



#### IV

The game of cricket, presumably because it was obscure and relatively innocuous, was not mentioned in the king's Book of Sports. But in 1611 it at last surfaced as an adult activity, albeit a somewhat inglorious one. In the Sussex village of Sidlesham, south of Chichester, two men were prosecuted for playing cricket instead of going to church. Eleven years later at Boxgrove, north of Chichester, six cricket players were 'presented' by the churchwardens not only for profaning the Sabbath, but because 'they use to breake the church windows with the ball' and 'a little childe had like to have her braynes beaten out with a crickett batt'.<sup>9</sup>

It was hardly a crime wave, but then, in 1628, as the clouds of Puritanism gathered over Chichester, there was further trouble at nearby East Lavant. The Archbishop's Peculiar Court heard how ten men, one of them a systematic adulterer to boot, had been playing in, or watching, a game of cricket at service time: all had to pay the standard fine of 12*d.* for missing church; the players also had to make a public confession before the whole congregation, and the spectators before the vicar and churchwardens. A further eight were similarly dealt with at Midhurst, a dozen-miles away, in 1637.

Kent was another early cricketing county. Indeed, in 1629, the curate of Ruckinge, on the edge of Romney Marsh, Henry Cuffen, censured when after evening prayers he 'did immediately go and play at Cricketts', defended himself on the grounds that it was played by persons of quality. On the other