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DUDLEY ELECTION.

THE POLLING.

SERIOUS RIOTS.

THE MILITARY CALLED OUT.

The polling for the election of a member of Parliament for the borough of Dudley was opened at eight o'clock on Wednesday morning, and throughout the day the borough was the scene of much serious rioting and disturbances. Indeed it is said that more than 40 years has elapsed since anything like a disturbance equal to the one which we now have to describe has taken place in this borough. Not only in Dudley itself but in the out districts the mob appeared for the time to be masters of the situation. It is impossible for one person to describe more than a decimal portion of the incidents which took place as the area of their occurrence was so extensive and disconnected. Previous to the day of the election signs had not been wanting that a serious riot might be apprehended, but nothing like what really occurred was expected. Knowing something from former experience what a Dudley crowd is when aroused, the Mayor and borough magistrates very wisely determined to have the means at hand to quell any disturbance should it take place. With this object in view a troop of cavalry from Birmingham was ordered to be in readiness at some convenient spot near Dudley. It was fortunate for the welfare of the borough that this precaution had been taken, for had it been otherwise conjecture fails to suggest what excesses the mob might have performed. The polling, as we have said, opened at eight o'clock, and there were 40 polling places in the borough. For a time all went on briskly and quietly although there were not wanting indications that the

excitement of the previous day was destined to be renewed. As far as we can learn the first symptoms of personal violence showed themselves at Eve Hill when some cabs were overturned and a few of the voters stoned. This was at about 10 o'clock in the morning, and about the same time rumours were current that at Holly Hall Mr Shenstone's voters were not allowed to go to the poll. On hearing this, Mr. Shenstone's supporters in Dudley were naturally irritated, and a band of working men immediately started off to the scene of action. Fearing a riot, a large body of police were also sent to the spot. The scene which ensued baffles all description. It was a pitched battle between large bodies of men rather than a mere scrimmage, and the list of injured must have been large. It was rumoured in the evening that one man had been killed, but our reporter has so far been unable to verify the fact. The mob from Dudley were, after a hard fight, completely driven away from the polling booths, and the victors returned to the front of the Holly Hall schools to resume their "reign of terrors" over the luckless voter, who presuming in his own opinion declared himself in favour of Mr. Shenstone, or was even supposed to have Conservative tendencies by the rabble. After a while the mob began to tire of interfering with the voters, and marched along Holly Hall, where they smashed the windows of a public house kept by a man named Pope. They then marched on to Holly Hall again, and broke the windows of one or two public-houses, notably the Coach and Horses (Mr. David Smith's), an old-fashioned house, over-looking what is called Bug's Gutter. Not a single pane of glass here remained whole. The spirit of mischief seemed now to have thoroughly seduced the mob, who marched on to Queen's Cross, and broke the windows of the Wagon and Horses. Several gentlemen passing in traps – not connected with the election – were stoned and their horses injured. The mob deliberately knocked in the panels of a private cab standing by Messrs. Westwood and Wright's works. Pursuing their career, this mob went into Wellington Road, and after interfering with

the voting there for a quarter of an hour proceeded to the Golden Cross, at Queen's Cross, and broke every window in the house.

ATTACK ON THE DUDLEY ARMS HOTEL.

By this time it was one o'clock, and the crowd in the Market Place, at Dudley was very excited, and telegrams were being received every minute by the Mayor (Alderman Wilkinson), praying for help for the outlying districts, where the polling was being stopped, and his Worship, acting under legal advice, had previously sent for the military and police to Birmingham, and for police to Wolverhampton. The answer from Birmingham was that the military would be there at two o'clock. At the exact moment the telegram arrived some mischievous person in the Market Place, threw a stone, and the example being followed, the large plate-glass windows of the Dudley Arms Hotel were instantly smashed, and one or two of the gentlemen gazing through the lower windows were slightly injured. The mob were not content with this, and they proceeded to break the ball-room windows which lighted the committee room of Mr. Shenstone. The military – fifty of the Royal Horse Artillery – from the Birmingham barracks then came up, and, after a short consultation between the Mayor and the officer in command (Major Thornhill), one half of the men were sent to Brierley Hill for a tour through Woodside, Netherton, Brockmoor and Pensnett. The other half were dispersed to Shaver's End, Kate's Hill, and other wards where the disturbance was not so serious. Matters then began to look a little quieter at Brierley Hill. Alderman Rudge conducted the troops to Brierley Hill, where early in the morning Mr. Shenstone and his party had been mobbed, although not seriously injured. One or two of his party lost their hats and were stuck with potatoes, apples, stones &c. Mr. Shenstone had to shield Mrs. Shenstone with the carriage cushions and coats. The lady behaved with great courage. Beyond this the voting at Brierley was carried on without much disturbance, and the district was considerably

