

"English Liberties: Or, the Free-Born Subject's Inheritance" (1682) by Henry Care: A Canonical Book

This first edition was curated by Stephen A Batman

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Summary of this Particular Rare First Edition

Henry Care, English Liberties: Or, The Free-Born Subject's Inheritance, 1682



English Liberties :
Or, The
Free-Born SUBJECT's
Inheritance,

CONTAINING

- I. *MAGNA CHARTA*, The *Petition of Right*, The *Habeas Corpus Act*; and divers other most *Useful Statutes*: With Large *COMMENTS* upon each of them
- II. The Proceedings in *Appeals of Murther*; The Work and Power of *Parliaments*; The *Qualifications* necessary for such as should be chosen to that great Trust. Plain Directions for all Persons concerned in *Ecclesiastical Courts*; and how to prevent or take off the Writ *De Excommunicato Capiendo*. As also the Oath and Duty of Grand and Petty Juries.
- III. All the Laws against *Conventicles* and *Protestant Dissenters* with *Notes*, and Directions both to *Constables* and others concern'd, thereupon; And an *Abstract* of all the Laws against *Papists*.

LONDON:

Printed by G. Larkin, for Benjamin Harris, at the Stationers Arms and Anchor in the Piazza under the Royal-Exchange.

English Liberties.

Notes on Magna Charta.

THis Excellent Law holds the first place in our Statute Books, for though there were no doubt many Acts of Parliament long before this, yet they are not now Extant: 'tis called *Magna Charta*, or the Great Charter, not in respect of its Bulk, but in regard of the great Importance and weight of the matters therein contained; it is also styled *Charta Libertatum Regni*, the Charter of the Liberties of the Kingdom, and upon great reason (saith Cook in his Proem) is it so called from the effect, *Quia liberat facit*, because it makes and preserves the people free.

Though it run in the style of the King as a Charter, yet (as my Lord Cook well observes on the 38 Chapter) it appears to have passed in Parliament; for there was then a fifteenth granted to the King, by the Bishops, Earls, Barons, Free-tenants and people, which could not be but in Parliament, nor was it in those times to have Acts of Parliament of a Charter: as you may read in 7. Rep. L. 8. likewise thought

"HAD MORE TO DO WITH PREPARING THE MINDS OF AMERICAN COLONISTS FOR THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION THAN... COKE, SIDNEY AND LOCKE": EXCEEDINGLY RARE FIRST EDITION OF CARE'S *ENGLISH LIBERTIES*, 1682, WITH A PRINTING OF THE MAGNA CHARTA—"A SYMBOL OF POLITICAL LIBERTY"—AND OTHER FOUNDING "DOCUMENTS AND STATEMENTS"

(Rare first edition, containing printings of the Magna Charta and other seminal documents on the separation of church and state, the right to religious liberty, trial by jury and other founding principles. It was designed to "slip into one's pocket... [and] had more to do with preparing the minds of American colonists for the American Revolution than the larger but less accessible works of Coke, Sidney and Locke" (Hudson, 580-85). Care's influence is clear "in the writings of the founding fathers of the United States—Samuel Adams, John Adams, John Dickinson and Alexander Hamilton... Jefferson added two copies of English Liberties to his library and arranged that it be included in the library of the University of Virginia" (Schwoerer, 231-5).

Care's *English Liberties* contains "the most important documents and statements in English history and law concerning liberty, property and the rights of the individual... Benjamin Franklin knew its contents thoroughly" (Lemay, *Life*, 74). This first edition features a printing of the Magna Charta, "a symbol of political liberty and the foundation of constitutional government" (Grams, *Great Experiment*, 95), and was published in 1682 "to provide uneducated and inexperienced English persons with documents and information about the law and their rights... praising England's 'fundamental laws [as] coeval with government' and describing the Magna Charta as 'Declaratory of the principal grounds of the Fundamental Laws and Liberties of England.'"

Celebrating law in another piece as second only to the gospel, he described it in *English Liberties* as 'the Best Birthright the Subject hath'... Care regarded the essence of this birthright as the 'privilege not to be exempt from the law of the land, but to be freed in Person and Estate from Arbitrary Violence and Oppression'" (Morrison & Zook, *Revolutionary Currents*, 46-7). "Care advocated a radical theory of liberty of the religious conscience for all persons... and argued for the principle of separation of church and state... his ideas are comparable to those of John Locke on that subject and were in print before Locke's *Letter on Toleration*." Care especially promoted "an abiding respect for the merits of trial by jury as a bulwark of English rights and liberties.

