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Mander, Mill Colleges

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B. J. II 137

T O
THE REVEREND
DOCTOR RANDOLPH,
VICECHANCELLOR
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
O X F O R D.



REVEREND SIR,

YOUR eminent station in this place, and the character you have deservedly maintained of integrity, learning, and public spirit, have determined me to apply myself to you, with regard to a complaint of no small importance, which I find myself under the disagreeable necessity of making. And as the object of this complaint is a trust, wherein the honour and interest of the whole university seem to me to be deeply concerned, I shall make no apology for laying the same before the members of convocation also; since their advice and concurrence will be requisite, to minister effectual redress.

It is now almost two years ago, since I had the unexpected honour to be nominated a delegate for printing; an employment by no means to be coveted in the most flourishing state of the press, but much less so at a period of time when it was notoriously reduced to a very deplorable condition. I thought myself however obliged to the gentlemen concerned in the nomination, for this mark of their confidence and good opinion, and therefore accepted the trust; little dreaming of the difficulties it has since been my lot to encounter.

When I came to consider the weight and extent of the charge, thus suddenly cast upon me, I perceived myself bound, both in point of reputation and duty, to learn in some little degree the nature of the business I had undertaken: for without a competent knowledge of the constitution of the press in general, and the university press in particular, I presumed it would be impossible to understand the causes of its present decline, so as to prepare the way for a speedy and lasting restorative. I saw that the credit of the place was intimately connected with this enquiry: that all seminaries of learning had made it their particular care to raise and support the character of their learned press; being sensible that it was principally from this outward fruit, that posterity or foreign nations could judge of their internal merit: that other less respectable universities, even in our own island, were daily extending their fame by this and by similar methods: while the *Oxford* press, which was once the foremost in this laudable contention, was languishing in a lazy obscurity, and barely reminding us of its existence, by now and then slowly bringing forth a programme, a sermon printed by request, or at best a *Bodleian* catalogue. Individuals, it is true, had at times, very nobly

contributed their quota, by learned and elegant publications, to rescue its name from contempt: but the university in its *collective* capacity, which sat idle, got little reputation by the contrast. And this was the more astonishing, as we were in possession of the most ample privileges, by the favour of our kings and legislature; were endowed with a princely revenue, appropriated to the use of the press; and never had at any one time more gentlemen of learning, of various and extended learning, than of late had adorned the university.

To investigate therefore the true causes of this misfortune, I had recourse to a diligent perusal of our charters, statutes, and registers, relating to the press; (so far as I was *permitted* to peruse them;) and had repeated conferences with the most eminent masters, in *London* and other places, with regard to the mechanical part of printing; and then endeavoured to compare what I had thus learned with what was put in practice at *Oxford*. The result of this comparison, between what ought to be, and what is performed, will form the subject of the ensuing pages; wherein I shall endeavour to lay before you, impartially, freely, and without reserve, what I take to be the immediate causes of the present condition of our press.

And herein, sir, I am sensible that some disagreeable truths must be brought into open light, which may possibly chagrin a few gentlemen, for whose many good qualities in other situations of life, I have a just and sincere respect; and for whose sakes, as well as my own, it had been much more eligible, could this task of reformation have been carried on among ourselves, with privacy, concord, and dispatch. But the experience of near two years has convinced me, that this is rather to be wished than expected; all proposals of amendment having hitherto been treated with supercilious neglect, or at best with a languid indifference. It gives me however a very sensible pleasure, that you, sir, have been totally unconcerned in these transactions; not having been yet called to the burthen of either the delegacy of the press, or of accounts, much less to the accumulated weight of both; so that nothing contained in these sheets can be construed to convey a reflection on your justly distinguished character. And, in this situation, I am persuaded that your prudence will not hastily engage you to adopt the mistakes of others; nor your integrity suffer you to encourage the continuance of measures, which have only been excusable from inadvertence, but may require a harsher construction, if wilfully pursued and avowed.

I. The first cause of our present inactivity, that I shall mention, is the want of a regular *time* and *place* for the meeting of the delegates to deliberate

berate on business. This omission, however slight it may appear, is the parent of much uncertainty and delay. When a stated time and place are prefixed for the meeting, the delegates will so order their private avocations, that they may be able to attend constantly upon their public duty. And a regulation of this kind is always to be found, in every other assembly selected for the dispatch of business; by daily, weekly, or monthly assemblies at a certain place, or by adjournments made among themselves, as particular exigencies may require. Whereas, when summoned at all, we are now summoned together at a few hours notice, and frequently in private lodgings. And sometimes it happens that the magistrate who directs the summons, not being restrained to any regular time, puts off the intended meeting from day to day, till the business either entirely drops, or suffers considerably by delay. Thus, to instance in a recent transaction, bishop *Gibson* died in the year 1748; and his executor soon after offered to the university, pursuant to the bishop's intentions, his corrected copy of the *Codex*; but no final agreement was made with him till *february*, 1756; and no steps were taken to carry that agreement into execution, and forward the work to the press, till *october* following.

I am very well aware that the appointment of both *place* and *time* is now left in the breast of the vicechancellor only; and perhaps, sir, you may hear some suggestions, that it would be too dangerous a condescension, to part with so important a prerogative. But let it be considered, that there was formerly no public place set apart and prepared for the reception of *all* delegates, as the delegates' room at the printing house at present is: and the peculiar propriety of *our* meeting there, for conducting the business of the press, is too obvious to need explanation. Nor is it desired, to preclude the vicechancellor from calling a meeting at *any time*, as sudden emergencies may require; but only to insure a constant and regular meeting at *some time or other*. And I think I may be confident that *you*, sir, will never insist upon a prerogative, attended with so much inconvenience to the public business, which cannot be used to any laudable purpose, and may be perverted to many bad ones. It is under a good and gentle administration that we hope for such salutary provisions, as may restrain the power of doing hurt in those of a different stamp; and I own I am the more solicitous for a restriction, which seems at first view of no mighty importance, because I have seen the latitude at present given made a very extraordinary use of: I have known a meeting, either suddenly precipitated to carry a favourite point, like the memorable scheme for the almanacs; or deferred without end, to stave
off

off a disagreeable measure, like that of appointing an overseer; (both which I shall presently explain;) or secretly assembled in a private conclave, to elude the claim of a delegate, whom his brethren had resolved to reject. Nay, I have known this discretionary prerogative stretched to such a wantonness of power, as to insert or leave out of the summons, whom-ever the magistrate thought fit: I have known a bedel sent ^a to an unquestioned delegate, at ten o'clock at night, with this singular message in writing, that "if he pleased to attend (the next morning) as a *stated* delegate of the press, he was included in the summons; if not, his attendance was not required:" as a supplement also to which, I cannot easily forget that this delegate, at the next public meeting, in a few days after, was openly charged with perjury for non-attendance upon the former notice, by the very person who wrote the summons.

II. Another cause of our dissipation and uncertainty in matters of business is the want of a proper and distinct *register*, wherein the acts of the delegacy might be entered and properly authenticated. This was advised by archbishop LAUD at the first establishment of the delegacy, viz. "that some handsome registerbook were bought, in which might be kept alone your acts concerning the settlement of the press ^b." And I have reason to believe it was then complied with; for I remember to have seen in your predecessor's hands a book, out of which he read an old order of the delegates, to prove some particular point; but when I desired he would favour me with the perusal of the whole at leisure, he begged to be excused: and as I am informed by you, sir, that such a book never came to your knowledge, I presume that this register, like others, "is so mislaid that he knows not where to have recourse to it." At present, it is true, the registrar sometimes attends us, and takes loose minutes of what is agreed on, for immediate use; but as this is not properly his duty, and as no lasting entry is made of any thing, we are as much, nay more, at a loss to know what passed a year ago, than what was done at the settlement of the press. I need not enlarge upon the inconvenience of this strange omission.

III. It would also be extremely conducive to our knowledge of the business before us, if, as delegates of the press, we were permitted to *audit* and *examine* the *accounts* of the workmen we employ. It seems to common understandings an absurdity to debar us of this right; to give us a power of laying out money for the press, and no power of seeing whether that money has been properly applied as directed. But, as the

^a 13 Jul. 1756.

