

actors for the first time took part in representations on the stage, and the language used was shocking. Religion, which during the Commonwealth had been the "sign of the times," was mocked and jeered at. The shafts of ridicule were directed, not at shame and dishonesty, but at truth and purity. Such a thing as modesty was unknown. In every sinful lust and debauchery the king himself outshone all his subjects. The Church of England, which by the Restoration had again been raised to eminence, looked calmly down upon her erring children, and did nothing but persecute her rivals. Had not they suffered for her during her trials, so could they not enjoy a little recreation? What if they did gamble and drink all day, and roll in the gutter all night; had not they atoned for this by defending her ritual, and sending Baxter and Bunyan to prison? Assuredly so.

While Clarendon was in power his highest ambition was to raise the English Church to the topmost summit. This would have been very worthy of him had he endeavoured to effect his desire by honest means. This, however, he was not content to do. All dissenters from the Church of England were commanded to acknowledge the superiority of the Prelacy, and in Scotland, on a large number refusing, the soldiers were instructed to punish them. In England an Act of Uniformity was passed, which stated that every minister should declare his consent and assent to everything contained in the Book of Common Prayer, before the feast of St. Bartholomew, 1662, on pain of being deprived of his benefice. On that day at least two thousand persons resigned their positions, rather than stain their consciences by agreeing to what they very reasonably disliked. In 1664 an Act was passed for the suppression of Conventicles,

which inflicted on all persons above the age of sixteen, present at any religious meeting conducted in other manner than is allowed by the practice of the Church of England, where five or more persons beside the household should be present, a penalty of three months' imprisonment for the first offence, six for the second, and of seven years' transportation on a third. With the desire to make the penalty as hard as possible, it was decided that none should be transported to the New England States in America where they might find sympathizing friends. Next year it was enacted that all persons holding holy orders, who had not taken the Act of Uniformity, should swear that they held it unlawful to take up arms against the king, and would not endeavour any alteration of government in Church and State. Those who refused this oath were not allowed to hold any public position, and were prohibited from going within five miles of any corporate borough.

No doubt Tennyson refers to a period such as this, when he says that Freedom sat on the Heights, with the thunders breaking at her feet; when only the few connected with the leading power of the country or State had any freedom whatever, and the common majority of people none at all, but were bound down to their leaders and masters by ties of no mean strength, and were not at liberty to express their thoughts, or publicly announce their ideas, if told not to by their severe rulers.

The people, however, as education and civilization advanced, becoming more and more aware of the fact that they were making themselves slaves to their tyrannic superiors, came to the conclusion that their rights must be respected, and with firm and steady resolve pressed forward to the goal of freedom.

Notwithstanding the great struggle