

THE KINDERSCOUT RIGHT-OF-WAY QUESTION.

At Hayfield yesterday the interest with regard to the question of a right of way across Kinderscout was considerable. A rumour had spread that an attempt to cross the mountain was to be made in the morning by an organized body of people, and this brought together a large assemblage from the surrounding districts. Later in the day there were many visitors from Manchester and Sheffield, and most of these walked to the foot of the Scout, but no attempt was made to cross the higher moors. It is necessary to add that the Committee who are engaged in the settlement of the question deprecate any action which would be outside the law. In the afternoon a large public meeting was held on a piece of vacant ground in the middle of the village.—Dr. Martin, medical officer of health for Gorton, presided. He remarked that it was not surprising that the interest in this matter was large and widespread, as the whole question was really one of national importance. As population everywhere increased and our great towns became still larger, we had also quicker, cheaper, and easier methods of getting outside these great centres. We therefore needed to secure large public breathing grounds in which we might escape from the vitiated air of our cities. Of such a kind of breathing ground was the great open moor of Kinderscout, and he thought it worth remembering that centuries ago, when there were first people in the land, Kinderscout under primitive tenure must have been common land. It was, considering the age of the world, a comparatively new thing that land had passed into the holding of a few people, and that that was so was a matter for the grave consideration of our great landlords. Undoubtedly we had a moral right to the enjoyment of the pleasures of these open country spaces, and if the owners wished their legal rights respected they must not forget the moral rights of the great body of the public. But besides that he believed we had also a legal right of way across Kinderscout moor—(hear, hear).—and that legal right was what they now intended to make secure.—(Applause.) They had met to protest publicly against the action of the landowners which attempted to deprive the public of its rights by stopping this way across the mountain.—(Applause.)—A letter was read from Dr. Pankhurst in which that gentleman expressed regret at his inability to attend the meeting. The object sought, Dr. Pankhurst wrote, was one "that must command the most enthusiastic support of the entire community. To preserve public rights over open lands such as Kinderscout is of the highest importance to the whole people. In this we are all interested. As an old and faithful soldier in the cause of the rights of the people I am glad to stand by you. If any fund is raised to sustain this work I shall be pleased to contribute."—Mr. W. H. Chadwick (the old Chartist) spoke at considerable length on the question of the rights of the people to common lands and to a footpath over Kinderscout in particular. If it came to a question of "making a way" over the mountain, he would be ready to cross even were he to undergo imprisonment for so doing.—(Applause.) An old magistrate of the county had, he said, written him that there was certainly a right of way across from Hayfield to the Snake, for he (the magistrate) had used it on occasions for fifty years.—(Hear, hear.) He proposed: "That this meeting expresses its indignation at the conduct of the landowners of Kinderscout in attempting to close the roads over the Scout, and pledges itself to stand by the Association just formed in the efforts to be made by the Association to secure by constitutional means the rights of the public to the use of the footpaths as established by usage, custom, and right."—The resolution was seconded by Mr. W. Smithard (Derby) and carried with applause.—A vote of thanks was afterwards passed to Mr. Chadwick for his address.