

ment. If he had wished for innocent enjoyments, that would have been a different matter, but he was shameless and immoral in his pleasures. He surrounded himself with the most profligate companions. Any one looking on would have thought that the whole court gloried in being as wicked as possible.

At first the nation sympathized with the king's merriment. The years had been so grave and gloomy that it was certainly a relief to have a king who was good-humoured and witty; but people soon began to realize that more than wit and agreeable manners are needed in the man who stands at the head of a nation; and more than one remembered that Cromwell and his Parliament, even if they had been strict and serious, had not given their time to selfish pleasures, and had conscientiously tried to do what they believed was for the good of the country.

**181. Persecution of the dissenters.**—The first Parliament elected in Charles's reign set to work at once to restore the Anglican church and to drive out the Puritans and other dissenters. An Act of Uniformity was passed in 1662 requiring all clergymen to use the prayer book; about two thousand refused, and were compelled to give up their churches. All those who refused to attend the service of the English church were arrested, fined, and imprisoned; as many as ten thousand were in prison at one time. An attempt was made in 1665 to break up the dissenting congregations by the "Five-Mile Act," which forbade their clergy to preach or teach within five miles of any town or city.

John Bunyan of Bedfordshire was one of the dissenting preachers imprisoned under these laws. Driven by a feeling of sin in his youth, he was converted to the Puritan faith, and became a travelling preacher. For refusing to abstain from preaching, he was put in Bedford jail, where he remained twelve years. While there he wrote several books, the most remarkable of which is "The Pilgrim's Progress," a famous allegory of a pilgrimage from this world to the next.

In Scotland, the Presbyterians were called Covenanters, because they had signed a "Solemn League and Covenant"