^b Hist. of his Chancellorship. 126.

case now stands, the delegates of accounts have taken this office upon them, in exclusion of those of the prefs; notwithstanding the decree of convocation, 31 mar. 1637, expressly directs, that the delegates of the prefs, “*delegati antebac nominati*, 1 apr. 1633, *quotannis rationem redderent huic domui de receptis & expensis, in hunc usum erogatis; & super hoc negotio LIBRUM RATIOCINII servarent.*”——A certain writer indeed has not scrupled to assert (page xviii. of his performance) that “it has been the immemorial practice to have the accounts of the prefs audited and settled by the *proper* delegates (he must mean, those for printing;) and then for some of those delegates, who were also delegates of accounts, to see the balance already stated made a part of the vicechancellor’s general account.” But the proctors have reminded him, that the fact was totally the reverse, the *only* time that the prefs accounts were settled during his administration: and I must also add to their testimony my own experience, that in *december*, 1755, Dr. Walker (a mere delegate of accounts) was called in to settle the accounts of the prefs; and neither myself, nor either of the proctors, were permitted to inspect the book; but were dismissed the room, before Mr. Wood was suffered to begin his account.

IV. It seems also highly expedient that we should have *copies* of our charters for printing, of the university-lease to *Baskett*, and of all acts of parliament, &c. relating to the privileges of our prefs, always ready for the delegates to consult upon occasion; who would thereby be the better *informed* of the limits and extent of their powers. For want of this knowledge, about two years ago, an agreement was actually drawn with regard to the *Codex*, to have passed under the public seal, by which we were to have given up our privileges to Mr. *Lintot* the law-printer, to have purchased his consent at a very high price, and to have inserted in the title of the book that it was printed by his permission; but that luckily a person, who was consulted about the *form* of the agreement, started an objection to the *matter*.——So too at a meeting, 14 *july*, 1756^c, it was thought proper to empower two *London* booksellers to print at the *Clarendon* press the fourpenny sheet almanack, together with *Rider’s* british *Merlin*, poor *Robin*, and other vulgar almanacs; and an instrument was actually ingrossing for that purpose; but a sufficient number not being present to constitute a regular meeting, the confirmation of this bargain was luckily deferred till another day; when one of the delegates, who refused to be excluded a second time, gave it a strong opposition on account of the

^c See the last page.

discredit so mean an employment would bring upon the *Oxford* prefs. And he was so well seconded by others who were not before present, that the further consideration of this scheme was put off *sine die*; and it was afterwards found (as was then suggested) that we were happily precluded, by our lease to *Baskett*, from making any such agreement at all.—Again; by a statute of queen ANNE, all books printed at the university prefs, in any learned language, are allowed a drawback at the treasury for the duty paid upon the paper. Yet so little has this been attended to, that when Mr. *Lye* some years ago printed his edition of *Junius* here, and made his application for the drawback, I have heard that he met with great trouble upon that account, the demand being entirely new and unprecedented. Whereas if the claim of this privilege were put into a certain method, and were constantly and regularly insisted on, it would soon become a matter of course in the public offices, and be allowed with as little hesitation as the bounty for exporting of corn.

V. Another cause of the decline of our prefs, more important than any I have mentioned, is the want of an industrious, honest, and skilful *overseer*, to inspect and manage the mechanical part of printing; with which the delegates themselves, from the nature of their respective studies, cannot be supposed to be accurately and minutely acquainted.

The university statutes direct^d, that over the public university prefs an architypographer, properly qualified, be appointed; to overlook (as I understand his office) the impression of all such books as are printed by the university itself, from its *public* fund. And to this office the superior bedel of law's place is for the future directed to be annexed. In pursuance of which, 24 *july*, 1649, at a meeting of the public delegates for the total administration of affairs in those times of confusion, “*magister Samuel Clarke e collegio Mertonensi, vir graecis latinisque literis probe instructus, et in studiis philologicis versatissimus, architypo-*

^d Tit. xviii. Sect. 5. Quoniam in re typographica usu compertum est mechanicos artifices (lucris sui compendium cum dispendio operis plerumque sectantes) calligraphiae seu operis decori & elegantiae minime studere, sed opera quaeque rudia ac inemendata in publicam lucem extrudere; idcirco praesenti statuto cautum esto, quod publicae universitatis typographiae instruendae, in domo aliqua huic usui specialiter deputata, praeficiatur architypographus unus; vir graecis latinisque literis probe instructus, & in studiis philologicis versatissimus. Cujus munus erit, operis typographicis ibidem praesse, materiam sive supellectilem typographicam (chartam scilicet, praela, typos, & alia hujus officii instrumenta) ut sint in suo quaeque genere lectissima, providere. In operibus e publica uni-

versitatis typographia prodeuntibus, typorum modulum, chartae qualitatem, marginum mensuram praescribere; correctorum errata emendare; et alia quaecunque ad operis ornatum & perfectionem spectantia sedulo curare. Cui muneri quo alacrius & liberius vacet (praeter certam portionem lucris e libris impressis provenientis, ipsi posthac pro ratione symbolae, quam ad publicae typographiae peculium seu sortem communem contulerit, assignandam ab iis qui a domo convocationis ad ordinanda statuta typographica delegandi erunt) officium superioris bedelli in jure civili, (utpote reliquis minus negotiosum) quandoque primum quoquo modo vacaverit, perpetuo in posterum annexendum fore, praesenti statuto cautum esto.

“ *graphus*

“ *graphus nominabatur, juxta stat. tit. 18. sect. 5. Cui muneri ut liberius vacet, officium superioris bedelli in jure civili, quandocunque primum quoquo modo vacaverit, designatur.*” And, upon the next vacancy in the bedell’s place by the death of *Bernard Hore, Clarke* was on the 14th of *may*, 1658, elected by the convocation architypographer, and on the 29th of *may* following was admitted bedell of law. And, however illegal the authority by which he was appointed, he continued to exercise both offices without any re-election till his death in 1669; when the convocation, on the 29th of *december*, unfortunately made choice of one *Norton Bold* to succeed him as architypographer, “ *cui muneri,*” says the register, “ *officium bedelli superioris in jure civili annexitur.*” But this man being utterly unqualified for the place, it gave occasion to a letter from king *CHARLES* the second to the univervity, in the following remarkable terms :

“ To our trusty and well-beloved our vicechancellor of our univervity
 “ of *Oxford*; and in his absence to the provicechancellor for the
 “ time being; to be communicated to the heads of houses, and
 “ to our convocation.

“ *CHARLES R.*

“ **T**RUSTY and well-beloved, we greet you well. Whereas the
 “ king our father of most blessed memory hath by his charters
 “ and gracious concessions added much to the antient rights and privi-
 “ leges of that our univervity in the affair of printing, and hath also, in
 “ that body of statutes which he gave you, most especially provided that
 “ the office of architypographer, or overseer of your printing presses,
 “ should have the office of superior bedell in the law faculty annex unto
 “ it; and that the person chosen thereto should be qualified for skill and
 “ experience suitable to such a trust and employment: and whereas we
 “ are informed that, at the last vacancie of the superior law bedell’s place,
 “ there was not that regard had to the statute and design of our dear
 “ father, as the weight and consequence of the thing required; which
 “ we are willing to believe was the effect of overmuch hast and inad-
 “ vertency, rather than any neglect of so useful an institution: We being
 “ now advertised by our right trusty and right entirely beloved cousin
 “ and counsellor the duke of *Ormond*, our chancellor of that our univervity,
 “ of an opportunity by transferring the person lately chosen superior law
 “ bedell into the like place of bedell in either of the other faculties that
 “ shall first become voyd, doe hereby declare our approbation of that ex-
 “ B pedient;

" pedient ; and further doe will and require that, upon the vacancie of the
 " law bedle's place by such transference, you do proceed to the election
 " of an architypographer according to your statutes ; wherein we doe both
 " recommend and expect that you choose the most capable person that
 " you can find, to oversee and governe your printing presses with best ad-
 " vantage to the publick ; and that you choose noe other but such who,
 " besides the abilities requisite in the tongues, you know to be most ex-
 " periened in the mechanick part of printing, according to the statute and
 " designe of our dear father in that behalfe. For we cannot but be very
 " much concerned that, since you have those conveniences for a great
 " imprimerie which other universitys cannot boast of, your improvement
 " and productions in that kind be answerable to the present opportuni-
 " ties and antient honor of that our university. And so we bid you heartily
 " farewell. Given at our court at *Whitehall* the 17th of *september* in the
 " 23 year of our raigne, 1671.