English Liberties... helped to transmit this 'jury ideology' and other ideas about fundamental laws and the rights and liberties of Englishmen to 18th-century England and the American colonies" (Schwoerer, *Ingenious Mr. Henry Care*, xxvi). On publication, *English Liberties* "became a publishing phenomenon, with successive editions circulating around the Atlantic world in the 18th century, its small size—it could literally fit into a pocket—enabling knowledge of English rights to reach the peripheries of the empire" (Yirush, *Settler, Liberty and Empire*, 29). It is said to have "had more to do with preparing the minds of American colonists for the American Revolution than the larger but less accessible works of Coke, Sidney and Locke" (Hudson, *William Penn's English Liberties*, 585).

In America, *English Liberties* "played an important role in spreading concepts about English law, history, government, liberties and especially juries... Colonists found in Care's *English Liberties* support of their views about the Saxons' Magna Charta as a reaffirmation of old laws guaranteeing the rights of all freemen, and ways to protect themselves against oppression... Care's vocabulary and ideas appeared in the writings of the founding fathers of the United States—Samuel Adams, John Adams, John Dickinson and Alexander Hamilton. In their speeches and writings may be found exactly the same language that Care used in *English Liberties* when he praised the 'two main pillars of the British Constitution,' identifying those pillars as parliament and trial by jury...

Americans started with Care's statement that the 'two Grand Pillars' of an Englishman's birthright shone 'most conspicuously in Parliament and juries' and reasoned from it that since the Constitution was 'founded in the Common Rights of Mankind,' and since the 'Rights of Nature' were 'happily interwoven' in its 'ancient fabric,' the right to parliament and juries was 'properly the birthright of free men everywhere'... Care's ideas, like those of William Penn and John Locke, which they profoundly resemble, were ahead of their time... Penn silently lifted a sizable portion of *English Liberties*... into his *Excellent Privilege [sic] of Liberty and Property*, which was printed in Philadelphia in 1687... The Library Company of Philadelphia, founded in 1731 by Franklin, acquired the 1719 [English] edition of *English Liberties* in 1764... Jefferson added two copies of *English Liberties* to his library and arranged that it be included in the library of the University of Virginia" (Schwoerer, 231-5).

Care and his publisher Larkin, who was also William Penn's printer, were frequently threatened not only with arrest and imprisonment, but also with physical injury. Many of Care and Larkin's publications were seized by the authorities and Care "was called before government authorities for seditious libel five times between 1679 and 1685" (ODNB). "In 1689, seven years after the publication of... *English Liberties*, Parliament presented King William III and Queen Mary a declaration that became known as the Bill of Rights... In the colonies, as in England itself, Americans would celebrate English liberties as their birthright" (Davis, Mintz et al., *Boisterous Sea of Liberty*, 83).

With woodcut-engraved headpiece and initial. Larkin printed three 228-page issues of the first edition with variant title pages, no priority established: two with no imprint date on the title pages: one "for John How" and one "for Benjamin Harris" (this copy) along with one with the imprint date of 1682 on the title page for "most Booksellers." Schwoerer, Ashcraft and others attribute the anonymously published *English Liberties* to Care, while some cite Penn as author. Ashcraft offers, as support, "an advertisement for *English Liberties* in the September 2-6, 1682, issue of the *True Protestant Mercury* [that] makes it likely it appeared in late August of that year" (Morrison & Zook, 205n). Wing STC "gives the date as '1682(?)' but internal and other evidence shows incontrovertibly that the date is 1682" (Schwoerer, 288n, 194). Precedes the 1721 first American edition. Bound without initial blank leaf, two-leaf publisher's advertisement; occasional mispagination as issued without loss of text. ESTC R31286. See Sowerby 2702, 2703; Sweet & Maxwell I:154-55; Sabin 10819.

CARE, Henry). *English Liberties: Or, The Free-Born Subject's Inheritance, Containing I. Magna Charta, The Petition of Right, the Habeas Corpus Act... II. The Proceedings in Appeals of Murther; The Work and Power of Parliaments... As also the Oath and Duty of Grand and Petty Juries. III. All the Laws against Conventicles and Protestant Dissenters... And an Abstract of all the Laws against Papists.* London: Printed by G. Larkin, for Benjamin Harris, [1682]. Small octavo (3-1/2 by 6 inches), period-style full brown calf; pp. (x), 228. Housed in a custom clamshell box.

