

## CHAPTER I

### CHARLES II

BORN 1630; RESTORED 1660; DIED 1685

THE poet of Puritanism, at the beginning of the third book of "Paradise Lost," rejoices in his re-ascent from the obscure sojourn of the Stygian pool to the realms of heavenly light. From a realm comparatively of light we descend to the Stygian pool in passing from the Revolution to the Restoration. In the Revolutionary period, with all its violence, havoc, and suffering, we have at least been among great men, lofty aspirations, and heroic actions. In the succeeding period we are in the midst of all that is the reverse of great, lofty, or heroic. Such is the nemesis of revolution. Over-tension is followed by collapse; over-excitement by prostration of spirit; the wreck of chimerical hopes by loss of faith in rational effort.

Puritanism, aiming at an unattainable standard, had denied the multitude pleasure, not only evil pleasure, such as that of bear-baiting, cock-fighting, and tipping, but the innocent pleasures of the drama, the may-pole, the Sunday dance or archery, the Christmas feast of family love, such pleasure as is a moral necessity of human nature. The consequences, when the Puritan yoke was cast off and the recoil ensued, were the manners, the literature, and the drama of the Restoration.