

GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

EDINBURGH, May, 1828.

The Committee, to whom was referred the King's letter, produced the draft of an answer, which was read and approved of; and his Grace the Commissioner, at the request of the Assembly, undertook to transmit it to his Majesty, by whom, his Grace said, he would take it upon himself to say, it would be received most graciously.

Dr. Chalmers conceived if there was any other topic appropriate for a place in the answer to his Majesty's communication—the one most appropriate, was the subject of the repeal of the test and corporation acts: and it was not good taste in them to leave it out. While he was walking through the streets, he observed large wooden props resting obliquely against the walls of some of the houses, placed there to uphold them. When he saw this, it seemed to be irresistibly implied that these were the craniest edifices in the street. So he thought it had been with the fabric of the English Church, which incurred the whole disgrace of these unseemly props, and which had increased her strength in taking them down. Her only blunder was, that to please the fancy of certain devotees, long accustomed to these props, and whose taste would have been offended by the want of them, they had erected in their place buttresses of mere gingerbread and stucco, in the form of a declaration. It was at one time proposed to include the Church of Scotland in the declaration; and this he would have felt as a stigma. But a resolution more satisfactory to him, was afterwards adopted, by which the English reserved the whole of the stigma to themselves. It appeared a striking lesson to blind intolerance, that the Church of Scotland, in the midst of disorder, had stood proof—her motto "*nec tamen consumebatur*" was now placed in characters as fresh and undefaced as ever on her forehead, and our establishment bids as fair for sound and vigorous existence as any other on the face of the earth. Believing, as he did, that without the aid of the national Clergy, all the efforts and zeal of the "dissenting bodies" would not have saved the land from lapsing into tenfold grosser heathenism, he would be fearful of any step which tended to the overthrow of the national establishments. He did not apprehend so much danger from over-tardy advances towards liberty, as from the over impetuous career of headlong and unguarded liberalism. (Hear.) He concluded by moving—that the General Assembly should present an address to his Majesty, expressive of their high satisfaction of the act which had obtained the sanction of the Legislature, for repealing so much of several acts of Parliament, which imposed the necessity of taking the Sacrament as a qualification for entering upon office.

Dr. Singer seconded the motion.

Dr. Cook rejoiced as much as any man at the repeal of the test and corporation acts; but he objected to the motion of his learned friend, because it was contrary to the practice of the General Assembly, to address his Majesty on the passing of acts of Parliament of a political nature. He deprecated all political discussions in that house, and had always done so. He concluded with a counter-motion—that while the General Assembly fully recognize the wisdom of the Legislature in repealing the test and corporation acts, it was unnecessary, and would be at variance with their usages and practice, to approach the throne, or to address his Majesty on the subject.

Mr. Buchanan, of Stichel, seconded the motion of Dr. Cook.

Mr. Lewis Ross, of Nigg, considered Dr. Cook as out of order in his motion, and that he ought to have met that of Dr. Chalmers, by moving the previous question.

Principal M'Farlan said, the general principles laid down by the Rev. Professor, would be recognised by every member of the house, for all, as men, must receive the repeal of the tests with feelings of unmixed satisfaction. Holding that opinion,