

in the Tower, to avoid Attainder and the forfeiture of his family estates. Monmouth made a confession of his misdeeds, and having received his father's pardon, was allowed to withdraw into honourable exile in Holland.

9. **Death of Charles II., 1685.** The discovery of the Rye House Plot, and the punishment of the conspirators rendered Charles's political position so strong, that he was little less than an absolute king. For three years he adopted the unconstitutional course of dispensing with a Parliament, although the Triennial Bill stated that a Parliament ought to be summoned every three years. He chose and dismissed his own ministers, just as he thought fit, and removed the judges when they did not please him, and filled their places with his own creatures. He largely increased the standing army as a protection against popular insurrections, and appointed all its officers. He set at defiance the Test Act by allowing the Duke of York to take his seat in the Council, and resume his office as High Admiral, and upon his own responsibility released Danby from imprisonment.

Just at the time when Charles was at the height of his power, he was struck down by a fit of apoplexy. In his last moments Archbishop Sancroft came to his bedside and spoke to him in an unreserved manner about his hope of a future state. "*It is time,*" said the Archbishop, "*to speak out, for, sir, you are about to appear before a Judge who is no respecter of persons.*" But the King took no heed of the Archbishop's warning, and calling for his brother expressed a wish to be admitted into the Church of Rome. When the Bishops and courtiers had left the room, a priest named Huddleson, who had aided him in his escape from Worcester, came to his bedside, and received his confession, and having pronounced his absolution, administered the sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church.

Charles retained his unaffected politeness to the very last. Although racked with intense pain he lingered on for some time in full possession of his faculties, and only the day before he died, apologized to those who stood round him all night for the trouble he had caused them. "He had been," he said, "a most unconscionable time dying, but he