quieter than Netherton or Woodside. So far as could be judged at Brierley Hill, there was a large majority for Mr. Sheriden. About two o'clock, when there were several thousand people in the Market Place, and just as matters were looking as bad as they could be, Mr. Shenstone, looking very pale and tired, walked through to his hotel. He received a few cheers, and some tokens of disapprobation.

THE RIOT ACT READ IN DUDLEY.

By this time (between one and two o'clock) matters had assumed a serious aspect, and the Mayor thought it necessary to read the Riot Act, which was done in the presence of several magistrates. With as little delay as possible, notices were printed intimating that the Riot Act had been read, and were issued to the police to post about the town. The artillery were then instructed to clear the principal streets. The order was obeyed with great coolness and with complete effect. Commencing at Castle Street, the soldiers proceeding, with drawn swords, made a clean sweep of High Street and the Market Place, as far as St. Thomas's Church. The immense crowd which had assembled made an instantaneous stampede down the various streets leading from the Market Place to other parts of the town, and the ground thus cleared was kept until after eight o'clock in the evening, by soldiers and police stationed at various points.

Thus dispersed from the chief centre of attraction in the town, the mob dispersed in different directions to the outskirts of the borough, and committed a variety of riotous acts, inflicting a vast amount of damage, and creating terror wherever they appeared. Bent, apparently, upon spoliation, they attacked not only public-houses, but private residences and provision shops. In short, nothing could exceed the fury of the mob, and for a time they appeared to be perfect masters of the situation, the police not daring to interfere. And now we will proceed to describe some of the details of the riot.

ATTACK ON SERGENT DAVIES.

At about mid-day Sergeant Davies, of the Borough Detective Police was on duty near the top of Wellington Road, when he was “spotted” by a gang of the ruffians on “mischief bent.” No sooner had they seen him than a yell was set up and he was quickly surrounded by the mob, women and children joining in the clamour against him. The sergeant defended himself vigorously, but was at length obliged to seek a refuge in the shop of Mr. Short, a well-known provision dealer in that locality.

ATTACK ON MR. SHORT’S SHOP

No sooner had Davies obtained friendly shelter from the fury of the half drunken crowd, than some of the ringleaders stepped forward and demanded that he be given up to them. Davies not relishing this, determined to keep his place of safety, and the doors being locked, the crowd were completely baffled. They now turned their attention to the scheme of revenge against his protector. Armed with sticks, staves, &c., (many of which had evidently been prepared for the occasion,) and a goodly supply of stones, an attack was made upon the windows, and so fierce was the bombardment for a short time, that the constable was obliged to seek protection in another room. The windows, both upstairs and down, were literally and completely smashed, the wood-work, in many instances, being damaged. The shop windows were broken, and the contents, consisting of greengrocery, eggs, sweets of various kinds, potatoes, and red herrings, were strewn about the streets. Altogether, it is thought that nearly £100 will be required to cover the amount of damage.

ATTACK ON THE SHAKESPEARE INN.

At about the same time and almost immediately opposite, the same mob made an attack on the Shakespeare Inn. Just previously shouts were heard “Now to the Shakespear” and before any opposition could

be made to protect the property, stones and sticks came through the windows in a most alarming manner. The landlady still preserved a stout cudgel worthy of Donybrook fair, as an interesting souvenir of the occasion. Many of the vagabonds were armed with stout sticks with pieces of iron bound round the end, similar to that which is used for making nails.

WOLVERHAMPTON STREET

Passing along Stafford Street into Wolverhampton Street we notice the extensive depredations of the mob. At so short a notice and with so limited a space at our command, it is utterly impossible for us to more than glance at the principle features of the results of the row.

THE OLD INN, EVE HILL.

Late on Wednesday evening we noticed the shutters up at the Old Inn, kept by Mr Brecknall. On enquiring the cause we found that here too the mob had been most persistent in their attentions and had broken everything which they could possibly break in so short a time.

