

the corn the people shall curse him, but blessings shall be upon the head of him that selleth it." And during the famine years of the agitation, this motto was abundantly verified.

It was because "the little group who met several times in each week in a dingy room on an upper floor in Manchester were fired by the conviction that what they were fighting against was not merely a fiscal blunder, but a national iniquity," that they prevailed.

Entering Parliament in 1841, Cobden "startled men by an accent that was strange in the House of Commons. The thoughtful among them recognized the rare tone of reality and the note of a man dealing with things and not with words." Thenceforth his every energy was bent to this one end—the repeal of the Corn Laws. In the interval of parliamentary sessions his diary reads like an early Methodist minister's in the frequency of his speeches and restless itineraries. Private business cares went by the board, and even antagonists admired the man's altruistic zeal.

Early in 1839 a subscription of six thousand pounds was raised, "the first instalment of many thousands yet to come." A bazaar in the February of 1842 brought in nearly ten thousand more. "They had been spending," said Cobden, "a hundred pounds a week. They ought to spend a thousand."

The income of the League rose to £1,000 a week, then to £2,000 a week, and when a call was made at a Manchester meeting for a quarter of a million for printing, lecturing, and public agitation, £60,000 was subscribed on the spot.

The country was deluged with tracts, and everywhere the living voice of the lecturer emphasized the silent messenger. Still, though by 1842 a hundred thousand pounds had

gone, "the Corn Laws seemed more immovable than ever." But there was no faint-heartedness. The Council made up their minds at once to raise a new fund of fifty thousand pounds; and, notwithstanding the terrible condition of the cotton trade, the amount was collected in a very short time.

Fifty thousand pounds were spent in 1843, and "a fund of a hundred thousand pounds was desired for the following year, and before the end of 1844 nearly ninety thousand pounds of that sum had been actually raised."

The Leaguers were in earnest, and after a seven years' struggle, they gained the victory.

Cobden wrote to his wife, "My dearest Kate. Hurrah! Hurrah! The Corn Bill is law, and now my work is done." The food tax was abolished, and emancipated labor soon made England the richest country in the world, a nobler victory than that of Waterloo.

Cobden, crowned with honors and with the thanks of a nation, save a few great landlords, set out to visit by invitation the great courts of Europe, and "to endeavor to enforce those truths which have been irresistible at home." At Madrid, Paris, Turin, Venice, Rome, Naples, Vienna, Berlin, St. Petersburg and Moscow, the Pope, kings, emperors, statesmen, received and feted the hero of free trade, and the people dragged his carriage and shouted themselves hoarse in honor of the emancipator of labor. Well had it been for the rulers of Europe had they given greater heed to his arguments and warnings. Two years later, the Revolution of 1848 set their thrones rocking and tumbling to earth, and showed them the danger of sitting on the safety-valve and repressing the explosive forces of society.

In this after work, following Kosuth, he anticipated the aboveboard, square deal that characterizes the new