" By his majestie's command,

" ARLINGTON."

In consequence of this letter (which contains good matter of reflection
 for succeeding times) *Bold* was, on the 10th of *october* following, transferred
 to the place of divinity bedell ; and *Christopher Wase* was elected archi-
 typographer, "*cui muneri,*" says the register again, "*secundum statuta*
 "*annectitur officium superioris bedelli in jure civili.*" In like manner *Gerard*
Langbane, 16 *jan.* 1690 ; *Giles Thistlethwayte*, 28 *jun.* 1692 ; *Thomas*
Hearne, 19 *jan.* 1714 ; and *William Mussendine*, 12 *aug.* 1715 ; were
 elected architypographers, and not bedells ; the bedell's place being ex-
 pressly declared in the registers to be annexed to the other office. The
 last mentioned gentleman, I have been informed, was at least as unfit
 for the office as *Norton Bold* ; but instead of removing him into another
 faculty, according to that example, he was suffered to execute his office
 by deputy : one *Richardson*, a working printer, and warehousekeeper to
 the delegates, being thenceforth entrusted with the total management
 of the house.

This warehousekeeper, or mechanical overseer, I apprehend to be a
 very distinct officer from the former, or architypographer ; who is the
 servant of the *university*, and whose office is to correct, and prescribe the
 size, the letter, &c, of such works as are undertaken at the *public* charge.
 This would be absurd and impracticable in works that are printed for
private persons ; though therein also, for the credit of the house, he has
 a general

a general oversight, and should be careful that all the apparatus for printing be the best in it's several kinds. But the warehousekeeper, manager, or foreman, who is the servant of the *delegates*, is not only to dispose and arrange the university books in the drying rooms and warehouse, when printed; but also to provide ink, and other materials; to inspect and prevent abuses among the other workmen; to assign a due proportion of wages to the compositors and pressmen, according to the value of their work; and to agree upon reasonable terms with authors or booksellers, for printing any private pieces, when the public press is at leisure.

But *Richardson*, for the reasons before mentioned, having long acted in both these capacities, Mr. *Muffendine's* typographical character was entirely forgot in the university; he was regarded as a mere bedell of law; and when on his death, Mr. *Herbert Beaver* was, 30 Oct. 1732, elected bedell in his room, the place of architypographer was then left vacant, and so continues to the present time.

What *Richardson's* abilities might formerly be, I know not. When I first became acquainted with the house, he was totally superannuated, and entirely unfit for business. In a long course of years he had however peopled the house with a numerous train of descendants; sons, grandsons, sons-in-law, &c: who only, for the most part, are still suffered to be there employed; and indeed they care not to undertake more work, than can be conveniently and leisurely performed by their own family. To one of these, whose name is *Wood*, by profession a pressman, and entirely ignorant of the compositor's business, (but his own son-in-law) *Richardson* had consigned the care of the house; and to these two men, this deputy and under-deputy, thus qualified and thus connected, acting without check or controul, for the benefit of themselves and their kinsmen, has the total management of the press, and with it the honour of the university, been entrusted; till by degrees, in a course of about forty years, it has sunk to it's present condition.

It was in this branch of management that a reformation (if any was ever intended) was necessarily first to begin. It was therefore, so long ago as *february* 1756, proposed by the compiler of these papers to the then vicechancellor and delegates, to appoint some honest, industrious, and skilful manager, and to allow old *Richardson* a competent salary for his life; in case a regard for his past services should forbid us to think of his total discharge. But the latter part of the proposal soon became unnecessary, by *Richardson's* death very early in the following spring. His son-in-law immediately became a candidate to succeed him, and met (as he assured me) with encouragement from most of the delegates.

For my own part, though very willing to continue *Wood* in his proper employment of a pressman, yet I thought he had shewn no talents for the total management of the printing-house; and was not a little pleased at an opportunity, that so luckily offered, to put the mechanical branch of the press under some able artist, without any real or apparent hardship to any one. But discoursing with your predecessor to this purpose, I had soon the mortification to find, that *Wood* had given me a very just account; and that a strong inclination (if not a resolution) had prevailed among many of the delegates, to commit to his hands the entire management of the house; because (I was startled at the expression) "they had most of them a kindness for *Wood*." Yet as those, who had a kindness for the university, would probably require a more substantial reason, he hath not hitherto (that I know of) at any public meeting been appointed in form the chief manager; but this place also has been kept vacant above a twelve-month. Out of kindness however to *Wood*, he hath ever since been permitted (by what authority or whose orders I am ignorant) to take the same care of the printing-house as he did in the lifetime of *Richardson*.

I may, like other gentlemen before me, be accused of "more crafty than fair suppressions," if I omit to mention one circumstance, which perhaps is not very material; viz. that soon after *Richardson's* death, by desire of the present bedell of law, I presented a memorial from him to the delegates, wherein he put in his claim to succeed Mr. *Richardson*; supposing him to have been architypographer, and that the said office was annexed to the bedell's place. In both of which points I apprehended, and so told him, he was under a mistake; *Richardson* having never been architypographer, and the bedell's place being statutely annexed to that office, not that office to the bedell's place. His abilities for the station he desired were, I believe, unquestionable; but that not being in the disposal of the delegates, but of the convocation, this I should suppose might be the reason (since no reason was given at the time) for entirely slighting his memorial.

VI. This sacrifice of the university press to the purposes of a favourite family has occasioned the very inconvenience which our statutes foresaw, and were therefore solicitous to prevent, by appointing an architypographer. "*Ufu enim compertum est mechanicos hocce artifices lucri sui compendium, cum dispendio operis, plerumque sectari.*" I will not weary your patience with raking into the whole of their conduct. I leave it to those, who have employed or corrected the press, to complain of the incivility, the delays, the negligence, the incorretness of the workmen; and shall at present confine myself only to the article of *expense*; which

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is here amazingly higher than that of the best artists in other places. The following is a plain example of this, in a work of the most common nature, (such, for instance, as an octavo sermon) which may serve as a specimen of the whole.

The price of printing per sheet, number 500, english letter, without notes;

In <i>London</i> .			At the university press.						
	s.	d.		s.	d.				
Compositor	—	—	6	0	Compositor	—	—	10	0
Corrector	—	—	1	0	Corrector, none found.				
Pressmen	—	—	2	4	Pressmen	—	—	3	0
Master, for house, presses, types, ink, utensils, trouble, and profits			4	8	Warehousekeeper, for ink, utensils, and trouble			2	0
					University, for house, presses, types, and profits				
Total	—	—	14	0	Total	—	—	17	0

From whence it appears, that the customer pays three shillings per sheet more in *Oxford* than in *London*, and is also to find a corrector:—that the wages of our compositor and pressmen only, without any corrector, amount to just as much as the total price in *London*, exclusive also of the corrector; from which total price the master printer (who finds every thing) gains a competent livelihood for himself and family:—that the warehousekeeper (who has also an annual allowance) receives as much for a few trifling articles, as the university for the only expensive ones:—and that, lastly, if the university should undertake a work at their own expense, (or were to lend the use of their types and printinghouse *gratis*) it would cost more to use their own types in their own house, than to have the work printed at *London*; for, in the present instance, the *London* price is only *fourteen* shillings, and the university must pay their own servants *fifteen*, besides the expense of a corrector.

These abuses and exactions, together with many others, were plainly stated in writing, and put into the hands of the late vicechancellor, to be communicated to all the delegates, so long ago as *february 1756*; and a scheme was at the same time proposed for reducing the present prices, and fixing them for the future in all sizes, letters, and languages, by a series of tables; which tables were so calculated that any person, without the least previous knowledge of printing, might at one view be able

to

to ascertain the price he was to give for any work. This proposal (which cost some pains in the compiling) had undergone the strictures of many persons of learning in this place, and had been examined, corrected, and approved by some printers of the first character in *London*. Many also of the delegates received it with seeming satisfaction, and professions of zeal for its success. Others indeed treated it with a gloomy and contemptuous silence; imagining perhaps that any steps towards reformation would be an acknowledgement of former negligence. Objections of some sort or other they certainly had, and probably extremely strong ones; else it will be hard to account why, in the course of fifteen months, these proposals have never been once considered in any meeting; nor have had any other effect, than barely to alarm the favourite family in the printinghouse; who, I hear, have begun among themselves a flight and imperfect reduction, which may possibly continue till the present enquiries are over.

