

I was right; arguments, unanswerable, came to my mind, and what I then prepared confirmed me in my determination to persevere; a great spirit arose among the people, and the speech which I delivered afterwards in the House communicated its fire and impelled them on; the country caught the flames, and it rapidly extended. I was supported by eighteen counties, by the grand jury addresses, and the resolutions of the Volunteers. I stood upon that ground, and was determined never to yield. I brought on the question on the 19th of April, 1780. 'That was a great day for Ireland; that day gave her liberty.' The speech Grattan delivered on that day was a triumphant vindication of his country's rights. Here is an extract:—

"I have no ambition, unless it be the ambition to break your chain and contemplate your glory. I never will be satisfied so long as the meanest cottager in Ireland has a link of the British chain clanking to his rags; he may be naked, he shall not be in iron; and I do see that the time is at hand, the spirit is gone forth, the declaration is planted; and, though great men should apostatize, yet the cause will live; and, though the public speaker should die, yet the immortal fire shall outlast the organ that conveyed it, and the breath of liberty, like the word of the holy man, will not die with the prophet, but survive him. I shall move you: 'That the King's most excellent Majesty and the Lords and Commons of Ireland are the only power competent to make laws to bind Ireland.'"

This is what the Irish people are now unanimously looking for, and it shows the spirit which lived in Grattan is still alive; and no one, no matter how prejudiced, can say that it is not the unanimous wish of the Irish people that they should have their own Parliament. The same thing was said that time to Grattan as is now said to Butt: that the movement was only "veiled rebellion."

After a long course of events, the rebellion of '98 having been quashed, etc., and Grattan having suffered from severe illness, we come to 1800. The friends of Ireland were necessarily anxious that Grattan should re-enter Parliament. It chanced that a vacancy in the borough of Wicklow occurred just in time to enable the patron of the borough, Mr. Tighe, to have Grattan returned at the opening of the session. A stormy debate had occupied the day and night, when at seven o'clock in the morning of the 15th of January, 1800, Grattan, emaciated and feeble from his long illness, entered the House of Commons supported by two trusty

friends, Mr. Arthur Moor and Mr. W. B. Ponsonby. His reappearance at that awful crisis of his country's fate excited the strongest emotion in the House and galleries. A cheer broke forth, prolonged and vehement; friends crowded round him; but their delight at his return to the scene of his old glories was qualified by the deep anxiety with which they regarded his evident physical exhaustion. Being unable to stand, he obtained permission to address the House sitting; and in the course of a speech of two hours, he dissected the ministerial project, exposing the sophistry of its advocates, and demonstrating its fatal tendency, with the vigorous logic and impassioned eloquence that had characterised his most effective parliamentary efforts. During the session he frequently spoke against the ministerial scheme. On the 14th of February, Mr. Corry taunted him with his absence from Ireland during the previous year. Grattan, in his answer, took occasion to refer to the monstrous crimes committed by the agents of the administration: "I could not join the rebel—I could not join the government—I could not join torture—I could not join half-hanging—I could not join free quarter—I could take part with neither. I was therefore absent from a scene where I could not be active without self-reproach, nor indifferent with safety." He also said, "The treason of the Minister against the liberties of the people was infinitely worse than the rebellion of the people against the Minister."

In the beginning of 1820 his health gave way, and his physical weakness, increased by old age, rendered it apparent that his time on earth must be short. His anxiety to get to London to move the Catholic question in Parliament induced him to disregard the advice of his physicians, who assured him that he ought to avoid all mental and bodily exertion; and that if he persisted in undertaking the journey, the responsibility would be his own. His weakness was so great that the leading Catholics implored him to abandon the intention of going to plead their cause in London. He said, "Nothing but physical impossibility shall prevent me, as I consider that my last breath belongs to my country." He also said that, if unable to speak for the Catholics, he could pray for them. He had always a profound sense of religion. He was free from sanctimonious pretension, or the cant of piety; but he only gave expression to his life-long sentiments when he said, in his last illness, "I can do nothing of myself. I prostrate myself, with all my sins, at the foot