THE SIR ROBERT PEEL INN, SALOP STREET

The mob then passed on to the Sir Robert Peel Inn, Salop Street. The “very Liberal” politics indicated by the sign of the house ought to have protected it from violence from a Radical mob, but as a rule, the people, or perhaps we should say the residuum – as Mr. Bright might call them – are not particularly distinguished for their reflective capacity. At all events smash went in the windows, and a few sticks and half-bricks were all that the visitors left in consideration of the damage they had caused.

ATTACK ON A PRIVATE HOUSE

Not content with the mischief already wrought the mob then paid a visit to 38, Salop Street, the residence of Mr. Benjamin Pickerell. Here they smashed every window and so alarmed the inhabitants, that they were afraid to go to bed during the night. The shutters of this house and the iron bar by which they were fastened, were broken down and carried away to make weapons for further operations.

WINDOWS BROKE AT THE MINERS' ARMS.

At about three o'clock a mob supposed to be composed of Woodside roughs, wearing blue colours, made an attack on the Miners' Arms, Salop Street. Windows were broken, but beyond this little damage was done.

MORE RIOTOUS CONDUCT.

In the same street there is a public-house kept by Edward Bishop, with the somewhat singular title of "The Old Welch Go by." Whether the Welch are in the habit of going by it or not without calling we cannot say, but certain it is the mob could not. The landlord tells us that Mr. Smith-Shenstone's party commenced the attack upon this house, and broke seventeen panes of glass, and shortly afterwards a second lot of rioters on the other side came up and completed the mischief which had been begun. In addition to the windows, numbers of jugs, and other little articles were broken.

DUDLEY STREET

Turning down Dudley Street, on Thursday morning, a picture of desolation presented itself. For some reason utterly inexplicable to us the rioters seems to have thought this a peculiarly favourable spot for indulging in their pastime. Windows were smashed in all directions, and throughout the night many of the inhabitants were afraid to retire to rest.

KATE'S HILL.

In St. John's Ward, the polling proceeded comparatively quietly, a few policemen being sufficient to preserve order. Of course there was a fight or two, near the committee rooms of the respective candidates, but no doubt but that the knowledge that the military were within easy distance contributed much to preserve order in this locality.

AT NETHERTON.

Here King Mob was for many hours completely master of the situation. Before the polling had been in progress long it was found necessary to telegraph to Dudley for more policemen, and although every available man was urgently required in Dudley, Mr. Superintendent Burton managed to send a force of about 25 men to this part of the borough. Even his force was, however, totally insufficient to preserve order, the miners to a man appearing to be enthusiastic in their support of Mr. Sheridan. So convinced were they of the righteousness of their own cause that they refused to allow any other man to express his opinion, and the Castle Inn, the head-quarters of the Conservative committee, had to be closed and remain in a state of siege for several hours. So infuriated were the mob that Conservative voters here as well as at Holly Hall and other places were afraid to go to the poll, and many respectably-dressed person who ought to have known better were heard to boast that the Torys were afraid to show their faces. After the mob had amused themselves for a time in throwing stones at the voters, &c., the assembled in front of Mr. Jordan's grocery shop, smashed the windows, and distributed a large quantity of all kinds of grocery about the streets. Shortly afterwards the cry was raised that the military were coming, and luckily for the residents of the town this turned out to be true. These had been looked for for some time, and now that they had come the mob prepared to give them a warm reception, which they did by sending a shower of stones amongst the men and horses. Discipline, however, proved more than a match for the untrained pugnacity of a Netherton mob, who very shortly after the

arrival of the soldiers were as quiet as necessary. We regret to add that one of the soldiers was severely cut on the face with a stone.

ATTACK ON MR. HINGLEY'S MANAGER

At about two o'clock in the afternoon a number of men went to Mr. N. Hingley's works (Netherton furnaces), and asked to see the manager. This they did, and asked him in a menacing manner for whom he was going to vote. He said he could not tell them. Some of the men then caught a glance at some of Mr. Smith-Shenstone's papers, and these were immediately seized and destroyed, and then stone throwing commenced. A number of large boards were then seized and split into pieces to supply weapons for the men. During this "controversy" one of the rioters was captured, but it was thought prudent to release him in consequence of the distinct threats of murder which were made in case he was detained.

AT BUMBLEHOLE.

From Netherton Furnaces the mob proceeded to Bumble Hole when they smashed a good many windows and committed a variety of other damage.

COWARDLY ATTACK ON MR. AND MRS. SMITH-SHENSTONE.

