

**The newe Decrees of the Starre Chamber for  
orders in printinge./**

*Vicesimo Tertio Die Junij Anno Domini 1586./ Annoque Regni Regin[a]e  
Elizabeth[æ] vicesimo octauo./*



HEREAS sondrye Decrees and Ordynaunces haue vpon grave aduice and deliberacon been heretofore made and published, for the repressinge of suche greate enormyties and abuses as of late, more then in tyme paste, haue been commonlye vsed and practised by dyvers contentyous and disorderlye persons professinge the arte or mysterye of Pryntinge or sellinge of bookes And yet notwithstandinge the saide Abuses and enormyties are nothinge abated: but (as it is found by experience) doe rather daylye more and more encrease to the wilfull and manifeste breache and contempte of the said ordinances and decrees to the great dyspleasure and offence of the Quenes most excellent maiestie by reason whereof sondrye intollerable offences and troubles and disturbances haue happened aswell in the Churche, as in the Civill governement of the state and common wealthe of this Realme, whiche seeme to haue growen because the paynes and penaltyes conteyned and sett downe in the said ordynaunces and decrees haue been to lighte and small for the correctyon and punishment of soe greivous haynous offences, and soe the offenders and malefactors in that behalf haue not been soe severelye punished as the qualytye of their offences haue deserved Her maiestie therefore of her most godlye and gracyous disposytion, being carefull that spedye and due reformacon be had of the abuses and disorders aforesaid; And that all. persons vsinge or professinge the arte, trade or mysterye of pryntinge or sellinge of bookes, should from henceforth be ruled and directed therein by some certayne and knowen rules and ordynaunces whiche should be invyolabie kepte and observed, and the breakers and offenders of the same to be severelye and sharpelye punished and corrected hathe straightlye charged and required the moste Reverend in GOD the Archebysshop of CANTERBURY and the righte honorable the Lordes and others of her highenes pryvye Councell, to see her maiestye said moste gracyous and godlye intencon and purpose to be duelye and effectuallye executed and accomplished./ Wherevpon the said moste reverend father and the wholle presence sittinge in the honorable Courte this xxij<sup>th</sup> daye of June in the eighte and twentieth yere of her maiesties reigne vpon grave and mature deliberacon, haue ordayned and decreed that the ordynaunces, constitucons, rules and artycles here after

followinge fromhenceforth by all persons be dulye and invyolablye kepte and observed, accordinge to the tenour purporte and true intent and meaninge of the same, as they tender her maiesties highe displeasure, and as they will answere to ye contrarye at their vttermoste perill. *Viz.*

/ 1. /

Against the havinge of any printinge presse or other Instrumentes withoute notefyinge to the master and wardens./

*Inprimis* that everye Prynter and other person or persons whatsoever which at this tyme presente hath erected or sett vp, or hereafter shall erecte, sett vp, keepe, mainetayne or haue any pryntinge presse, Rowle or other Instrument for ympryntinge of bookes, Chartes, ballades, portraictures, paper called Damaske paper, or any suche matters or thinges whatsoever, Shall bringe a true note or certificate of the said Presses or other pryntinge instrumentes alreadye erected, within Tenne dayes nexte commynge after the publicacon hereof. And of the said presses or other printinge ynstrumentes hereafter to be erected or sett vp from tyme to tyme, within Ten dayes nexte after the erectinge or settinge vp thereof vnto the maister and wardens of the Cumpanye of Staconers of the Cyttye of London for the tyme beinge, vppon payne, That everye person faylinge or offendinge herein, shall haue all and everye of the said Presses and other Instrumentes vtterly defaced and made vnserviceable for ympryntinge forever And shall alsoe suffer Twelve monethes ymprysonment without Bayle or maynepryse./

*Pœna duplex.*

/ 2. /

Against printinge in any place savinge London and the twoe vniuersities.

London. Oxford. and Cambridge

*Item* that noe Prynter of Bookes, nor any other person or persons whatsoever shall sett vp, keepe, or mayneteyne any Presse or Presses, or anye other Instrument or Instrumentes for ympryntinge of Bookes, ballades, Chartes, Portraictures, or any other thinge or thinges whatsoever, But onelye in the Cyttye of London, or the Subburbes thereof, and excepte one presse in the vniuersitye of Cambridge, and another presse in the vnyuersytie of Oxforde, and noe moe, And that noe person shali hereafter erecte, sett vp, or mayneteyne in anye secrett or obscure corner or place anye suche presse or instrument before expressed, but that the same shalbe in suche open place or places in his or their house or howses, as the wardens of the said Cumpanye of the Staconers for the tyme beinge or suche other person or persons as by the said wardens shall be therevnto appoynted, maye from tyme to tyme haue readye accesse vnto, to searche for and viewe the same / And that noe prynter or other person or persons shall at any time or times hereafter withstand or make resystance to or in anye suche viewe or searche nor denye or keepe secrett anye suche presse or other instrument

Resisting the search.  
Concealing of Presses.

for ymprintinge, Vpon payne that everye person offendinge in any thinge contrarye to this artycle, shall haue all the said presses and other printinge instrumentes defaced and made vnserviceable for ymprintinge forever, and shall alsoe suffer ymprisonment one wholle yere without bayle or mayneprise, and to be disabled forever to keepe any printinge presse or other instrument for pryntinge, or to be master [of any pryntinge house, or to haue anye benefytt therebye, other then only to worke as a Journeyman for wages./

3.