Interior generally fresh with expert paper repair to lightly toned title page, expert reinforcement to inner hinges.

Introduction

"English Liberties: Or, the Free-Born Subject's Inheritance" was first published in London in 1682, during a period of intense political and religious turmoil in England. The book emerged at a critical juncture in English history, following the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and amid growing tensions between Protestant and Catholic factions. Henry Care, a political writer and journalist known for his anti-Catholic stance, wrote this seminal work to educate common English citizens about their legal rights and liberties under English law[1]. The book was specifically designed to be accessible, small enough to "slip into one's pocket," making it distinctly different from the more voluminous legal treatises of the era[1].

Care's motivation for writing "English Liberties" was deeply rooted in the political climate of the time. The 1670s and early 1680s were marked by the Exclusion Crisis, during which the Whig faction attempted to exclude the Catholic James, Duke of York (later James II), from succession to the throne. As a "Whig propagandist," Care was deeply involved in these political struggles[3]. The alleged Popish Plot of 1678, which claimed Catholics were conspiring to assassinate King Charles II, further inflamed anti-Catholic sentiment and heightened concerns about threats to English liberties[3]. In this charged atmosphere, Care sought to provide ordinary citizens with knowledge of their fundamental rights and the legal protections afforded to them under English law.

The economic and cultural context of the book's publication was equally significant. The late 17th century saw the emergence of a more literate populace and an expanding print culture in England. Care's work, with its accessible format and focus on practical legal knowledge, was part of this broader trend of democratizing information. The book was published "to provide uneducated and inexperienced English persons with documents and information about the law and their rights," reflecting Care's belief that knowledge of legal rights was essential for all citizens, not just the educated elite[1].

The Author

Henry Care (1646-1688) was an English political writer and journalist whose career was defined by his fervent anti-Catholic stance and his advocacy for English liberties. Born during the tumultuous period of the English Civil War, Care came of age in a society deeply divided by religious and political conflicts. He established himself as a prominent "Whig propagandist," using his pen to advance the Whig political agenda and oppose what he perceived as Catholic threats to English freedoms[3].

Care's journalistic career was marked by his editorship of the "Weekly Pacquet of Advice from Rome," a serial publication that began as a history of the Protestant Reformation but evolved into a platform for anti-Catholic rhetoric following the alleged Popish Plot of 1678[3]. His outspoken criticism of the Church of England and its members, whom he accused of being inclined toward "popery," brought him into conflict with the authorities. In July 1680, Care was tried at Guildhall for his writings, particularly for criticisms directed at Lord Chief Justice William Scroggs, who ironically presided over Care's own trial. Despite being found guilty, Care continued to publish his journal until July 1683, when illness forced him to stop[3].

Care's confrontational approach to journalism and political writing made him a frequent target of government authorities. He was "called before government authorities for seditious libel five times between 1679 and 1685," and many of his publications were seized[1]. This persecution reflected the precarious position of political writers in late 17th-century England, where freedom of the press was limited and criticism of authorities could lead to serious consequences.

Beyond his anti-Catholic writings, Care was also known for his advocacy of religious liberty and the separation of church and state. His ideas on these subjects have been compared to those of John Locke, though Care's writings on religious tolerance predated Locke's famous "Letter on Toleration"[5]. Care's work on "English Liberties" represented the culmination of his political thought, combining his commitment to English constitutional principles with his belief in the importance of an informed citizenry.

Care died in 1688, the same year as the Glorious Revolution, which saw the overthrow of the Catholic James II and the establishment of a constitutional monarchy under William and Mary. Though he did not live to see it, the Bill of Rights of 1689, which formalized many of the liberties Care had championed, was presented to the new monarchs just seven years after the publication of "English Liberties"[1].

Why this is a Canonical Book

"English Liberties" stands as a canonical work in American political thought for several compelling reasons. First and foremost, it served as a crucial conduit for transmitting English constitutional principles to the American colonies. The book has been described as having "had more to do with preparing the minds of American colonists for the American Revolution than the

larger but less accessible works of Coke, Sidney and Locke"[1][5]. This assessment underscores the book's practical influence on colonial thinking about rights and liberties, making it an essential text for understanding the intellectual foundations of American independence.

