

political party, called the Chartists, had been for some time agitating for certain changes in the national institutions, and the present crisis brought them prominently forward. These changes were vote by ballot, universal suffrage, annual parliaments, equality of electoral districts, the abolition of a property qualifications for members of the House of Commons, and the payment of members of that house. Some riots took place, but the spirit of disaffection gradually subsided.

3. The Whigs, who had been in power since 1831, had for some time been losing their popularity with the nation, and in August, 1841, were forced to resign office, having been beaten in the Commons on a bill brought in by them for the suspension of the Constitution of the Island of Jamaica, which was in a disturbed state from questions arising out of the liberation of the negroes. A Conservative administration was formed under the leadership of Sir Robert Peel. Ireland, in the meantime, was loudly demanding the repeal of the national union, and holding monster meetings of the people for that purpose, under the direction of the celebrated lawyer and orator, Daniel O'Connell. In England the cry for freetrade, especially in corn, became general; an association, called the Anti-Corn Law League was particularly active and zealous in advancing this object; and in 1845, a famine being threatened in many parts of the United Kingdom, free trade was at last conceded. Sir Robert Peel introduced a Bill into parliament which wholly repealed the duty on corn; and many of the import duties were reduced or