

## The Ancient Rights and Liberties of Great Britain, 1849

### THE ANCIENT RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES OF GREAT BRITAIN.

When William the III., who with Mary his wife, was crowned King and Queen of England, Scotland and Ireland, on the 13th of February 1689, there was read in their presence, a DECLARATION, adopted by both houses of Parliament, setting forth the reasons why they adjudged King James the II. as having abdicated his throne- and the principles upon which they required the government to be administered by their new Sovereigns. In this declaration, it is something singular that the number of distinct points corresponds exactly with the number of States in this confederacy which adopted the Federal Constitution. They are as follows, viz:

"I. That the pretended Power of suspending laws, or the execution of laws, by regal authority, without consent of Parliament, is illegal. II. That the pretended power of dispensing with laws, or the execution of laws, by regal authority, as it hath been assumed and exercised of late, is illegal. III. That the commission for erecting the late court of commissioners for ecclesiastical causes, and all other commissions and courts of the like nature, are illegal and pernicious. IV. That levying of money, for or to the use of the crown, by the pretence of prerogative, without grant of Parliament, for longer time, or in other manner than the same is or shall be granted, is illegal. V. That it is the right of the subjects to petition the King, and all commitments and prosecutions for such petitioning, are illegal. VI. That the raising or keeping a standing army within the kingdom in time of peace, unless it be with the consent of Parliament, is against law. VII. That the subjects which are Protestants may have arms for their defence, suitable to their condition, and as allowed by law. VIII. That elections of members of Parliament ought to be free. IX. That the freedom of speech, and debates or proceedings in Parliament, ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament. X. That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor to be excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted. XI. That jurors ought to be duly empanelled and returned, and jurors which pass upon Men in trials of High Treason ought to be freeholders. XII. That all particular persons before conviction, are illegal and void. XIII. And that for redress of all grievances, and for the amending, strengthening (sic) and preserving of the laws, Parliaments ought to be held frequently. And they do claim, demand, and insist upon all and singular the premises, as their undoubted rights and liberties; and that no declarations, judgements, doing or proceedings, to the prejudice of the people in any of the said premises, ought in any wise to be drawn hereafter into consequence or example."