

who would not receive the Sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England, take the oaths of supremacy and allegiance, and renounce the doctrine of transubstantiation. Oaths already existing excluded Catholics from the House of Commons; but the Test Act drove them also from the House of Peers, and from every official position. It was particularly aimed at the Duke of York, who had long been known to be a Catholic. True to his convictions, he at once resigned command of the fleet—a position in which he had rendered considerable service to the country. The Duke had recently married as his second wife a Catholic princess, Mary d'Este, daughter of the Duke of Modena. This fact had given additional intensity to the Protestant feeling of the nation. The Duke's daughters by Anne Hyde were subsequently married—Mary, the elder, to William, Prince of Orange; the younger, Anne, to Prince George of Denmark.

17. In 1673 the rule of the Cabal came to an end. Clifford, as a Catholic, was driven from office by the Test Act. Shaftesbury played the rôle of an ultra-Protestant, and became the leader of the opposition party. The control of affairs passed into the hands of the Earl of Danby, a man of good character, a strong friend of the Established Church, and an ardent upholder of the royal prerogative.

Cabal
dissolved.

18. In 1678 a disgraced clergyman, named Titus Oates, pretended to have made a great discovery. Before taking orders, Oates had been a zealous Dissenter; and after his expulsion from the clerical office, had professed himself a convert to the Catholic faith. Gross misconduct had driven him from the seminary where for a while he had been studying for the priesthood, and he came over to England, announcing that he possessed the secrets of a plot to murder the King, burn London, and massacre the whole Protestant population of England. Oates told his story with shameless effrontery, and, unfortunately, found some prepared to believe him. Encouraged by Shaftesbury, for political purposes, the silly and malicious fable was the means of sending many innocent Catholics to the block. The King saw clearly enough that Oates and a wretched crowd of imitators were swearing away the lives of honest men; but he had not the courage to resist the furious outburst of fanaticism. Oates was lodged in Whitehall Palace, received a pension of £1,200, and, with something akin to blasphemy, was called "the saviour of the nation." The plot might have failed at the outset had not the magistrate before whom Oates made his first deposition been found dead in the fields the next morning. Without stopping to reason, men saw in this event "confirmation sure" of Oates's story.

The
"Popish
Plot."

19. It was fitting that the Parliament which accepted Titus Oates