VII. The last and most important complaint, which I think it my duty to lay before you and the university, relates to the *withholding* of those ample *revenues*, which are appropriated to the maintenance of a learned press. I will not go so far as to charge (what I cannot prove) any particular misapplication or embezzlement of this sacred fund: but, during my knowledge of the university, and by all accounts for these forty years past, so small a proportion has been *visibly* applied to its proper use, that if it still remains untouched (as I trust it does) there must be stock in the chest sufficient to complete the most extensive designs of a LAUD, a SHELDON, or a FELL.

As this is a matter of great consequence, not only to the university but also to the learned world, I must entreat your patience, while I endeavour to state the fact with some degree of minuteness.

The *funds*, appropriated to the support and maintenance of a learned press, I apprehend to be principally three.

I. The first is the rent paid by Mr. *Baskett*, for the use of one half of our printinghouse in the impression of bibles and liturgies; and also in consideration of the university's forbearing to *comprint* (such is their expression) these and certain other books, according to their privilege by charter and immemorial prescription.

Sir *Edward Coke*, who was educated at *Cambridge*, hath observed with some triumph; that "the university of *Cambridge* hath power to print "within the same *omnes et omnimodos libros*, which the university of "*Oxford* hath not." How true this negative branch of the observation might have been when he made it, I shall not at present enquire. But

it certainly hath not been true, ever since the 12th of *november*, 8 CAROLI I. 1632; when our ever-to-be-honoured chancellor, archbishop LAUD, then bishop of *London*, procured the king's charter of that date, containing most ample privileges of printing; which were confirmed, explained, and enlarged by two subsequent charters, 13 *mar.* 8 CAR. I. and 3 *mar.* 11 CAR. I. "The motives" (says he in his letter to the convocation 22 *mar.* 1632^f;) "which I used were principally two; the "one, that you might enjoy this privilege for learning equally with "Cambridge; and the other, that having many excellent manuscripts in "your library, you might in time hereby be encouraged to publish some "of them in print, to the great honour of that place, this church, and "kingdom. And now, upon the grant of the like patent, I doubt not "but you will enter into some provident consideration among yourselves, "how you may set the press going, and do something worthy of this "his majesty's favour, and that the world may see it is not granted to "you for nothing."

In consequence of these charters, and this letter, the first delegacy for printing was appointed, 1 *apr.* 1633; the intention whereof will be best understood from the words of the delegation itself. "*Ne aut indigni tanto beneficio, aut prorsus ingrati videremur, rogavit vicecancellarius, placeretne venerabili coetui ut designentur delegati, qui consilio mature habito rationem ineant, qua amplissima ista privilegia in majorem academiae utilitatem redeant & honorem, qui statuunt de stipulatione a librorum impressoribus academiae praestanda, de praelo graecis literis destinando, de CENSU demum ANNUO quo mss. bibliothecae codices luce publica donentur.—Procuratores nominabant hos egregios viros delegatos ad audiendum, statuendum, & determinandum de negotio proposito; impressorum scilicet, & praeli, et eorum quae ad imprimendum pertinent; viz. &c.*"

What this annual *census* was to be, was not fully determined till the year 1636; when the stationers' company began to apprehend the sale of their bibles, grammars, almanacs, &c, would be greatly diminished, should the university resolve to comprint them in pursuance of their late charters; and therefore offered the university 200*l.* a year, to forbear comprinting these and other books, usually printed for the company of stationers. This proposal the hebdomadal meeting of heads and proctors approved of, and entered into articles with the stationers for that purpose; a copy of which was transmitted to archbishop LAUD^g, and he on the 24th of *february* writes thus^h to the vicechancellor. "These articles I can find

^f Hist. Chanc. 58.^g Hist. Chanc. 124.^h Hist. Chanc. 126.

“ no fault with ; for certainly it will be more beneficial to the university
 “ for the advance of a learned press to receive 200*l.* a year, than to
 “ print grammars, and almanacks, &c ; and more honour too, when it
 “ shall appear to what extraordinary *good use* you turn this money.—
 “ Now in the mean time I shall require this of you and your successors,
 “ that this money which you yearly receive may be kept safe, as a stock
 “ apart; and *put to no other use than the settling of a learned press.*
 “ And I think it were not amiss, that some handsome registerbook were
 “ bought, in which might be kept alone your acts concerning the settle-
 “ ment of the presss aforesaid, and in another part of the book all your
 “ receipts and all your disbursements. And, if you and the heads like
 “ this proposal of mine, I would then have you order it so by an act of
 “ convocation: and I will presently acquaint the king, what *great good*
 “ *use* we are like to make of the gracious privilege he hath granted, least
 “ any other man should tell him we have **BASELY SOLD** it.”

In pursuance of this letter, we find this act of convocation, 31 mar.
 1637. “ *Cum rex noster CAROLUS ex regia sua munificentia per literas*
 “ *patentes cancellario magistris & scholaribus universitatis Oxon. concesserit*
 “ *privilegium & potestatem imprimendi sacra biblia, psalteria, gramma-*
 “ *ticas, & omnis generis libros qui ad ornatum reipublicae literariae con-*
 “ *ducere possunt, stationarii Londinenses ex eo suum commodum perverti sen-*
 “ *tiebant. Qui ultro ad dominum Balie vicecancellarium & collegii divi*
 “ *Johannis baptistae praesidem accesserunt, humiliter petentes ut exequutio-*
 “ *nem privilegiorum imprimendi ultimo concessorum suspenderemus, eaque*
 “ *lege societatem stationariorum Londinensium annuatim ducentas libras*
 “ *bonae & legalis monetae Angliae in usum universitatis soluturam: hocque*
 “ *ratum & confirmatum fore per indenturas communi sigillo dictae societatis*
 “ *suae munitas stationarii se obstrinxerunt a triennio in triennium. His*
 “ *post maturam deliberationem discussis, & ad domum convocationis propo-*
 “ *sitis, placuit universitati ut hinc inde indenturae conficerentur, & com-*
 “ *muni sigillo universitatis munitur.—Significavit insuper vice-*
 “ *cancellarius has pecuniarum summas magno usui academiae futuras, si*
 “ *IN PRAELUM IMPENDERENTUR, quo libri graeci mss. arabici & lin-*
 “ *guarum orientalium selectiores imprimerentur, quibus honoratissimus noster*
 “ *cancellarius locupletissime instauravit bibliothecam nostram. Huic curae*
 “ *destinantur delegati antebac nominati, viz. primo die aprilis 1633; qui*
 “ *quotannis rationem redderent huic domui de receptis & expensis in hunc usum*
 “ *erogatis; & super hoc solo negotio librum ratiocinii servarent, & cistam*
 “ *in qua liber ratiocinii & pecuniae in hunc usum collatae reponerentur.”*

From

From the whole of these extracts it is clear that, *at the time* when this rent was created, it was destined and appropriated to the maintenance of a learned press; a thing which the chancellor and university seem then to have had greatly at heart. And, unless the continuation of this rent has *since* been expressly appropriated by the university to other purposes, it seems reasonable to suppose that it must still remain in the same channel; according to the express desire of the archbishop in his letter ¹ of the 10th of *April* 1637. "I shall hope that your successors after you will keep it in that way into which it is now put, unless they can find a better and more useful for the learned press." Let us therefore see in what manner this agreement was afterwards carried on.

On the 12th of *August*, 1639, the same terms were renewed with the stationers for three years from the 12th of *February* following, with a covenant for future renewals from three years to three years, so long as the parties should please. But the national calamities, which soon followed, put a stop to all transactions of this sort; and in the convocation on the 24th of *January*, 1650, it being recited that the stationers had long since broke through their agreements, power is thereupon given to *Leonard Lichfield* and *Henry Hall*, university printers, to print bibles, grammars, prognostications, &c; till the university should deliberate upon and resolve what further should be done in this matter.

