Market-Place, St. Mary's Gate, Dan's-Gate, and St. Peter's-street, to the open space of the place of meeting. Some idea may be formed of the immense numbers that attended this meeting, when we state, that Newton-Lane, which is not less than thirty yards wide, was literally choked up for above a mile with the divisions from Smedley-Cottage, Oldham, Rawton, and Falsworth. Each division had its respective flags, music, &c. All the divisions took Mr. Hunt's route. Females of all ages were inter-perred in each company, with children of both sexes. Mr. Hunt reached the ground a little after one o'clock, and was received with respectful cheers from the innumerable thousands that were assembled."

"It may be proper here to state, that the magistracy had assembled about twelve o'clock, at the house of Mr. Buxton, probably the residence of one hundred and fifty yards from the hustings, and from which they commanded a view of the whole field. In a time from this house to the hustings was arranged a strong body of special constables armed with truffs, the intention of which was to surround Mr. Hunt and the Manchester yeomanry and Cheshire cavalry in the commission then presented himself; Mr. Hunt acknowledged his authority, and surrendered himself; most of the other persons on the hustings, including Mr. Johnson, Mr. Tsal, a reporter from the office of the Times newspaper, Mr. Smith, Mr. Saxon, Robert White, Thomas Taylor, and three females, were carried off the field under an escort to the New Bailey prison. Mr. Hunt was taken to the residence of the magistracy. At this moment, the Manchester yeomanry were joined by the 16th Hussars, the 51st, and 52nd regiments of foot, and the Cheshire yeomanry made their appearance in another part of the field; the infantry and artillery did not take any active part; and the Manchester yeomanry cavalry began to act with great vigour, galloping about and trampling over the heads of the Reformers, who were then in every direction. The hustings, with a considerable number of persons upon them, were instantly thrown down, and a scene of terror, confusion, and dismay presented itself, to which no language can do justice; the people were trampled down by hundreds and trampled over and over again; the Reformers were scattered in every direction. 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