

Source: G.M. Trevelyan, *History of England*, 1926

It was well for England that the [Glorious] Revolution Settlement did not supply her with a brand new, watertight, unalterable, written constitution. A sacrosanct written constitution was necessary to achieve the federal union of the States of North America after they had cut themselves adrift from the old Empire. For England it was not at all necessary, and it would certainly have proved inconvenient. If England had been given a rigid constitution when James II was deposed, the Crown would have had assigned to it, in perpetuity, powers which within thirty years of the coronation of William and Mary it handed over to be exercised by its Parliamentary advisors. It is probable, also, that a rigid constitution, drawn up according to the lights of 1689, would have excluded the King's Ministers from sitting in the House of Commons.

A written constitution, as distinct from the sum of ordinary law and custom, is alien to the English political genius. One of the worst signs of the straits, to which Cromwell was driven by his inability to find a basis of national agreement, was the fact that he promulgated written constitutions dividing up by an absolute line - never to be altered - the powers of Protector and Parliament respectively. These experience for contrary to the real method of English progress. The London fog which decently conceals from view the exact relations of executive and legislative at Westminster, has enabled the constitution to adapt itself unobserved to the requirements of each passing age.