

Thus the last years of Charles's reign beheld the overthrow of the Whigs. The conduct of James realized their worst fears. *Absolutism and Catholicism combined* to threaten the future of England. Still the nation hesitated as the heir to the throne was a confirmed Protestant. The birth of a son brought matters to a crisis.

"It is no wonder if men received the news with incredulity, and thought that, as James had called into existence a sham bench of judges, and was preparing to call into existence a sham House of Commons, he had now produced a sham heir to the throne. Whether the child was the queen's or not, its very existence made prompt action necessary, unless James's system was to be perpetuated."

Thus the leading men of both parties combined to invite the Prince of Orange to come, and the two houses offered the throne to William and Mary.

THE REVOLUTION SETTLEMENT, AND THE RULE OF THE WHIG ARISTOCRACY.

The Revolution was more than a change of Sovereigns.

"Up to the Revolution, England was under a monarchy surrounded by certain constitutional checks, intended to prevent the will of the monarch from degenerating into arbitrary wilfulness. After the Revolution, England became practically a republic, in which the Crown possessed various constitutional powers, intended to prevent the will of the representatives of the people from degenerating into arbitrary wilfulness."

Such was the fact, but the theory upon which contemporaries grounded their new conception of government was the figment of the *Social Compact*. The results of the Revolution came quickly. Governments had failed in their attempt to control the domain of religion and intelligence. Their failure led to the *Toleration Act* and to the withdrawal of the censorship of the press. "A free press and a free pulpit took their place in the new system established by the Revolution." Thus by the restriction of the sphere of government its work was made easier. Yet the accession of power to the House of Commons was not unattended with danger. Parliamentary faction grew apace, and, during the last years of William, the House of Commons meddled with matters which it did not understand. This led to the evolution of *Cabinet Government*, viz., government by a committee of both Houses of Parliament chosen from the Dominant party by the King or Prime Minister. The Commons was able to secure government in accordance with