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KING'S MAIESTIES  
DECLARATION

TO HIS SUBJECTS,

CONCERNING

Lawful Sports

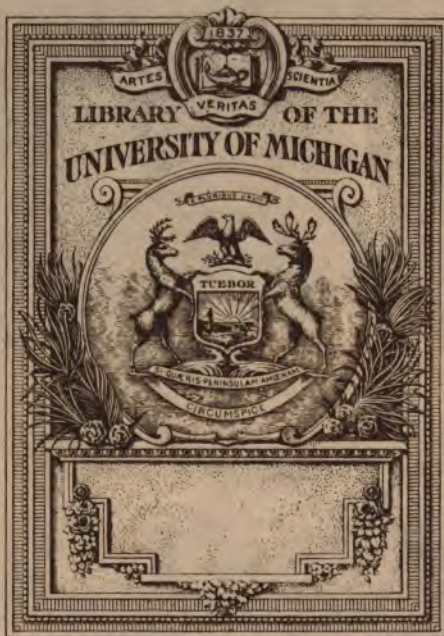
TO BE USED.

LONDON:

Printed by BONDAM NORTON and JOAN BILL, Deputy Printers for  
the King's most Excellent Maiestie.  
M.DC.XVIII.

PHILADELPHIA:

REPRINTED BY BENJ. ASHWORTH, 22 SOUTH FOURTH ST.  
1866.



31403

*James I, King of Brit., 1566-1625.*

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## INTRODUCTION.

King James on his return from Scotland, found much discontent prevailing in Lancashire, in consequence of the population being deprived of the privilege they had enjoyed from time immemorial of having popular recreations on Sundays and holidays, after the church service. The custom, until this time, had met with no innovation, and in all countries where the reformed religion was established, the Sabbath, after church service, was a festival day. The King, in issuing his proclamation, afterwards entitled "The Book of Sports," did no more than define the boundaries of what might be on one side unbridled license, on the other pharisaical austerity. But two powerful religious parties were then forming, and the "Book of Sports" was destined in after years to be one of the chief causes of a Sovereign and an Archbishop being dragged to the block. In the succeeding reign, one of these parties possessed the necessary influence which obtained an order from the judges of Assize in Somersetshire, for the suppression of the anniversary dedication feasts of Churches—customarily held on Sunday. Charles I, on the 18th of October, 1634, took action in the matter and reaffirmed the Declaration of his father as follows:—

"Now out of the like pious Care for the Service of God, and Suppressing any Humours that oppose Truth, and for the Ease, Comfort and Recreation of our well deserving People, we do Ratifie and Publish this our Blessed Father's Declaration.

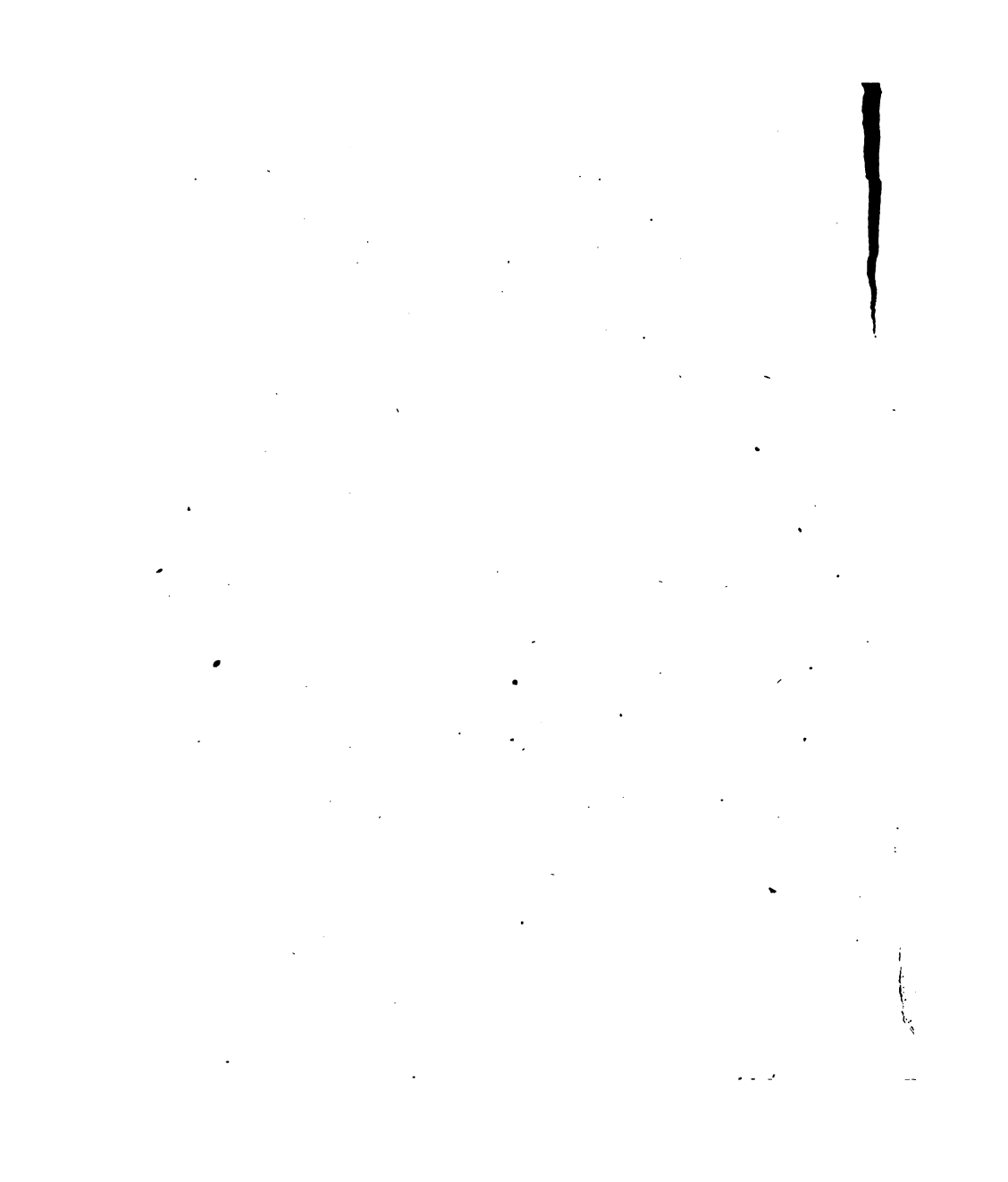
"We command that no Man do Trouble or Molest any of Our Loyal People, in or from their Lawful Recreations; and We further Will, that Publication of this Our Command be made by Order of the Bishops through all the Parish-Churches of their several Diocesses respectively."

