

# THE LANCET

## SATURDAY

### WEEKLY

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Mr. John Bright.

MR. BRIGHT may be said to have first distinguished himself in political life by his hostility to the Corn Laws, the worst evils of which, it was asserted, were felt in the manufacturing districts. He was associated in the work of the Anti-Corn Law League with Richard Cobden; and it must be admitted that both these champions of Free Trade comported themselves throughout the controversy, with slight and venial exceptions, as became good citizens and good subjects of the Crown.

The Anti-Corn Law League sprung from an association formed in 1838, to obtain the repeal of the obnoxious statutes. It was not, however, until the League visited London, and began its great system of "Tours" into the agricultural districts, that Mr. Bright became extensively identified with the proceedings of this body. His speeches at the Drury-lane Theatre meetings

were circulated all over the kingdom, and insured him great attention at the provincial gatherings of farmers; and his earnest and impassioned manner of dealing with facts and figures told well with such audiences. He also greatly distinguished himself by his activity in organizing the bazaars held, in aid of the League, in Manchester, in 1842, and in Covent Garden Theatre in 1845.

In April, 1843, he unsuccessfully contested the representation of the city of Durham, for which he again stood in July following, and was returned; and he continued to sit for Conservative Durham until 1847, when he was first returned for Manchester. His contests for Durham were costly, but his expenses were paid by subscription among the friends of the Anti-Corn Law League. In his speech on his return, he professed to throw aside party considerations

altogether, and to support measures of improvement, from whatever party they might come. He made his maiden speech in Parliament on the motion of Mr. Ewart for extending the principles of Free Trade, August 7th, 1843; and in the same month he opposed the Slave-Trade Suppression Bill, as calculated to inflict a serious injury on the commerce of the country connected with the regions to which the Bill applied.

Mr. Bright, speaks well: his voice is good, his enunciation distinct, and his delivery is free from any unpleasant peculiarity or mannerism; and it tells something of his cast of mind to find occasionally in his speeches quoting from Shelley and Wordsworth. "The man's nature," quoting from a recent article in *Blackwood*, "is intensely intolerant, autocratic and despotic. He would have made an excellent Mohammed had