

era of peace and prosperity thitherto unknown, was signed 1st May, 1707, and was considered a great triumph by England, flushed with her continental successes."

As to Ireland, the struggle was longer, but England finally triumphed.

"After the crisis of 1798," says Gustavus de Beaumont,\* "England, holding Ireland rebellious but vanquished, chastised her without pity. Twenty years before, Ireland regained possession of her political liberty. England kept in bitter remembrance Ireland's success, and did not fail to take advantage of her weakness to bring her under the yoke.

"The Irish parliament, after the recovery of its independence, became troublesome to England. To obtain the mastery, corrupt influences were necessary; despite which, it still offered opposition; the English government therefore decided on its abolition.

"At the news, Ireland quivered like a dead body on the touch of the iron which has just lacerated and deprived it of life. Of thirty-two counties, twenty-one protested energetically against the destruction of the Irish parliament. The parliament itself, on being asked to take the initiative in its own abolition, refused, and by its vote maintained its constitutional existence.

"Indignant at the servility demanded of the body to which he belonged, Grattan vehemently opposed the ministerial project.† But resistance was in vain. The only obstacle of any importance to the views of England was the Irish parliament, which refused to vote its own destruction. Hitherto its acts had been purchased; now its death must be bought also. Corruption on an extensive scale was put in operation; places, pensions, favors of every kind, peerages, money, were lavished; and the same men who, in 1799, had repelled the proposition of union, on the 26th May, 1800, adopted it by a vote of 118 to 63. It is calculated that of the 118, 73 were either public functionaries or state pensioners. The greatest source of opposition to the abolition of the Irish parliament was the rich Irish proprietors, who, as one of their aristocratic privileges, had the right of disposition of a certain number of seats in the lower house. This privilege was in their eyes sacred, and to deprive them of it, spoliation. How were their outcries appeased? It was roughly estimated that each rotten borough was worth to its owner £15,000 sterling, and that sum was promised as an indemnity to

\* Ireland, Social, Political, and Religious.

† Grattan's Speeches. Collection of Grattan's speeches before the Irish and also the English parliament, published by his son, 4 vols. 8vo, 1822. Grattan's two sons are still (1862) members of the English House of Commons.