But soon after the restoration, 23 *Jun.* 1662, "*causa convocationis erat, ut contractus inter universitatem et stationarios, a. d. 1636 primitus factus, jam tandem ex decreto istius venerabilis conventus de novo confirmaretur; et ut indenturæ prioribus consimiles, mutatis necessario mutandis, hinc inde consicerentur; ea lege, ut stationarii annuatim 200 l. in usum universitatis solvant. Placuit universitati ut indenturæ sigillo munirentur.*"

Here was an express renewal of the agreement with the stationers upon the *original terms* in 1636; and, by fair implication, we might infer that the rent arising from thence was destined to the same *original uses*. But, not to rest upon implications merely, we find that in six months after, viz. 22 *Dec.* 1662, a new delegacy of the press was constituted; (the same that by various substitutions and subjunctions subsists to this day;) "*ad deliberandum et determinandum cum relatione ad domum convocationis de re typographica; nimirum, qui PECUNIAS A STATIONARIIS Londinensibus nupero conventu debitas, ALIASQUE SUMMAS in eos usus solvendas, RECIPIANT ET EROGENT; de loco typographiæ*

¹ Hist. Chanc. 129.

“ idoneo, aliisque omnibus in hanc rem facientibus, prospiciant et transigent;
 “ et rationem quotannis reddant de receptis et expensis quo tempore vicecan-
 “ cellarius computum suum fecerit.”

By this delegation, (which we are bound to regard as instructions from our masters and constituents, the venerable house of convocation) we are bound to *receive* and *expend* the sums due from the *stationers*, or such as now stand in their places, and *all other* sums destined to the use of the press; and to render an account of such our receipts and expenses every year, at the self same time as the vicechancellor renders his accounts, and of course to the self same auditors.

This agreement was renewed to the stationers' company 22 *dec.* 1664;—and again, 30 *oct.* 1669:—to Sir *Leoline Jenkins*, Sir *Joseph Williamson*, Dr. *Yate*, and Dr. *Fell*, 16 *nov.* 1671;—and again to the survivors, 25 *febr.* 1674; 19 *apr.* 1678; 6 *oct.* 1685;—and to bishop *Fell*'s executors, 26 *apr.* 1688:—to Mess. *Isted*, *Mortlock*, and *Bellinger*, 27 *jan.* 1691:—to Mess. *Mortlock*, *Philips*, and *Lownes*, 4 *jun.* 1698:—to Mess. *Philips*, *Mortlock*, and *Andrews*, 20 *sept.* 1703;—and again 1 *jan.* 1708:—to Mess. *Williams*, *Baskett*, and *Asburst*, 2 *jan.* 1711, for twenty one years:—to Mess. *Baskett*, *Asburst*, and *Gosling*, 28 *jun.* 1734:—and, on their surrender, to *Thomas Baskett* only, 28 *sept.* 1744, for twenty one years from lady-day preceding.

These several agreements, thus renewed, are expressly declared in their preamble to be “ for the better maintaining and management of “ printing in the university of *Oxford*, and for the discharge of the “ TRUST in the said university lodged and reposed, and for improve- “ ment of the INTEREST granted to the university by the king's “ charters.” And therefore I conclude that the rent reserved on these several renewals must necessarily be appropriated to the same “ great “ good use”, and no other, for which that TRUST was lodged and reposed in the university, and that INTEREST granted by the king's charters; unless it can be shewn (which I am persuaded it cannot) that the convocation have disposed of it to *other uses*, regardless of that censure which the good archbishop was so careful to guard against, of having “ BASELY SOLD the gracious privilege which the king hath granted.”

This rent stood for many years at 200*l.* has been sometimes raised to 300*l.* and now stands, by the present lease, at 250*l. per annum.*

2. The second fund, appropriated (by the will of the donor) to the support of a learned press, is the annual surplus arising from the estates given by archbishop *SHELDON* to the university, after the charges of repairing his theater are first deducted.

In

In his latin deed of gift to the univerfity, dated the 25th of may 1669, part of the confideration is, “ *ut res typographica, a cujus incrementis bonae literae uberrimos profectus merito speraverint, idoneis conclavibus, forulis, et officinis deinceps instrueretur; &c.*” And by his letter to the houfe of convocation, accompanying this deed of gift, he informs them, that he had laid by 2000 *l.* in order to a purchafe of lands for the perpetual repair of the theater, and then adds, “ What fhall every year be remaining of the rents over and above the charge of repairs, I defire may be employed for the beft advantage and encouragement of the LEARNED PRESS there defigned, and already fet at work; which I pray God prosper.”

With this money was purchafed an eftate at *Leclade* in *Gloucefterfhire*, of the clear annual value of 100 *l.* and the favings from this eftate, whatever they be, (and which I cannot calculate at lefs than 50 *l.* per annum ever fince I have known the theater) fhould be applied by the proper delegates to the ufes of a learned prefs. And thus much was exprefsly declared by the convocation when, 16 *oct.* 1688, they fealed an acquittance to the executors of bifhop FELL, (the original curator of the theater) for favings to the amount of 475 *l.* 9s. 8d. from the *Leclade* eftate; “ the yearly rents and profits whereof, until fuch time as there fhould be occafion to repair the faid theater, the faid archbifhop did direct and appoint fhould be made ufe of and applied in carrying on of the charge of PRINTING books in the theater in the univerfity aforefaid.”

3. The laft fund, appropriated to the fupport and maintenance of the prefs, arifes from the favings of the money annually collected in the univerfity (by virtue of the ftatute, *tit. xx. §. 4.*) from all perfons taking degrees,—from all that propofe difpensations,—from all determining bachelors,—and from all fcholars at the time of matriculation. Thefe contributions, the ftatute informs us, were originally a voluntary and temporary tax, laid on for feven years by the convocation, in order to difcharge the debt contracted by building the public fchools. They were afterwards continued, as appears by the register, 10 *dec.* 1633, for two years more; during which period the new ftatutes were promulged and received; which perpetuate and appropriate this tax in the following words: “ *Quoniam tamen ex eo tempore deprehensum eft, totam fcholarum fabricam male materiata effe, ac porro vitium facturam fubeft periculum; neque vero fufientandae aut reparandae fumptuofae huic moli aliunde quicquam fuppetit; decretum eft, has contributiones deinceps in perpetuum duraturas effe, in fufientationem fabricae novarum fcholarum, quoties ufus feret, erogandas. Interim vero, ceffante hujufmodi impendii* “ *occafione,*

“ occasione, quicquid est hujus proventus (quod universitati honorificum
 “ juxta ac utile futurum est) IN INSTRUENDAM ET ALENDAM PUBLICAM
 “ UNIVERSITATIS TYPOGRAPHIAM impendatur; ad volumina quam-
 “ plurima, tum graeca tum latina, modo in bibliotheca publica sepulta
 “ (indigna certe quae cum blattis ac tineis usque rixentur) aliquando in
 “ lucem protrahenda.”

Could the meaning of this statute admit of a doubt, it might be cleared and explained by a multitude of concurrent testimonies. Thus archbishop LAUD^k writes to his vicechancellor, 8 *sept.* 1637, in the following terms: “ Since the finishing of your new library will cost you a thousand pounds, I am heartily glad you have seven hundred pounds in chest towards it. I pray therefore acquaint the heads, that I would have this work presently begun, (especially considering how long it will be in doing) that so the *learned press* may really and heartily be set upon; which I do desire to see on foot.” You will observe that the archbishop depends upon the monies that were to arise *after* finishing the new library, (i. e. the western part) *before* the learned press *could be* really and heartily set on foot. And this, notwithstanding the agreement just made with the company of stationers; on the strength of which only, it appears by the public accounts that there was this very year disbursed, in the purchase of matrices and arabic types, 293 *l.* 11 *s.* 6*d.*

However before this fund had worked itself clear, the unhappy desolation, which overwhelmed the university together with our church and monarchy, put a temporary stop, as was before observed, to the press. But when these matters began again to be looked into; when, on the 30th of *June* 1652, the old convocation house was ordered to be turned into a printing house, and the university types, &c, to be there deposited; and when, in further consequence of this reviving spirit, a new delegacy of the press was appointed, 26 *mar.* 1653; it appears, that about three years afterwards this schoolmoney (as it was called) was collected into a separate account for the *first* time, in the year 1656; and in that year there were purchased from this fund three fonts, of saxon, of hebrew, and of arabic letter. And almost at the instant of the restoration, 16 *may* 1660, it is declared in the register, that “ by the statutes of the university, the overplus of the money collected for the maintenance and repair of the schooles is to be employed in setting up and maintaining a “ LEARNED TYPOGRAPHIE, AND NOE OTHERWAYES;” and therefore the convocation confirm the proceedings of their delegates, in allowing

^k Hist. Chanc. 141.