Civil war ensued, and, in the language of Warton, "it is owing to the Puritans since Cromwell's time that Sunday has been made in England a day of gravity and severity."


This editon of King James' Declaration is an accurate reprint from the excessively rare copy of 1618.

Feb. 1st, 1866.

T. L. C.



*By the King.*

 Hereas vpon Our returne the last yeere out of Scotland, Wee did publish our pleasure touching the recreations of Our people in those parts vnder Our hand: For some causes Us thereunto mouing, We have thought good to command these Our directions then giuen in *Lancashire* with a few words thereunto added, and most appliable to these parts of our Realmes, to be published to all Our Subjects.

*Whereas We did iustly in Our Progresse through Lancashire,* rebuke some Puritanes and precise people, and tooke order that the like vnlawful cariage should not bee vsed by any of them hereafter, in the prohibiting and unlawfull punishing of Our good people for vsing their lawfully Recreations, and honest exercises vpon Sundayes and other Holy dayes, after the afternoone Sermon or Seruice: Wee now find that two sorts of people wherewith that Country is much infested, (Wee meane Papists and Puritanes)

\*



tanés) haue maliciously traduced and calumniated those Our iust and honourable proceedings. And therefore lest Our reputation might upon the one side (though innocently) haue some aspersion layd upon it, and that vpon the other part Our good people in that Countrey bee misled by the mistaking and misinterpretation of Our meaning: We haue therefore thought good hereby to cleare and make Our pleasure to bee manifested to all Our good People in those parts.

It is true that at Our first entry to this Crowne, and Kingdome, Wee were informed, and that too truly, that Our County of *Lancashire* abounded more in Popish Recusants than any Countie of England, and thus hath stil continued since to Our great regret, with little amendment, saue that now of late, in Our last riding through Our said County, Wee find both by the report of the Iudges, and of the Bishop of that diocesse that there is some amendment now daily beginning, which is no small contentment to Vs.

The report of this growing amendment amongst them, made Vs the more sory, when with Our owne Eares Wee heard the generall complaint of Our people, that they were barred from all lawful Recreation, and exercise vpon the Sundayes afternoone, after the ending of all Diuine Service, which cannot but produce two euils: The one, the hinder-  
ing

ing of the conuersion of many, whom their Priests will take occasion hereby to vexe, perswading them that no honest mirth or recreation is lawfully or tollerable in Our Religion, which cannot but breed a great discontentment in Our peoples hearts, especially of such as are peraduenture vpon the point of turning; The other inconuenience is, that this prohibition barreth the common and meaner sort of people from vsing such exercises as may make their bodies more able for Warre, when Wee or Our Successors shall haue occasion to use them. And in place thereof sets vp filthy tiplings and drunkennesse, and breeds a number of idle and discontented speaches in their Alehouses. For when shal the common people haue leaue to exercise, if not vpon the Sundayes and Holidayes, seeing they must apply their labour, and winne their liuing in all working dayes?

*Our* expresse pleasure therefore is, that the Lawes of Our Kingdome, and Canons of Our Church bee as well observed in that County, as in all other places of this Our Kingdom. And on the other part, that no lawful Recreation shall bee barred to Our good People, which shall not tend to the breach of Our aforesaid Lawes, and Canons of Our Church: which to expresse more particularly, Our pleasure is, That the Bishop, and all other inferiour  
Churchmen,