*Item* that no Prynter, nor other person or persons whatsoever, that hath sett vp any presse or Instrument for ymprintinge within Six monethes last past, shall hereafter vse or occupye the same, nor any person or persons shall hereafter erect or sett vp any presse or other instrument of pryntinge, tyll the excessiue multytude of Prynters hauinge presses already sett vp, be abated, dyminished, and by death gyvinge over, or otherwyse brought to so small a number of maisters or owners of pryntinge houses, beinge of abylyty and good behauyour, As the Archbishop of CANTERBURY and Bishop of LONDON for the tyme being shall therevpon thinck requisyte and convenyent for the good service of the Realme, to haue somme more presses or ynstrumentes for pryntinge, erected and sett vp. And that when and as often as the sayd Archbishop and Byshop for the tyme beinge shall so thinck yt requisyte and convenyent, and shall signifye the same to the said master and wardens of the sayd Cumpanye of Staconers for the tyme beinge./ That then and so often the sayd master and wardens shall within convenyent tyme after, call the Assistantes of the same Cumpany before them, and shall make choice of one or more (as, by the opynion of the sayd Archbishop and Bishop for the tyme beinge, need shall requier) of such persons being free Staconers, as for their skylle, abylyty, and good behauour shall be thought by the sayd master wardens and Assistantes or the more part of them, meet to haue the charge and governement of a Presse or prynting howse / And that with in xiiij. daies next after suche eleccion and choice, The sayd master wardens and ffoure other at the least of the Assistantes of the said Cumpanye shall present before the high Commissioners in cause Ecclesiasticall or Six or more of them, whereof the Archbishop of CANTERBURY or Bishop of LONDON to be one, the person and persons so chosen and elected / And that vpon such choice and presentment so made, yt shallbe lafull to and for the sayd Commissioners or any Six or moe of them, whereof the sayd Archbishop to be one, to allowe and admytt euery such person soe chosen and

Punishment

Against the erecting of Presses.

To diminish the excessiue number of Prynters.

In whose Judgement it lyeth to haue more Presses erected./

Chosing of a Prynter.

The Electors of a newe Prynter.

The presentment of the elected Prynter to the Commissioners

Admission of the Prynter elected.

presented to be master and governour of a presse and pryntinge howse, accordinge to the same electyon and presentment, vpon payne, that every person offendinge contrary to the entent of this Artycle, shall haue his Presse and other Instrumentes for Pryntinge, defaced and made vnserviceable and also suffer ymprysonment by the space of One whole yeare without bayle or maynepryse. Provyded alwayes that this artycle or any thinge therein conteyned shall not extend to the office of the Quenes maiesties Prynter for the service of the Realme / But that the sayd Office and Officer shalbe and contynew at the pleasure and dysposicon of her maiestie her heires and successors at all tymes vpon the death of her highnes Prynter or otherwyse./

Penaltye./

Liberty for the  
Queenes Prynter.

4.

*Item* that no person or persons shall ymprynt or cawse to be ymprinted, or suffer by any meanes to his knowledge his presse, letters [*type*], or other Instrumentes to be occupied in pryntinge of any booke, work, coppye, matter, or thinge whatsoever, Except the same book, woork, coppye, matter, or any other thinge, hath been heeretofore allowed, or hereafter shall be allowed before the ymprintinge thereof, accordinge to th[e] order appoynted by the Queenes maiesties *Iniunctyons*, And been first seen and perused by the Archbishop of CANTERBURY and Bishop of LONDON for the tyme beinge or any one of them (The Queenes maiesties Prynter for somme speciall service by her maiestie, or by somme of her highnes pryvie Councell therevnto appoynted, and such as are or shalbe pryviledged to prynte the bookes of the *Common Lawe* of this Realme, for such of the same bookes as shalbe allowed of by the Twoo Chief Justices, and Chief Baron for the tyme beinge, or any twoo of them onely excepted) Nor shall ymprynt or cause to be ymprinted any book, work or coppie against the fourme and meaninge of any Restraynt or ordonnaunce conteyned or to be conteyned in any statute or lawes of this Realme, or in any Iniunctyon made, or sett fourth by her maiestie, or her highnes pryvye Councell, or against the true intent and meaninge of any Letters patentes, Commissions or prohibicons vnder the great seale of England, or contrary to any allowed ordynaunce sett Downe for the good governaunce of the Cumpany of Staconers within the Cyttye of London, vppon payne to haue all such presses, letters, and instrumentes as in or about the pryntinge of any such bookes or copyes shalbe employed or vsed, to be defaced and made vnserviceable for ymprintinge forever. And vppon payne also that euery offendour and offendours contrarye to this present Artycle or ordynaunce shalbe dishabled (after any such offence) to vse or exercise or take benefytt by vsinge or

Against prynting  
of Bookes with-  
out authoritye /

Allowinge of  
Bookes.