140*l.* of the said money to Mr. *Pococke* for printing *Abûl Pharagius*, and 100*l.* for *Johannes Malela*. And, finally, these sums seem to be what is meant by the "*alias summas in eos usus solvendas*" mentioned in the delegation of 1662 above cited.

It appears by the public accounts, that from the year 1656 to 1697 (both inclusive) this collection amounted to 15674*l.* 17*s.* 4*d.* that is, upon an average, rather better than 373*l.* 4*s.* 2*d.* *per annum*. From the year 1697 to the present time no roll of accounts has been suffered to appear in the public archives: but we may fairly calculate that this income has been much the same as formerly; especially as the money collected for the unendowed lectures, and usually paid to the proctors, (which shews the number of undergraduates and bachelors of arts) has been nearly equivalent in the greater part of both periods. Yet, as the whole of this income is allotted in the *first place* for repairs of the schools, and the *savings* only belong to the prefs, it is hard to ascertain without proper lights what each on an average may amount to. But to avoid all appearance of over-rating this fund, I will suppose there has annually been expended in repairs 173*l.* 4*s.* 2*d.* which will leave 200*l.* *per annum*, clear money, for the use of the prefs.

Upon this calculation the revenues of the prefs will appear to be as follows;

<i>Baskett's</i> annual rent	—	—	250 <i>l.</i>
Savings from the theater estates	—	—	50 <i>l.</i>
Savings from the schoolmoney	—	—	200 <i>l.</i>

Total 500*l.* *per annum.*

Whether these have been annually applied to the purposes for which they were designed, cannot positively be asserted without inspecting the accounts of the prefs. But within my own memory, and that of my more experienced friends, there has been no *visible* application of this money to the uses of "a learned typographic:" and such an application, if made, could not be long a secret. The method adopted, during the administration of *Richardson* and his family, having been to drive a little peddling trade, with a small but certain gain; unless they were so unfortunate as once in twenty years to forfeit all those gains, by adventuring upon and overprinting some bulky unsaleable performance. Not that I will suspect any misapplication of these sums to other purposes; being, like the rest of the university, (the delegates of accounts excepted) an entire stranger to the present methods of managing the public stock. I will rather

rather suppose, till the contrary shall appear, that the income of these revenues for forty years past (amounting to 20000*l.*) is now slumbering in the public chest, and ready to be employed in the service of learning, whenever the delegates of the press shall think that service worth attending to.

If it be enquired, to what uses of a printinghouse can so ample revenues be applied, the answer to this question is not the business of the writer of these papers, nor of any other single person. It must be the work of calm deliberation, and the result of the accumulated wisdom of a well constituted delegacy; re-examined perhaps and approved by that learned public-spirited body, the venerable house of convocation. But thus much is certain; that to apply them to *any other uses* would be a very unwarrantable practice. Sums of money, thus arising from the privileges of a royal charter, or specially appropriated by the express directions of our great benefactor SHELDON, or, lastly, raised by a voluntary impost of our own upon every member of the university, avowedly for this very purpose, ought in honour and conscience to be strictly and properly applied: and the literary world in general, the members of *Oxford* in particular, have an interest in such application, and should reap what advantage would attend it. Perhaps, among other schemes, it might hereafter be proposed,—to allow some able overseer an increase of salary, in lieu of the proportion per sheet at present given; which is in many respects inconvenient:—to supply the printinghouse from time to time with the most elegant types of all sizes and languages, from the best artists at home or abroad; and possibly to employ a peculiar founder, or at least a graver of punches, under our own direction:—to be constantly engaged in the publication of some latent manuscript, or scarce and valuable author, with a competent gratuity to an able and learned editor; and to sell the same for little more than the price of the paper, and the workmen's wages:—to undertake at convenient times some splendid and beautiful editions, for the honour of the *Oxford* press; not to be exposed to sale, but reserved as presents to illustrious strangers, and as premiums for scholastic exercises, to kindle emulation in our youth:—and lastly, to allot one or two presses for the use of such members of the university, as shall be permitted to print thereat by the delegates; paying only the wages of the workmen, and engaging to sell the same at a price to be fixed by those delegates beforehand; the author being allowed a reasonable profit, in reward of his pains and learning. From these loose hints a system might perhaps be formed, which, by enhancing the elegance of printing, would do immediate honour to this seat of literature; and, by reducing the price of books, be a lasting benefaction

benefaction to learning. I own it seems to me a very narrow notion, and unworthy the dignity of an university, to consider the press in a mere *trading* light, as an engine for raising money. Our royal and munificent patrons had views more noble, and more enlarged, when they armed us with these privileges, and endowed us with these revenues: views, that were well understood, and properly seconded, by our wise and disinterested predecessors, when they submitted to a perpetual tax for completing these generous designs.—But I am insensibly wandering from the point in hand; the prospect of what might be done being far more agreeable than of what is at present doing.

These, sir, appear to me to be the IMMEDIATE causes of the melancholy condition of our press; the want of *stated* meetings, and a proper *register* for business, among the delegates for printing; the keeping us in *ignorance* of our own *accounts*, and of the *privileges* conferred upon the *Oxford* press; the *laying aside* the statutable office of *architypographer*, and employing a mere *labourer* in his stead; and, in consequence of both, the shameful extravagance of our *prices*; and, lastly, the *withholding* the *revenues* appropriated to the maintenance of a learned press. But if we chuse to go a step higher, and search into the ORIGINAL cause of all these miscarriages, I fear it must be traced to the gradual and fatal CONSOLIDATION of the delegacy of the press with the stated delegacy of accounts. For, so long as they were kept in any tolerable degree distinct, the business of the press was carried on without confusion; and, as one of these sets of officers formed a constant check upon the other, shame and emulation (had there been no superiour motives) were sufficient to deter them from gross ignorance, or wilful neglect, of their duty.

At the first institution of the delegacy for printing, 1 *apr.* 1633, there were no stated delegates of accounts subsisting; and when these were originally constituted, 26 *jul.* 1634, *four* only out of *thirteen*, (*Fell, Smith, Baylie, and Turner,*) were taken from the delegates of the press. During this administration great advances were made towards the establishment of a learned imprimerie; till the general calamity of the times overturned the university and its press together.

In the delegation of the 26th of *march*, 1653, (which, however *illegal* in its date, is by much the best modelled of any) not one of the delegates of accounts is named to the care of the press.

In that of the 22d of *december*, 1662, *four* out of the *seven* named were indeed stated delegates of accounts; but then there were *nine* doctors and masters besides, in the latter station, who had no concern with the
press,

preſs, and who formed a ſufficient check upon the other *four*. Theſe delegates found a conſiderable ſtock of types, &c, formerly purchaſed by the univerſity from the appropriated funds; yet the affair of a public preſs ſeems to have been much at a ſtand, for want of a convenient printinghouſe, till the erection of the theater by archbiſhop SHELDON; which was in ſome meaſure owing to the inſtances of Dr. FELL, and intended as much for typographical uſes, as for public ſolemnities. But when this edifice drew near to its completion, in 1668, we find Dr. FELL and his brother delegates extremely buſy in furniſhing and ſetting up the preſs; expending thereon in that and the three following years upwards of 2000*l.* from the public fund, beſides near 1000*l.* more laid out in repairs of the ſchools.

