

before the Irish Parliament would give its consent to the union. Finally, in spite of the opposition of Grattan, the Act of Union was passed in 1800 and went into force on January 1st, 1801. By its terms one hundred commoners and thirty-two peers were given seats in the British Parliament. There was to be absolute free trade between the two countries, and the flag of St. Patrick was to be added to the Union Jack. The united countries were henceforth to be known as Great Britain and Ireland. Pitt had promised, as soon as the union was carried out, to repeal the penal laws against the Roman Catholics; but this promise, owing to the refusal of the king to agree, he was unable to carry out. Indeed, it was the opposition of the king to this act of justice that led to Pitt's resignation of the premiership in 1801.

242. **Social unrest.**—Great Britain had been at war almost continually from 1775 to 1815, and now that the country was at peace, the suffering caused by the wars began to receive attention. The national debt was more than six times as great as at the beginning of the wars, the interest alone amounting to one hundred and sixty million dollars a year. To raise this amount and to meet the expenses of government, taxes were very heavy. Nearly everything that people used in daily life was taxed. Hundreds of men were ruined by the heavy taxes, or by the effect of the wars on their business. Banks and factories were closed, and thousands of people were out of work.

In 1815 a law was passed by which no grain was allowed to be brought into England until the price reached ten shillings a bushel. The next year there was a bad harvest, the price of grain rose, many people could not get food, and riots broke out all over the country, accompanied by destruction of property and the stoppage of business.

Another cause of distress was the rapid introduction of machinery, which threw many thousands of men out of employment. The people thought that the new machines were the reason for all the trouble. Night attacks were made upon the factories, and many machines were destroyed. This led