The courage displayed by Mrs. Smith-Shenstone in this contest has been such as will elicit admiration on all hands. Not only has she attended the roughest of rough meetings and witnessed undismayed all the eccentricities in which a meeting of free and independents is wont to indulge, but she has been with her husband in places of danger, from which many men would have shrunk with fear. Mrs. Shenstone, with a heroism which Englishmen know how to appreciate, accompanied her husband throughout the

whole campaign, and amidst all the tumult of the day of election. It is with a feeling of shame and regret, therefore, that we have to record an act which much receive the reprobation of all decent people. Mr and Mrs. Shenstone were driving along Wolverhampton Street, on the afternoon of the polling day, and when near the Mechanics' Institute they were met by a number of ruffians, who commenced to hoot at Mr. Smith. From hoots they went on to throwing stones, and had it not been for the presence of mind of Mr. Smith, who protected his wife by holding up the carriage rugs, the lady might have been seriously injured. As it was the party were forced to beat a hasty retreat into Mr. Bateman's, auctioneer, and the crowd, acting on former precedents, broke Mr. Bateman's windows for baulking them out of their gratification of stoning a lady. We are glad to add that although stones and other missiles were thrown pretty freely through Mr. Bateman's windows, neither he nor any of his family sustained any injury.

ATTACK ON MR. PERKS'S, WOLVERHAMPTON STREET.

Perhaps the most persistent and vindictive attack was that made upon the grocery shop of Mr. Perks, Wolverhampton Street. In the day time a mob visited the place and broke the windows, but their "little game" was interrupted by the arrival of the police. At eleven o'clock at night, however, they returned and endeavoured to break into the house, but in this they were again interrupted by the police. About an hour and a half later, several roughs, for the third time, went to the shop, armed with a heavy hammer, intending to break open the door. The police, on this occasion, were not to be seen, the ruffians having, no doubt, watched them to a safe distance. Of course, the inmates were much alarmed at these persistent attacks, but with admirable presence of mind, Mr. Perks's son got on to the roof of the house and fired a pistol into the air. This had the double effect of rousing the neighbours and frightening the attacking party, and assistance being shortly

forthcoming, the men retreated. The damage done in this shop is considerable.

IN THE EVENING.

After the close of the poll, owing to the admirable arrangements of the military and police, order reigned once more in Dudley. Of course there were a few fights at public houses, but with the exception of the attack at Mr. Perks's, and one or two other isolated instances, we have not heard that anything serious took place. The police and military kept the Market Place clear, allowing only residents to pass the lines until a few minutes past eight o'clock, when the bugle sounded, and the soldiers leaving their posts, assembled in front of the Dudley Arms Hotel, where their billets were distributed to them. A large crowd assembled in the Market Place immediately it was opened to the public, but beyond a little cheering and groaning there were no symptoms of disorder. By half-past nine o'clock it was considered that there was no fear of any further outbreak of violence, and the Birmingham detachment of police returned home by train. The military did not return to Birmingham until the next day.

THE WOUNDED IN THE FRAY.

During the evening exaggerated rumours were prevalent concerning persons killed or fatally injured in the fights and ugly rushes which had been so frequent during the day. Among the worst cases of injury we have been able to investigate are those of a boiler-maker, named Horton, who is employed at Messrs. Cochrane's works at Woodside, and a minder, named Aaron Shaw, of Cawney Hill, Kate's Hill. The former had his face cut open at Woodside with a brickbat or a piece of slag, the injury rendering him insensible for a long time. He was conveyed home, and it is feared he will not recover. Shaw was in Earl Street, Kate's Hill, when he was knocked down. His head came into violent contact with a stone step, and he was kicked until he was

insensible. There were many such instances, but the persons injured were in many cases unknown, or those interested in them decline to give any information for fear of being what is called "spotted" or marked for further punishment.

THE RESULT OF THE POLLING

The result of the poll was not made known until late on Thursday evening, when it was declared by the Mayor to be as follows: -

Sheridan (L)	5,149
Smith-Shenstone (L.C.)	4,181
Majority for Sheriden.....	968

The town was perfectly quiet, and there was little display of party feeling on Thursday. We will not here make further comment on the systematic action which appeared to prevail to keep Mr. Shenstone's supporters from the poll. Judging from that gentleman's address which appears in another column, it is not improbable that the subject may be enquired into before a competent tribunal. We hope it may be so for whatever the result, a free people in a boasted free country have a right to be protected in the exercise of their political privileges. The tyranny and terrorism of an ignorant mob is not for ever to be endured – even in Dudley.