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**CC204, Unit – I**

**Paper Name – Introduction to 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> Century Literature**

**CAROLINE AGE (1625-49)**

**Introduction:**

The reign of Charles I, the name is derived from “Carolus,” the Latin version of “Charles.”

This was the time of the English Civil War fought between the supporters of the king known as “Cavaliers” and the supporters of Parliament, known as “Roundheads,” (from their custom of wearing their hair cut short). Series of civil war took place between 1642 to 1649, which ended with the beheading of King Charles I.

**Historical Background:**

- Charles I, was a man of little intellectual abilities. Economic and religious conflicts became high during his reign leading to the civil wars. Though limited in his intellectual ability, he created a court of taste, refinement and distinction- a connoisseur of art, he made a fine collection of pictures later dispensed by Cromwell, who sold them to obtain international currency. He was a patron of Flemish artist Van

Dye. His nobility and progressiveness earned him great popularity, he is often called Charles the Martyr.

- Historically, the age was one of tremendous conflict. The Puritan religio-political revolutions; turning the country into a blood bath. The Puritan overthrew the corrupt monarchy resulting at first in the imprisonment of Charles I in 1643 and his beheading in 1649 under the leadership of Cromwell.

### **Cavalier Poets:**

Cavalier Poets were a group of English gentlemen poets, who gathered at the court of Charles I. because of their loyalty and support for Charles I, these poets were called ‘Cavaliers’. They were also Cavaliers in their style of life and believed in the ideal of the Renaissance man-who was a lover, a soldier, a gallant, a man of affairs, a musician and a poet all at once.

### **Common Features in the Poetry of Cavalier Poets:**

- The Cavalier poets use “Direct and colloquial language expressive of a highly individual personality”.
- Important themes in their poetry include the theme of honour and the theme of **carpe diem** or seize the day.
- Their poetry aims to entertain rather than provoke the audience.

### **Major Cavalier Poets:**

1. Robert Herrick (1591-1634)
2. Thomas Carew (1594 – 1640)

3. John Suckling (1609 – 1642)
4. Richard Lovelace (1618 – 1657)

(These Cavalier Poets were also called as **Sons of Ben** because they admired and were influenced by the poetry of Ben Jonson).

**Major Prose Writer:**

1. Robert Burton
2. Sir Thomas Browne