The influence of "English Liberties" on America's founding generation is well-documented. Care's ideas can be traced "in the writings of the founding fathers of the United States—Samuel Adams, John Adams, John Dickinson and Alexander Hamilton"[1][5]. Thomas Jefferson, recognizing the book's importance, "added two copies of English Liberties to his library and arranged that it be included in the library of the University of Virginia"[1][5]. Benjamin Franklin was also thoroughly familiar with its contents[5]. This widespread readership among the architects of American government demonstrates the book's central place in the canon of works that shaped American political thought.

The book's physical characteristics contributed significantly to its influence. Its small size—"it could literally fit into a pocket"—enabled it to circulate widely throughout the British colonies[5]. This accessibility made "English Liberties" a "publishing phenomenon, with successive editions circulating around the Atlantic world in the 18th century," bringing knowledge of English rights to the farthest reaches of the empire[5]. The book's practical format and clear language made it accessible to a broad audience, extending its influence beyond the educated elite to ordinary colonists.

"English Liberties" was particularly influential in shaping American conceptions of jury trials and parliamentary representation. Care's emphasis on these institutions as the "two main pillars of the British Constitution" provided colonists with a framework for understanding their rights as Englishmen[6]. When these rights were threatened by British policies in the mid-18th century, colonists drew on Care's arguments to justify their resistance. They expanded on Care's assertion that the Constitution was "founded in the Common Rights of Mankind" to argue that the "Rights of Nature" were "happily interwoven" in its "ancient fabric," making the right to parliament and juries "properly the birthright of free men everywhere"[6].

The book's inclusion of fundamental documents of English constitutional history, most notably the Magna Carta, was another factor in its canonical status. "English Liberties" featured "the most important documents and statements in English history and law concerning liberty, property and the rights of the individual"[1][5]. By making these texts accessible to colonial readers, Care's work helped establish the centrality of documents like the Magna Carta to American conceptions of constitutional government. Indeed, when William Penn published "The Excellent Privilege of Liberty and Property" in Philadelphia in 1687, he reproduced the first forty pages of "English Liberties" and included the Magna Carta, marking its first American printing[7][9].

Five Timeless Quotes

1. "The constitution of our English government is no Arbitrary tyranny"[9]

This declaration from Care's work encapsulates one of the most fundamental principles of Anglo-American constitutional thought: the rejection of arbitrary power. In asserting that the English constitution stands in opposition to tyranny, Care articulates a principle that would become central to American political identity. This quote remains profoundly relevant today as democracies worldwide continue to grapple with the proper limits of governmental authority. In an age of expanding executive powers and concerns about surveillance and privacy, Care's insistence on constitutional constraints on government power reminds us that the struggle against arbitrariness is timeless. The quote speaks to ongoing debates about the rule of law and the importance of constitutional safeguards against the concentration of power in any branch of government.

2. "The Best Birthright the Subject hath"[1][5]

Care's description of English liberties as "the Best Birthright the Subject hath" reflects his belief in the inherent nature of rights. This concept—that rights are not granted by government but are the natural inheritance of all citizens—became a cornerstone of American political philosophy. The quote resonates powerfully in contemporary discussions about human rights, citizenship, and immigration. It raises profound questions about whether rights are truly universal or contingent on citizenship status. In an era of global migration and refugee crises, Care's notion of rights as a "birthright" challenges us to consider the moral foundations of our political communities and the extent to which rights should be recognized across national boundaries.

3. "Privilege not to be exempt from the law of the land, but to be freed in Person and Estate from Arbitrary Violence and Oppression"[1][5][6]

This quote captures Care's nuanced understanding of liberty. True freedom, in his view, does not mean exemption from law but protection against arbitrary power. This distinction remains crucial in modern political discourse, where liberty is often misconstrued as the absence of all constraint. Care's formulation reminds us that the rule of law, properly understood, is not the enemy of freedom but its guarantor. In contemporary debates about regulation, public health measures, and civil liberties, this quote offers a valuable perspective on the relationship between individual freedom and the common good. It suggests that legal frameworks, when justly constructed and equally applied, protect rather than diminish our essential liberties.

4. "Two Grand Pillars of an Englishman's birthright shone most conspicuously in Parliament and juries"[6]

Care's identification of representative government and trial by jury as the twin pillars of English liberty had profound implications for American constitutional development. This quote highlights the institutional foundations of liberty in the Anglo-American tradition. Today, as democratic institutions face challenges worldwide, Care's emphasis on the importance of representation and impartial justice remains prescient. The quote speaks to ongoing concerns about voter suppression, gerrymandering, and the integrity of judicial systems. It reminds us that

abstract rights require concrete institutional protections to be meaningful, and that the health of these institutions is essential to the preservation of liberty.

