

Glorious Revolution

Glorious Revolution, in English history, the events of 1688–89 that resulted in the deposition of [James II](#) and the accession of [William III](#) and [Mary II](#) to the English throne. It is also called the Bloodless Revolution. The restoration of [Charles II](#) in 1660 was met with misgivings by many Englishmen who suspected the Stuarts of Roman Catholic and absolutist leanings. Charles II increased this distrust by not being responsive to [Parliament](#), by his toleration of Catholic dissent, and by favoring alliances with Catholic powers in Europe. A parliamentary group, the [Whigs](#), tried to ensure a Protestant successor by excluding James, duke of York (later James II), from the throne, but they were unsuccessful. After James's accession (1685) his overt Catholicism and the birth of a Catholic prince who would succeed to the throne united the hitherto loyal Tories (see [Tory](#)) with the Whigs in common opposition to James.

Seven Whig and Tory leaders sent an invitation to the Dutch prince William of Orange and his consort, Mary, Protestant daughter of James, to come to England. William landed at Torbay in Devonshire with an army. James's forces, under John Churchill (later duke of Marlborough), deserted him, and James fled to France (Dec., 1688). There was some debate in England on how to transfer power; whether to recall James on strict conditions or under a regency, whether to depose him outright, or whether to treat his flight as an abdication. The last course was decided upon, and early in 1689 William and Mary accepted the invitation of Parliament to rule as joint sovereigns.

The Declaration of Rights and the [Bill of Rights](#) (1689) redefined the relationship between monarch and subjects and barred any future Catholic succession to the throne. The royal power to suspend and dispense with law was abolished, and the crown was forbidden to levy taxation or maintain a standing army in peacetime without parliamentary consent. The provisions of the Bill of Rights were, in effect, the conditions upon which the throne was offered to and accepted by William and Mary. These events were a milestone in the gradual process by which practical power shifted from the monarch to Parliament. The theoretical ascendancy of Parliament was never thereafter successfully challenged.

See G. M. Trevelyan, *The English Revolution, 1688–1689* (1938); L. Pinkham, *William III and the Respectable Revolution* (1954); J. Childs, *The Army, James II, and the Glorious Revolution* (1981); S. E. Prall, *The Bloodless Revolution* (1972); T. Harris, *Revolution* (2008); S. Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (2009).

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