



James' Declaration of Indulgence (1687) in favour of the Catholics was also met with a strong resistance in Parliament. A great number of clergymen refused to obey the king's order to read the Declaration in the churches and only the hope that James' protestant daughter, Mary, who had married William of Orange, would succeed him, prevented further disorders. Public alarm increased with the birth of a Catholic son and heir, James Francis Edward, to James and Queen Mary in 1688. Threatened by a Catholic dynasty, several influential Protestants and the representatives of the two parties, Whigs and Tories, entered into negotiations with William, Prince of Orange.

In November 1688 William landed at Torbay and found no opposition; James, deserted by all his supporters, fled to France. Parliament that had won supremacy over the monarchy offered the Crown of England to William and Mary: this was called the Glorious or Bloodless Revolution.

William III and Mary II. In 1689 Parliament passed the Bill of Rights, a document which ratified the joint accession of William (1689-1702) and Mary (1689-1694) to the English throne. It marked the end of the Divine Right of kings and based the principle of sovereignty on the Agreement of the People; this event was a turning point in the history of England. William and Mary reigned as constitutional monarchs, in the respect of the law; they also considered themselves as the defenders of Protestantism. Their reign was marked by the end of the long struggles between the Crown and Parliament.

In 1690 the new English monarchy was threatened by James' attempt to recover the throne. James had gathered a certain number of supporters, who opposed Protestantism in Scotland and Ireland, but his army was defeated in the Battle of the Boyne by William of Orange. The victory marked the final triumph of the «Glorious Revolution» and consolidated it.

William revoked the Stuarts' traditional alliance with France, and in 1689 he joined with Holland, Spain and Austria. This alliance involved him in a long war against France to check the ambitious projects of Louis XIV, who was extremely determined to win European supremacy. The war ended in 1697 with the Peace of Ryswick; as a result William was formally recognized king of England by other European nations.

In 1694 Queen Mary died prematurely. As the royal couple had no children, Parliament passed the Act of Settlement in 1701, by which all the Catholic descendants of James I were excluded from the throne of England and the crown was to go to Sophia (James I's granddaughter), electress of Hanover, the nearest protestant descendant of James II, in case Anne (Mary's sister), who was to succeed William, should die leaving no children. Anne had been brought up on strict Protestant principles in spite of her parents' Catholic faith.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF EVENTS

1660-1685 Reign of Charles II: 1661 → The Code of Clarendon; 1665 → Battle of Lowestoft;

1665-1666 → Great Plague and Great Fire of London; 1667 → Treaty of Breda; 1670 → Treaty of Dover; 1672 → Declaration of Indulgence; 1678 → Treaty of Nijmegen and Exclusion Bill; 1679 → Habeas Corpus Act; 1680 → Origin of the Whig and Tory parties; 1683 → Rye House Plot.

1685-1688 Reign of James II: 1685 → Marquis of Argyll and Duke of Monmouth's rebellion; 1687 → Declaration of Indulgence.

1688-1689 Glorious or Bloodless Revolution.

1689-1702 Reign of William III and Mary II: 1689 → Bill of Rights; 1690 → Battle of the Boyne; 1694 → Queen Mary's death; 1697 → Peace of Ryswick; 1701 → Act of Settlement.

