

The weavers also struck on August 31, 1818, Stockport being the centre and backbone of the strike. On September 3rd a procession was held in Stockport, at which 1,222 men and 355 women paraded with two fifes, and they were joined afterwards by many thousands. On the same day there was a Reform meeting in Stockport, as already mentioned. After September 5th the weavers settled down to enforce their demands in the different districts. In Stockport they adopted the system of billeting out the workless weavers amongst those in work. This strike, like the preceding one, proved disastrous to the workers, and they gained no advantage in the end.

Trade being depressed at the end of 1818 and the beginning of 1819, the cotton workers of Stockport, who had tried industrial action time and time again, only to make their position even worse than it was before, took up the subject of Political Reform, which at that time was agitating the minds of the middle and working classes in various parts of the country.

In the September of 1818 three leaders of the Reform movement, Bagguley, Drummond, and Johnston, were arrested for making seditious speeches in the town, and, failing to obtain bail satisfactory to Mr. Lloyd, the Magistrates' Clerk at Stockport, were kept in prison until the following Spring Assizes at Chester, when they were each sentenced to be imprisoned in the common gaol for two years.

While these three men were in prison awaiting trial, the work of agitation was strenuously carried on, meetings were held, inflammatory speeches made, and many of the speakers arrested. On the 19th January, 1819, Henry Hunt commonly called "Orator Hunt," arrived in Stockport, and addressed the people from the Bull's Head window in the Market Place. He afterwards led to Manchester a procession of people, many of whom carried banners with such mottoes as "Rights of Man," "No Corn Laws," "Hunt and Liberty," &c. One of the songs sung at the meetings at this time had the following verse, which, if not strictly grammatical, at all events shows what the people had in mind:—

Bagguley, Drummond, and Johnston
In Chester Castle lies,
For speaking of the Corn Laws,
And opening of our eyes.

On February 15th, 1819, a very large meeting was held on Sandy Brow, Stockport, at which the Rector, the Rev. Charles Prescott, read the Riot Act, and ordered the Yeomanry and constables to clear the ground, and to seize the flags and emblems. The people resisted, and the authorities were defied. To celebrate this victory a poem, entitled "Sandy Brow," was published, the following being an extract:—

Hail! sacred spot, to truth and virtue dear,
Where freedom's truths have often charm'd my ear,
Hail! sacred spot, where freedom's standard waved,
And all the force of proud oppression braved.
Let ages yet unborn hear, when and how,
The sons of freedom fought on Sandy Brow."

On April 15th, 1819, Bagguley, Drummond, and Johnston were tried at Chester and convicted. A protest meeting against their conviction was held in Stockport, presided over by the Rev. Joseph Harrison. A memorial was