Exception for  
the Queenes  
Prynter.

Printinge without  
Licence./

Penaltyes by  
defacing of  
Presses.

Dismissing from  
printing

exercisinge of the art or feat of ympryntinge./ And shall moreover  
Imprisonment. sustayne ymprysonment Six moneths without Bayle or mayneprise /

5./

Binders offending punishable by ymprysonment. *Item* that every such person or persons as sell, vtter, or putt to sale, wyttingly bynd, stitch or sowe, or wyttingly cause to be sould, vttered, putt to sale, bound, stitched, or sowed any bookes or Coppies whatsoever prynted contrary to th[e]intent and true meaninge of any ordynaunce or Artycle afore sayd, shall suffer three monethes ymprysonment for his or their offence./

6.

Search. *Item* that yt shalbe lawfull for the wardens of the sayd Cumpany for the tyme beinge, or any twoo of the sayd Cumpanye therevnto Deputed by the sayd wardens, to make serch in all woorkhowses, shops, warehowses of prynters, bookesellers, bookebynders, or where they shall haue reasonable cause of suspicon / And all bookes, Coppies, matters and thynges prynted, or to be prynted contrarye to th[e]intent and meaninge of theis present ordonaunces, to seize and take to her maiesties vse, and the same carry to the Staconers hall in London / And the partie or partyes offendinge in pryntinge, sellinge, vtteringe, byndinge, stytychinge, or sowinge any such bookes, coppies, matters or thynges, to arrest bringe and present before the sayd highe Comissioners in causes Ecclesyastycall or some Three or more of them, whereof the sayd Archbishop of CANTERBURY or Bishop of LONDON for the tyme beinge to be one./

Seizing of Bookes.

Offenders to be presented before the highe Comissioners.

7.

Taking of Presses vppon offences. *Item* that yt shalbe lawfull to and for the sayd wardens for the tyme beinge, or any twoo by them appointed, without lett or interrupcon of any person or persons whatsoever, to enter into any howse, workehowse, warehowse, shop, or other place or places, and to search take and carry away all presses, letters, and other pryntinge instrumentes sett vp, vsed or employed, or to be sett vp, vsed, or employed, contrary to th[e]intent and meaninge hereof, to be defaced and made vnseruiceable as aforesayd / And that the sayd wardens shall so often as need shall requier, call the Assystantes of their sayd Cumpany, or the more parte of them into their sayd hall, And there take order for the Defacinge, burninge, breaking, and destroyinge of all the sayd letters; presses, and other pryntinge Instrumentes aforesayd. And therevpon shall cause all such pryntinge presses and other Instrumentes of ymprintinge to be Defaced, melted,

Defacing and making of printing stufte vnseruiceable.

Sawing of  
Presses./

sawed in peeces, broken, or battered at the smythes forge, or otherwyse to be made vnserviceable / And the stuffe of the same so defaced shall redelyver to the owners thereof againe within three monethes next after the takinge or seizinge thereof as aforesayd./

8./

Against the  
excessiue  
number of  
Prynters.

*Item* that for the avoydinge of the excessyve number of Prynters within this Realme, yt shall not be lawfull for any person or persons beinge free of the Cumpany of Staconers, or vsinge the trade or mistery of pryntinge, booksellinge, or bookebyndinge, to haue take and keepe hereafter at one tyme any greater number of Apprentices then shalbe hereafter expressed, that is to saye / Everye person that hath been or shalbe master or vpper warden of the Cumpanye whereof he is free to keepe three apprentices at one tyme, and not aboue / And everye person that is or shalbe vnder warden or of the Lyvery of the Cumpanye whereof he is free, to keepe twoo Apprentices, and not aboue / And euery person that is or shalbe of the y[e]omanry of the Cumpanye whereof he is or shalbe free, to keepe one apprentice (yf he himself be not a Journeyman) and not aboue./

Number of  
Apprentices  
lymited.

An exception for  
the Queenes  
Printer.

Provyded alwayes that this ordinaunce shall not extend to the Quenes Maiesties prynter for the tyme beinge for the service of her maiestie and the Realme./ But that he be at liberty to keepe and haue apprentices to the number of Sixe at one tyme./

9./

Oxford and  
Cambridge.

*Item* that none of the Prynters in Cambridge or Oxford for the tyme beinge shalbe suffered to haue any more apprentices then one at one tyme at the most / But yt is and shalbe lawfull to and for the sayd Prynters and eyther of them and their Successors to haue and vse the helpe of any Journeyman beinge freeman of the cyttye of London without contradiccon / Any Lawe, statute, or Commaundment contrarye to the meaninge and due execucon of these Ordynaunces or any of them in any wyse notwithstandinge /.

A lyberty to  
retayne  
Journeyman  
free of  
London./

**Fynis.**/