

THE PLATT MEMORIAL AT OLDHAM.

Guardian. — 18 Sept. 78.

The ceremony of unveiling a statue of the late Mr. John Platt, M.P. took place on Saturday at Oldham, and was the occasion of great rejoicings on the part of the inhabitants of the town. Mr. Platt was for seven years (1855-72) member of Parliament for Oldham, in conjunction with its present representative, Mr. J. T. Hibbert. That position was but the fitting reward of a life of public usefulness and active philanthropy, and it was not, consequently, for services in that capacity alone that his fellow-townsmen desired to honour his memory. As one of the great "captains of industry," Oldham is pre-eminently indebted to him and the firm with which he was connected for its great prosperity. The personal history of the late Mr. Platt is in great measure bound up with the progress of the firm and with the history of Oldham, socially and politically. In 1847 he became the President of the Oldham Lyceum; he subscribed largely to the funds towards the erection of the new and handsome premises in Union-street; and in 1864 he added to the institution, at a cost of more than £2,000, a fine school of science and art, which the firm gratuitously furnished with models and casts for the use of the students. In Mr. Platt the scheme for the extension of the Owens College found a liberal supporter, £500 in aid of that scheme being subscribed in the name of the firm, who have subsequently contributed a similar sum towards the endowment of the chair of engineering at the College. For the benefit of their workpeople the firm established during his lifetime new-rooms and libraries at their works. Mr. Platt had scarcely attained his majority when he commenced to take a lively interest in the affairs of the town. In the struggle to secure a charter of incorporation, he was the leading spirit in favour of the scheme, and in 1849 he had the gratification of seeing his efforts crowned with success. He was elected a member of the first corporation, and in 1855 and 1856, and again in 1861, was mayor of the borough. Politically—as a thorough-going Liberal—the late Mr. Platt was prominently before his fellow-townsmen for a quarter of a century. In 1865 he was prevailed upon to offer himself as a candidate for the borough, and he was elected, along with Mr. Hibbert. Soon after his death a movement was started to provide a suitable memorial to Mr. Platt, and subscriptions to the amount of over £3,000 were received. Sculptors were invited to send in designs for a statue, and one by Mr. D. W. Stevenson, Edinburgh, receiving the special approval of the Committee, that gentleman was entrusted with the work. The memorial, as now completed, consists of a bronze statue of Mr. Platt, 10ft. in height, with a subsidiary emblematical figure at each corner of the pedestal. The latter is of Peterhead granite, and is 14ft. high. Mr. Platt is represented as standing in an easy and graceful attitude, the right arm being extended, with the hand open, as if in the attitude of directing some work to be done, and with the left hand the overcoat is thrown slightly back. The frank and open countenance of Mr. Platt is strikingly reproduced. The statues at the corners are female draped figures, 7ft. in height, representing engineering, manufacture, science, and art. In executing these the sculptor has adopted a free and bold style, admirably in keeping with the centre figure, and yet so toned down as not to detract from the general appearance. The memorial, which was cast at the foundry of Sir John Steel, Edinburgh, has been placed in the centre of the square fronting the Town Hall.

Saturday afternoon was observed as a general holiday in Oldham. The places of business and the shops of almost every tradesman in the central parts of the town were closed. Unfortunately the day was wet and the streets were muddy, but this only served to bring into stronger relief the enthusiasm of the people. A procession, estimated to number from 10,000 to 12,000 persons, and representing every public body and every trade in the town, paraded the principal streets. It comprised the borough and county magistrates, the Town Council, the Board of Guardians, the members of the Lyceum and other literary institutes, the Orders of Freemasons, Foresters, Ship-borders, Oddfellows, and Druids; the operative spinners, minders, and twistlers; smiths, plumbers, tinplate workers, shipmakers, brassfounders, and machinists. The largest body in the procession were the employees of Messrs. Platt, Brothers, and Co. upwards of 3,000 being present from the new works at Werneth, and 1,000 from the works at Mumps. In commemoration of the event each person taking part in the procession was furnished with a medal, which bore a representation of the statue and was mounted upon a handsome rosette. The medal was cast by Mr. G. Kenning, Bridge-street, Manchester. All the principal streets, which were decorated with banners, were crowded with sight-seers, and the space in front of the Town Hall, the terraces below the parish church, and the church-yard appeared one sea of human faces. The unveiling ceremony took place at four o'clock, and was performed by Mrs. Platt, widow of the late Mr. Platt. She was accompanied by the Misses Platt and several other members of the family, and there were also present the Mayor

