

Soon after two o'clock, Her Majesty came down to the House, attended by the great officers of State, in the usual manner, and with the accustomed ceremony; and having ascended the throne, and desired their lordships to be seated, the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod was instructed to command the attendance of the Commons at the bar of this House. On their arrival, Her Majesty made and subscribed the declaration against transubstantiation pursuant to the Bill of Rights."

Another authority tells us that,

"When the Queen had ascended the throne in the House of Lords, she directed the Lord Chancellor to read the declaration against transubstantiation, which she repeated after His Lordship sentence by sentence, very articulately, and with much feeling and solemnity."

It was indeed, an occasion calling for feeling and solemnity. I have no doubt that Her Majesty, then a tender young girl of eighteen years of age, must have felt profoundly humiliated at being obliged by law to brand a large, loyal and unoffending portion of her subjects as "superstitious and idolatrous."

I have tried to place clearly before you the history of this discreditable declaration. You have seen that it was first exacted from officeholders, both civil and military. No papist need apply. It was next extended so as to disable papists from sitting in either House of Parliament. It was finally made obligatory on the monarch. Such is the chronological genealogy of the declaration against Catholic doctrines; it has not a pedigree to be proud of.

Let me now briefly relate the efforts that have been made at different times for its abolition. This declaration remained in full vigor from 1689 until the election of Daniel O'Connell, in 1828, to represent Clare in the British House of Commons. Of course he could not take the Test Oath nor subscribe the Declaration against Transubstantiation; his seat was declared vacant, a new election was held and O'Connell was again returned. The agitation that preceded, accompanied and followed these stirring events, resulted in what is called Catholic Emancipation in 1829. At that time this declaration and the oath of the Test Act were abolished for members of Parliament, and for almost all office-holders. From a few offices—such as the Lord Lieutenantcy of Ireland, the Lord Chancellorship of England and of Ireland, and the chancellorships of the different universities—Catholics were still debarred.