5. "Fundamental laws [as] coeval with government"[1][5]

By describing fundamental laws as "coeval with government," Care suggests that certain rights and principles predate and transcend particular political arrangements. This conception of fundamental law as existing prior to and independent of positive law became a powerful intellectual resource for American revolutionaries seeking to justify their resistance to British authority. The quote continues to resonate in debates about constitutional interpretation, natural law, and the foundations of political legitimacy. It raises enduring questions about whether certain principles of justice are discoverable through reason and binding on all governments, regardless of time and place—a perspective that challenges both moral relativism and legal positivism.

Five Major Ideas

1. The Centrality of the Magna Carta to Constitutional Government

Care's "English Liberties" placed the Magna Carta at the heart of English constitutional tradition, describing it as "Declaratory of the principal grounds of the Fundamental Laws and Liberties of England"[1][5]. This emphasis on the Magna Carta as a foundational document of liberty had profound implications for American constitutionalism. By including the text of the Magna Carta in his accessible handbook, Care helped establish it as "a symbol of political liberty and the foundation of constitutional government"[1][5]. This idea—that written documents could codify and protect fundamental liberties—became central to American political thought, culminating in the written Constitution and Bill of Rights. Care's treatment of the Magna Carta helped establish the precedent for viewing constitutional documents not merely as procedural frameworks but as substantive guarantees of liberty against governmental overreach.

2. The Right to Trial by Jury

Care's work promoted "an abiding respect for the merits of trial by jury as a bulwark of English rights and liberties"[5]. He viewed the jury system as one of the "two main pillars of the British Constitution" and a crucial safeguard against tyranny[6]. This emphasis on jury trials as essential to liberty helped establish the centrality of this institution in American jurisprudence. The Sixth and Seventh Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, guaranteeing the right to jury trials in criminal and civil cases, reflect the enduring influence of this idea. Care's "English Liberties" helped transmit this "jury ideology" to the American colonies, where it became a cornerstone of the legal system[5]. The book's detailed explanation of jury procedures and rights educated colonial readers about this crucial institution and its role in protecting individual liberty against arbitrary power.

3. Religious Liberty and Separation of Church and State

Care "advocated a radical theory of liberty of the religious conscience for all persons and argued for the principle of separation of church and state"[5]. His ideas on religious freedom have been compared to those of John Locke, though Care's writings on the subject predated Locke's "Letter on Toleration"[5]. This commitment to religious liberty and the separation of church and state would become fundamental principles of American governance, enshrined in the First Amendment. Care's anti-Catholic writings might seem at odds with his advocacy for religious liberty, but they reflected his concern that Catholicism, as he understood it, threatened the very principle of religious freedom by seeking to establish ecclesiastical authority over civil government. His insistence on the separation of religious and political authority helped lay the groundwork for American conceptions of religious liberty.

4. The Birthright of Liberty

Care described English liberties as "the Best Birthright the Subject hath," suggesting that rights were not granted by government but were the natural inheritance of all citizens[1][5]. This conception of rights as birthrights rather than privileges granted by authority would become central to American political thought, finding its most famous expression in the Declaration of Independence's assertion that "all men are created equal" and "endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights." Care's emphasis on the inherent nature of rights provided intellectual ammunition for colonists resisting British policies they viewed as infringing on their liberties. By framing rights as birthrights, Care helped establish the idea that certain liberties were beyond the legitimate reach of governmental authority—a principle that would become foundational to American constitutionalism.

5. The Importance of Legal Knowledge for Ordinary Citizens

Care wrote "English Liberties" specifically "to provide uneducated and inexperienced English persons with documents and information about the law and their rights"[1][5]. This democratic approach to legal knowledge reflected Care's belief that an informed citizenry was essential to the preservation of liberty. By making complex legal principles and historical documents accessible to ordinary readers, Care helped establish the principle that knowledge of the law should not be the exclusive province of elites. This idea—that citizens should understand their rights and the legal system that protects them—became an important aspect of American civic culture. Care's practical handbook, with its clear explanations and portable format, exemplified the democratization of legal knowledge that would become a hallmark of American approaches to law and citizenship.