In 1671 Dr. FELL, ſoon after made biſhop of *Oxford*, together with Sir *Leoline Jenkins*, Sir *Joſeph Williamson*, and Dr. *Yates*, undertook the printing of bibles, &c, at the ſame rent as the ſtationers had before agreed for, but had ſeldom regularly paid. And from that time to 1691, a period of twenty years, the whole management of the preſs ſeems to have devolved on theſe gentlemen, and principally biſhop FELL, the academical ſurvivor, and his executors. This was the period of the greateſt glory that our *Oxford* preſs ever knew; and which eſtabliſhed that fund of reputation upon which it has principally ſubſiſted ever ſince. For this excellent prelate in general greatly reduced the price of books; of bibles, particularly, and teſtaments in ſome inſtances above an half; and annually himſelf publiſhed or reprinted ſome claffic, or other valuable author, beſides the liberal encouragement he gave to men of genius and induſtry to undertake expenſive impreſſions.

But, as every thing is ſaid to contain within itſelf the principles of it's own diſſolution, ſo perhaps it may be found that the biſhop's ſuper-eminent abilities have been the remote cauſe of the evils at preſent complained of. For a very long period of years the whole typographical care reſted principally upon his ſhoulders; and ſo equal was he to the burthen, that all others were content to be mere ſpectators and ſilent admirers of his management. So that, though from time to time he was furniſhed with the public money, yet the office of the delegates, as inſpectors of the preſs, ſeems to have been totally ſuſpended. There are only the ſubſtitutions of two delegates, Drs. *Alleſtree* and *Marſhall*, in the compaſs of twenty years; between the finiſhing of the theater in the beginning of 1669, and the death of biſhop FELL in the ſummer of 1688. And it is obſervable, that from the year 1676 the *expenſes* of the preſs have been *intermixed* with the vicechancellor's general accounts, ſo far as they

they appear in the archives, though the schoolmoney still continued to be *separately* accounted for. Perhaps the delegates of the preſs, then beginning to conſiſt principally (though not entirely) of ſuch as were delegates of accounts, and finding little or no employment in their typographical character during the life of biſhop FELL, began to conſider themſelves merely as delegates of accounts, and thought it indifferent in what ſhape theſe expenſes were brought to account, provided they were accounted for at all.

About two years after the biſhop's deceaſe, his executors, 4 *nov.* 1690, made over to the univerſity, purſuant to his will, all his materials and ſtock in printing; conſiſting among other things of " puncheons and " matrices for the printing of ſeveral, if not all, tongues and languages." And the delegacy of the preſs being now reduced, by death and ceſſion, to a very few, it was filled up by a new nomination, 22 *apr.* 1691; *ſix* of the *ſeven* delegates then named being previously delegates of accounts. Indeed I cannot but preſume (with the proctors of 1755) that theſe offices began now to be confounded together; and therefore in the next nomination, 18 *apr.* 1694, we find the delegates of the preſs, *for the firſt time*, denominated STATED delegates¹; and the vicechancellor's conſent was thereupon firſt introduced, as neceſſary to their nomination.

We may further obſerve, that the diſtinction between the two delegacies was at that time ſo utterly forgotten, that a nomination to the delegacy of the preſs ſeems to have been underſtood as a nomination alſo to that of accounts: for I cannot find at what other time biſhop *Hough*, who was then made a delegate of the preſs, was conſtituted a delegate of accounts; and yet he appears to have acted in that capacity, and to have ſubſcribed his name (for the firſt time) at the very next vicechancellor's account, 3 *nov.* 1694; and a ſucceſſor is conſtituted, expreſsly in his room as ſuch, 5 *oct.* 1704. Which blending of the two offices together may in ſome meaſure account (if any thing can) for the introduction of that conſent in our registers, which has ſince been ſo faithfully copied.

However that may be, from this aera to 1748, we find no perſon admitted to the delegacy of the preſs, but ſuch as had either been pre-

¹ Dr. *Huddesford* (pag. x.) has produced an inſtance, wherein he thinks that theſe delegates were called *ſtati*, ſo early as 1643; and, ſuppoſing the fact to be ſo, the proctors have (pag. 20.) given it a ſufficient anſwer. But the truth is, the fact is miſtaken on both ſides. This was indeed a report from the *ſtated* delegates of their tranſactions in five ſeveral buſineſſes, referred to them by the houſe, of which one was the choice

of a printer; both *Henry* and *William Hall* having been recommended by the king's letters. But theſe delegates, thus abſolutely called *ſtated*, appear to have been no other than the delegates of ACCOUNTS; for the meeting conſiſted of docters *Fell, Potter, Sbeldon, Walker, Stringer, Clayton, Zouch, Law, Langton, and Langbanc*; all of whom were delegates of ACCOUNTS, and but *two* of them delegates of the PRESS.

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viouſly, or elſe at the ſame time was made, a delegate alſo of accounts; except Dr. *Dunſter*, 13 *apr.* 1698; and Dr. *Dobſon*, his ſucceſſor, 6 *jun.* 1719.

Hitherto there had ſtill been a few delegates of accounts, who had no connection with the preſs: for there were *thirteen* perſons, viz. *nine* doctors and *four* maſters, nominated to this truſt, immediately after the reſtoration, 16 *aug.* 1660. But this number was gradually diminished to *eight*, to which that of the preſs had been encreaſed from its original number of *ſeven*; and in 1719 there ſtill remained one delegate of accounts, Dr. *Carter*, who was not a delegate of the preſs; as there was alſo Dr. *Dobſon* in the liſt for printing, who had nothing to do with the accounts. But, upon Dr. *Charlett*'s death in 1722, thoſe two gentlemen were on the 10th of *december* interchangeably named to ſucceed him; Dr. *Carter* in the delegacy of the preſs, and Dr. *Dobſon* in that of accounts; whereby the two truſts were now totally conſolidated, and ſo continued for eleven ſubſequent nominations, and for upwards of twenty five years, till the 20th of *april* 1748; when, in the room of Dr. *Mather*, Dr. *Conybeare* was appointed delegate of the preſs, and Dr. *Walker* delegate of accounts.

If we compare this hiſtorical deduction with the ſtate of printing in this univerſity, we ſhall find that the ſplendor of the *Oxford* preſs grew gradually fainter as the two delegacies approached nearer together; till upon their entire conjunction in 1722 it ſuffered a total eclipse, from which it is now labouring to emerge. While the ſpirit and example of a *FELL* were remembered and in ſome degree copied by an *ALDRICH*, and others his ſucceſſors in the management of the learned preſs, it's reputation remained unclouded, and it's influence was ſtill extenſively beneficial to the literary world. But, ſince it has been conſidered in no other view than as a branch of the vicechancellor's accounts, give me leave to enquire, what works of erudition have been ſent abroad, or even aſſiſted and encouraged, at the public expenſe? To what typographical uſes have our ample revenues been applied? Has the preſs, or the public, been advantaged by the ſums that are annually raiſed from the privileges of our charters, the bounty of our benefactors, and our voluntary tax upon ourſelves? Does there even exiſt at this hour ſuch a thing as a *learned* preſs, according to the idea that was formerly conceived by *LAUD*, and latterly exemplified by *FELL*? Has not the *CLARENDON* printinghouſe (that monument of our former ſucceſſes) been made the property of a favourite family, and a neſt of impoſing mechanics; while the intereſts of learning have ſo far been forgotten or neglected, that the office of architypographer has
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(contrary to statute) been laid aside for six and twenty years? Would this have been the case, had the care of this department been entrusted to separate hands, accountable (as directed by convocation) to those who have broke in upon their province, and who only account to themselves? And is it not therefore evident, that the root of all these inconveniences is the fatal CONSOLIDATION of these two incompatible trusts; which has removed that prudent guard provided by our wise predecessors, and introduced that glaring absurdity of making the same persons at once both auditors and accountants?

The proctors of 1755 were thoroughly sensible of this mischief, and therefore determined (like men of prudence and resolution) so far as lay in their power to separate these offices for the future; according to the recent example, which had been set them in 1748. Upon their first attempt, they succeeded without much difficulty; having, in the room of Dr. *Isham*, honoured me with the delegacy of the *prels*, and Dr. *Huddesford* with that of *accounts*; which qualified him to be afterwards elected *curator* of the theater. But upon their second trial, to name Mr. *Owen* in the room of the bishop of *Bristol*, (who was only a delegate of the *prels*) they found a negative power exerted in so arbitrary a manner, (and indeed with so ill a grace) that they were provoked to examine what before was little considered, the foundation upon which it was built. The result of that enquiry is well known, and it is not my intention to repeat it. I shall only say, that I am thereby myself most thoroughly and sincerely convinced, that the absolute exclusive nomination of delegates of the *prels* (as the statutes *at present* stand) is vested in the proctors only. Others perhaps may judge differently, and may have (or at least think they have) good reasons for such their judgment. In the mean time I cannot but lament that this difference of opinion, in a matter comparatively of little consequence, should unfortunately obstruct the reformation of the *prels* itself; in allowing the necessity of which, and in hearty wishes for its success, I believe every friend to the university will heartily and zealously concur.

