manner as that of cupellation : but where great quantities of baſe metal are to be worked off from a little gold, recourſe is had to a more expeditious method, that of teſting before the bellows.

An oval test is placed in a cavity, made in a hearth of a convenient height, and ſome moiſtened sand or aſhes pressed round it to keep it ſteady : the noſe of a bellows is direc­ted along its ſurface, in ſuch a manner, that if aſhes are sprinkled in the cavity of the teſt, the bellows may blow them completely out : ſome have an iron plate fixed before the bellows, to direct the blaſt downwards. To keep the ſurface of the teſt from being injured in putting in the me­tal, ſome cloths or pieces oſ paper are interpoſed. The fuel conſiſts of billets of barked oak laid on the ſides of the teſt, with others laid croſswiſe on theſe : the bellows impel the flame on the metal, clear the ſurface of aſhes or ſparks of coal, hasten the ſcorification of the lead, and blow off the ſcoria, as faſt it forms, to one end of the teſt, where it rune out thro’ a notch made for that purpoſe. About two thirds of the ſcorified lead may thus be collected ; the reſt being partly abſorbed by the teſt, and partly diſſipated by the ac­tion of the bellows. Care muſt be taken not to urge the blaſt too ſtrongly, left ſome portion of the gold ſhould be carried away by the fumes impetuouſly forced off from the lead, and ſome minute particles of it entangled and blown off with the scoriae.

*Test-A*ct*,* in law, is the ſtatute 25 Car. II. cap. 2. which directs all officers, civil and military, to take the oaths, and make the declaration againſt tranſubſtantiation, in the court of King’s Bench or Chancery, the next term, or at the next quarter-ſessions, or (by ſubſequent ſtatutes) within ſix months after their admission ; and alſo within the ſame time to receive the ſacrament of the Lord’s Supper, according to the uſage of the church of England, in ſome public church, immediately after divine ſervice or ſermon, and to deliver into court a certificate thereof, ſigned by the minister and church warden, and alſo to prove the ſame by two credible witnesses, upon forfeiture of 500l. and diſability to hold the ſaid office.

The avowed object of this act was to exclude from places of truſt all members of the church of Rome ; and hence the diffenters of that age, if they did not ſupport the bill when passing through the two houſes of parliament, gave it no oppoſition. For this part of their conduct they have been often cenſured with ſeverity, as having betrayed their rights from reſentment to their enemies. But is this a fair ſtate of the case ? Were any rights in reality betray­ed ? That the dread of a popiſh ſuccessor and of popiſh in­fluence was the immediate and urgent cauſe of paſſing the *test-act,* is indeed true ; but that the legiſlature, when guarding againſt an impending evil, had not likewiſe a retroſpect to another from which they had ſo recently been delivered, is not ſo evident. If it be proper to ſupport an eſtabliſhed church as a branch of the conſtitution, and if the teſt-act be calculated to afford that ſupport to the church of England, it is probable that the deliberations of parlia­ment were as much influenced by the dread of puritanic fury, and a renewal of the covenant, as by apprehenſions of a perſecution from a popiſh king and popiſh councils. That the members oſ the church eſtabliſhed by law in England had as much reaſon to dread the effects of power in the hands of Puritans as in the hands of Papiſts, no impartial man will controvert, who is not a ſtranger to that period of our national hiſtory ; and that it was the duty of the legiſla­ture by every method in their power to provide for the security of the conſtitution againſt the machinations of both its enemies, will be admitted by all but ſuch as are in love with anarchy on the one hand, or with deſpotism on the other.

Many people, when they talk or write of the *test-act,* ſeem to think that it was framed in oppoſition to the *religious* opinions of the church of Rome ; and finding the Proteſtant dissenters, who abhor theſe opinions, deprived by it of their civil *rights,* they ſpeak with indignation oſ a law which confounds the innocent with the guilty. But all this pro­ceeds from a palpable miſtake of the purpoſe of the teſt. As the legiſlature had no authority to make laws againſt *any opinions whatever,* on account of their being falſe in theolo­gy ; ſo it is not to be ſuppoſed that, in their deliberations on the test-act, the members of that august body took into their conſideration the comparative orthodoxy of the diſtinguiſhing tenets of the Catholics and Puritans. As a re­ligious ſect they might eſteem the latter much more than the former ; but if they found that both had combined with their theological doctrines opinions reſpecting civil and eccleſiaſtical government, inconſiſtent with the fundamental principles of the Engliſh conſtitution, they had an undoubt­ed right to enact a law, by which none ſhould be admitted to offices, in the execution of which they could injure the conſtitution, without previouſly giving ſecurity that their adminiſtration ſhould ſupport it in all its branches. It had not then been doubted, nor is there reaſon to doubt yet, but that an eſtabliſhed religion is neceſſary, in conjunction with civil government, to preſerve the peace of ſociety ; and therefore in every well regulated ſtate an eſtabliſhed religion muſt be ſupported, not becauſe it is the duty of the civil magiſtrate to conduct his ſubjects to future happineſs, but becauſe he cannot without ſuch an eſtabliſhment preſerve among them preſent tranquillity. The eſtabliſhment which muſt beſt anſwer this purpoſe, is that which, teaching the great and unchangeable duties of morality, is moſt accept­able in its government and forms of worſhip to the majority of the people ; and therefore in giving a legal eſtabliſhment to one conſtitution of the church in preference to all others, it is only this circumſtance, and not the comparative purity of the rival churches, viewed merely as eccleſiaſtical corpo­rations, to which it is the buſineſs of the legiſlature to pay attention. At the time when the test-act paſſed the two houſes of parliament, the eſtabliſhed church of England was certainly more acceptable to the great body oſ the people and to all ranks in the ſtate, than any one of the ſects, whe­ther Catholic or Proteſtant, which diſſented from her ; and therefore it was the duty of the legiſlature to preſerve to that church all her privileges and immunities, and to pre­vent thoſe hoſtile ſectaries from doing her injury in the dis­charge of any civil office with which they might be entruſted. It was with this view that the *test-act* was formed ; and it is with the ſame view that the legiſlature has hitherto re­jected every petition for its repeal. In doing ſo, it deprives no man of his *rights,* far leſs of rights which *confidence* calls upon him to maintain at every hazard ; for the rights of individuals to hold civil offices are not inherent, but derived from the legiſlature, which of courſe muſt be the judge upon what terms they are to be held. The legiſlature of Eng­land has excluded from many offices, civil and military, eve­ry man who will not give ſecurity, that in the discharge of his public duty he will ſupport the church eſtabliſhed by law ; and as the teſt of his intention, it requires him, before he enters upon his office, to renounce the doctrine of tran­ſubſtantiation, and receive the ſacrament of the Lord’s Sup­per in ſome public church, according to the liturgy of the church of England. Whether this be the moſt proper teſt that could have been exacted, may well be queſtioned ; but that in a country abounding with ſectaries of various deno­