

ted on the ground that he had no evil intentions, and was not responsible for the actions of his followers.

234. **A free Parliament for Ireland.**—Ireland, too, was causing a great deal of anxiety to the British government. There was in Ireland a Parliament, but it scarcely deserved the name, as only those who were Protestants had the right to vote at the election of members, and no Act passed by it could become law except with the consent of the British government. In addition, Great Britain had control over commerce and navigation, and regulated Irish trade as jealously as it had tried to regulate that of the American colonies. As a result, the Irish people as a whole were bitterly dissatisfied with their condition.

During the war with France and Spain, the coasts of Ireland were ravaged by privateers and the country itself was threatened with invasion. To defend their homes the



HENRY GRATTAN

Protestants took up arms and soon over forty thousand volunteers were enrolled. The Roman Catholics at first did not take an active part in the movement, as they were not allowed to bear arms, but they too joined at last. These volunteers, while loyal to the crown, adopted a distinctly national policy; their influence soon made itself felt. In 1780 the British government removed many of the restrictions on Irish trade, permitted the export of wool from Ireland, and threw open to the Irish merchants the trade with the colonies. But

this did not satisfy the volunteers, who by this time numbered nearly one hundred thousand armed and disciplined men. Led by Henry Grattan, they demanded a free Parliament for Ireland. The British government felt that to oppose the