Three Major Controversies

1. Anti-Catholic Sentiment and Religious Intolerance

One of the most significant controversies surrounding "English Liberties" and its author concerns the tension between Care's advocacy for religious liberty and his virulent anti-Catholicism. Care was known as an "English political writer and journalist, or 'Whig propagandist,' whose specialty was anti-Catholicism"[3]. His editorship of the "Weekly Pacquet of Advice from Rome," which became increasingly anti-Catholic following the alleged Popish Plot of 1678, reflected the deep religious divisions of his time[3]. This aspect of Care's work has been criticized for contributing to religious intolerance and sectarian conflict. The apparent contradiction between Care's support for religious liberty and his anti-Catholic rhetoric raises important questions about the limits and inconsistencies of early modern conceptions of tolerance. From a modern perspective, Care's anti-Catholicism appears at odds with his broader principles of liberty, highlighting the historical contingency of ideas about religious freedom and the challenges of applying them consistently across different faith traditions.

2. Nationalism and Xenophobia

Another controversy stems from Care's use of negative portrayals of foreigners to construct English national identity. According to some interpretations, "Care argued that seventeenth-century identities rested in part on negative images of foreigners, particularly the French and the Dutch"[2]. By emphasizing the superiority of English political and legal institutions in contrast to supposedly corrupt foreign systems, Care's work contributed to a nationalist discourse that could foster xenophobia and cultural chauvinism. This aspect of "English Liberties" raises important questions about the relationship between national identity, rights discourse, and attitudes toward foreigners. The tension between universal principles of liberty and particularistic conceptions of national identity continues to animate political debates today, making this controversy especially relevant to contemporary discussions of nationalism, immigration, and human rights.

3. Authorship and Attribution

A more scholarly controversy surrounds the attribution of "English Liberties" to Henry Care. While the work is generally attributed to Care, some scholars have suggested William Penn as a possible author[1]. This debate reflects broader questions about authorship, influence, and intellectual property in early modern print culture. The controversy is complicated by the fact that Penn reproduced significant portions of "English Liberties" in his own work, "The Excellent Privilege of Liberty and Property," published in Philadelphia in 1687[7]. The question of authorship is not merely academic but has implications for understanding the transmission of ideas between England and its colonies and the development of political thought in the Anglo-American world. The controversy highlights the collaborative and cumulative nature of intellectual production in the early modern period, challenging simplistic notions of individual authorship and originality.

In Closing

Civic-minded Americans should read "English Liberties" to understand the deep historical roots of the rights and liberties they enjoy today. This seminal work provides crucial insight into the intellectual foundations of American constitutionalism and the development of ideas about individual rights, limited government, and the rule of law that would become central to American political identity. By engaging with Care's text, contemporary readers can gain a richer appreciation of the historical context in which American conceptions of liberty emerged and the complex process by which English constitutional principles were transmitted to and transformed in the American colonies.

The book's emphasis on fundamental documents like the Magna Carta reminds us that our current constitutional order did not emerge *ex nihilo* but represents the culmination of centuries of political thought and struggle. Care's accessible presentation of these foundational texts and principles helped democratize knowledge of constitutional rights, making them available to ordinary citizens rather than just legal scholars. This democratization of legal knowledge remains essential to civic engagement and the preservation of liberty in our own time.

"English Liberties" also offers valuable perspective on contemporary debates about the nature and limits of rights. Care's conception of liberty as protection against "Arbitrary Violence and Oppression" rather than exemption from all legal constraint provides a nuanced framework for thinking about the relationship between individual freedom and the common good[1][5][6]. In an era when simplistic conceptions of liberty as the absence of all constraint often dominate public discourse, Care's more sophisticated understanding of freedom within the rule of law offers a valuable corrective.

Furthermore, the book's emphasis on the institutional foundations of liberty—particularly representative government and trial by jury—reminds us that abstract rights require concrete protections to be meaningful. At a time when democratic institutions face significant challenges, Care's insistence on the importance of these "two Grand Pillars" of liberty underscores the need to defend and strengthen the institutional frameworks that protect our rights[6].

Finally, "English Liberties" offers a window into the historical development of ideas about religious liberty and the separation of church and state that would become enshrined in the First Amendment. Care's advocacy for these principles, which predated similar arguments by John Locke, highlights the complex evolution of religious freedom in the Anglo-American tradition and its continuing importance to American civic life[5].

In sum, "English Liberties" deserves to be read by civic-minded Americans not only as a historical artifact but as a living text that continues to illuminate contemporary debates about the meaning and preservation of liberty in a democratic society. By engaging with this canonical work, readers can gain both historical perspective and conceptual clarity on the principles that have shaped American political life from the colonial era to the present day.

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