presenting every public body and every trade in the town, paraded the principal streets. It comprised the borough and county magistrates, the Town Council, the Board of Guardians, the members of the Lyceum and other literary institutes, the Orders of Freemasons, Foresters, Snapherds, Oddfellows, and Druids; the operative spinners, minders, and twistors; smiths, plumbers, tinplate workers, ekpmakers, brassfounders, and machinists. The largest body in the procession were the *employes* of Messrs. Platt, Brothers, and Co. upwards of 3,000 being present from the new works at Werneth, and 1,000 from the works at Mumps. In commemoration of the event each person taking part in the procession was furnished with a medal, which bore a representation of the statue and was mounted upon a handsome rosette. The medal was cast by Mr. G. Kenning, Bridge-street, Manchester. All the principal streets, which were decorated with banners, were crowded with sight-seers, and the space in front of the Town Hall, the terraces below the parish church, and the churchyard appeared one sea of human faces. The unveiling ceremony took place at four o'clock, and was performed by Mrs. Platt, widow of the late Mr. Platt. She was accompanied by the Misses Platt and several other members of the family; and there were also present the Mayor (Mr. Alderman Boddén), Mr. J. T. Hibbert, M.P.; the Mayors of Ashton, Burnley, Bury, and Warrington; Mr. J. W. Radcliffe, Mr. W. Wrigley, chairman of the Memorial Committee, &c. After a few remarks by Mr. Wrigley, Mrs. Platt unveiled the statue, which was the signal for enthusiastic cheering.—Mr. S. R. PLATT, on behalf of his mother, thanked the people of Oldham for the tribute they had paid to his father's memory.—Mr. S. BUCKLEY, on behalf of the Memorial Committee, read a deed conveying the statue to the Corporation for ever, and the Mayor accepted the gift. The proceedings then terminated.

A banquet was subsequently held in the large room of the Town Hall; Mr. W. Wrigley, chairman of the Memorial Committee, presided.—The toast to the memory of the late Mr. Platt was drunk in silence.—In responding to the health of the Houses of Parliament, which was proposed by Mr. J. W. RADCLIFFE,

Mr. J. T. HIBBERT, M.P. said the demonstration that had been made that day had been characterised by so much unanimity and enthusiasm, and by such an entire absence of any party spirit that might have been engendered in however small a degree during the lifetime of the man whom they were met to honour, that it was highly creditable to the town. Without entering into political topics, he might state that the last session of Parliament was one of the longest on record, and was remarkable as having had the longest sitting known in the annals of Parliament. On one occasion the House of Commons sat from four o'clock in the afternoon until twenty minutes past ten the next morning, and he thought, therefore, that no one ought to complain that members of Parliament were not hard-working men.—(“Hear, hear,” and laughter.) The life of a member of Parliament was not easy,—he did not lie upon a bed of roses; and it was surprising that there were so many people always anxious to get into that hardworking place.—(Laughter.) There were some pleasant features about it no doubt, and one was that, however much members might differ in opinion, they always agreed to treat each other with respect. The moment a division was over members who had voted against each other would walk away, arm in arm, in as friendly a manner as possible. He hoped the same spirit might extend throughout the country.—(Hear, hear.) The late session was largely devoted to foreign affairs. He would not enter into the Eastern Question, for they must all be heartily sick of it by this time, and he hoped that next session Parliament would be able to devote a little more of its attention to affairs nearer home.—(Hear, hear.) The time had come when, instead of thinking so much about foreign politics, they should think about improving matters at home. In the iron industry, in the cotton industry, and in the coal trade,—in nearly every department, in fact, exports had been falling off; and the time had come when they should try to find a remedy for this state of things and to place the country in a state of greater prosperity than it had been experiencing lately. This was certainly not the first time they had suffered depression, and they must keep a good heart, but they must ask their legislators to do everything they could to open trade abroad and to promote the prosperity of the country.—(Applause).—The proceedings shortly afterwards terminated.

In the evening the Platt Statue, the Town Hall, the Lyceum, and many of the public buildings were illuminated.