However, if the right of nomination must first be decided, (and I fear it is necessary it should) it then becomes a question of great importance; not so much on it's own account, as for the good or bad consequences it may produce to the *prels* and it's proprietors. You will therefore, sir, permit me, as a delegate of the *prels*, for the sake of the *prels*; as a member of the university, for the sake of the honour of the university; (from whose conduct in this matter the world has much to expect) you will permit me to intreat you, with all becoming deference, to put this

disputed question in some speedy method of accommodation. It is not for *any* man among us, much less for me, to prescribe to the governor of the university; but I hope it will not be liable to that harsh construction, if I venture to suggest that there seem only *three* ways of determining the point among ourselves at home: the *first*, by taking the opinion of convocation upon the single question of right: the *second*, by putting it in some method of judicial decision, before yourself in your *own* court; from which it may be carried, if necessary, through the regular stages of appeal: the *last*, by considering it as a doubt arising from the statute, or as a case omitted by the compilers, and thereupon proposing a declaratory supplemental statute, in the order and forms prescribed by *tit. x. sect. 2. §. 2.* The two former can only decide what our present constitution is; the latter may avoid that question, which perhaps would be more agreeable, and may supply any defects, or add any proper restraints (to the nominating or other powers) which time has discovered to be necessary.

I lately indeed flattered myself that this latter method (which I may venture to call the most eligible, as it was agreeable to your own sentiments) was likely to take effect, by means of the negotiation between you and the junior proctor of last year; a gentleman whose conduct in that office has merited universal esteem. It had indeed a most promising aspect, when undertaken by two magistrates, who (however they might differ in opinion upon the question) had each of them nothing in view but the credit and tranquillity of the place. The proposal to sacrifice on one side the disputed *negative*, and on the other the disputed *absolute nomination*, was equitable and generous in both: for it could not be expected, in any compromise, that what was dubious on one side should be *given up*, and what was dubious on the other should be *confirmed*. If therefore in the draught for completing this proposal there were any undesigned omissions, by which a latent negative might have been established contrary to the intent of the compiler, (and I own myself one of those members of convocation who thought there were) I am persuaded they are still meant to be supplied. And altho', through some misunderstandings with regard to punctilios of *form*, this treaty then failed of it's effect, I assure myself that in point of *substance* your sentiments continue as at first; and that at a proper time the *self-actuated wisdom* of one supreme magistrate will heal the breaches occasioned by the *misguided counsels* of a former.

And if at the same time some provision could be made for remedying a few of the grievances pointed out in the progress of this letter; if besides the right of *nomination*, the *duty* and *powers* of these delegates could
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be defined, or rather recognized; if some regulation could be made for a *time* and *place* of their meeting, for *registering* their acts, and rendering them properly *authentic*; and, above all, if care could be taken to *separate*, in future nominations, the *two inconsistent trusts* of the prefs and of accounts; the delegates must be then very deficient to themselves and their constituents, if the CLARENDON printinghouse does not speedily revive the antient reputation of SHELDON's theater.

I have been, sir, the more minute in laying open these grounds of complaint to you, and the members of convocation, whose servant I have the honour to be, and to whom ALL delegates are accountable; as well because it has been my lot, (I may add, my duty also) to examine these matters more narrowly than others have opportunity to do; as also because much artifice has been used, both in public and in private, to divert the attention of the university from it's proper object, the flagrant abuses of the prefs; to misrepresent the true grounds of the steps that have been taken to remove them; and to brand those steps as a rebellion of factious spirits against the legal authority of the heads of houses,—as the effect of private resentment against one gentleman,—or (at best) of private attachment and bigotted friendship to another.

The first clamour was originally raised by a *very few* gentlemen, who labour under a double mistake; by first imagining that the heads of houses are the representative body of the university; and then by adopting a notion that they themselves are the representatives of the heads of houses. And it since hath been loudly echoed by some, perhaps well-meaning, persons; but whose gratitude to their patrons is surely much stronger than their judgment. With such it is faction and rebellion for a *hundred* members of convocation to think differently from *half a dozen*, and an utter subversion of all discipline and order to desire the reformation of any measure that has been inadvertently pursued; however unreasonable or unconstitutional it may appear to their private judgments. For if the senior members of the house are once in the wrong, we are told it is for their dignity to continue so; perseverance in error is preferable to retraction; and “the remedy much worse than the disease”^m. As

^m Many gentlemen were lately astonished to hear the affair of Mr. *Viner's* will very publicly alledged as a farther instance of this turbulent disposition. But the facts will speak for themselves; and the persons, who directed that aspersions, would do well to recollect a few of them: viz. —That Mr. *Viner* departed this life, 5 jun. 1756; and by his will appointed the chancellor, masters,

and scholars of this university his executors; directing his effects “to be disposed of and sold, “and the money arising thereby to be applied, “by and with the approbation of a majority of “the members there in convocation to be assembled for that purpose, on public notice given.” —That the will being transmitted to the then vicechancellor, but no public notice being taken
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As this accusation hath been urged with seeming seriousness, it may require a serious answer. No persons then have a greater regard for the statutable authority of heads of houses, or are more sensible of the necessity of a proper subordination in the university, than those gentlemen who have been the most active upon this occasion. They are, for the most part, men of some standing and experience; and, all of them, so far from desiring to exclude heads of houses from the management of academical concerns, that they think a due proportion of them in all delegacies would add dignity and weight to their deliberations. Yet they cannot carry their complaisance to such a length, as to be persuaded that all ability is confined to any one, however respectable, order. And indeed they are convinced, that by far the majority of that rank

of it for several days, he was waited on by two members of convocation, on or about the 23d of *june*, to desire him, in the name of themselves and many others, to communicate the will to the house; in order to have delegates named, according to the statutes, to consider what was proper to be done, since the university (being a corporate body) was incapable of acting as executor.—That the vicechancellor repeatedly *promised* to lay the will before the house the next *friday* or *saturday*; and to take their opinion thereupon.—That on *friday* in the afternoon, the 25th of *june*, he accordingly summoned a convocation; and, having caused the will to be read to a very full assembly, he instantly dissolved the house, without asking any opinion or putting any question.—That the same evening he gave private directions to have an instrument got ready for the public seal the next morning at nine of the clock, containing an appointment of an attorney (of undoubted reputation) in this place to be *syndic* of the university upon this occasion; that is, one who should be constituted (in their stead) full, absolute, and irrevocable administrator of Mr. *Viner's* will and effects, amounting to many thousand pounds; which instrument was accordingly prepared, and a convocation held the next morning, the 26th of *june*.—That, this transaction being discovered by an accident, the convocation was attended by an unusual number of members; whereupon the instrument was not produced, but it was first proposed “to accept Mr. *Viner's* bene-
“*façtion*,” which being unanimously agreed to, it was then proposed, “that a *syndic* be elected “in some future convocation;” but that question receiving a general negative, till the matter of it should be previously considered in a delegacy, the vicechancellor desired leave to withdraw it, upon a *promise* to propose it again in a fuller as-

sembly; which was granted him.—That in the next convocation, the 30th of *june*, instead of re-proposing the former question, he proceeded as if it had been agreed to; declaring it his pleasure, that the convocation should immediately proceed to the election of a *syndic*, and that by way of scrutiny, wherein they were to take an oath to nominate only *one*. And, though endeavours were not wanting to dissuade him from so unconstitutional a step, he persisted and went down to the table; where finding his method of election impracticable, (through the firmness of the junior proctor, convinced by what he heard in the house) he returned to his chair and suddenly dissolved the convocation.—That, in a day or two after, an agent was sent by the vicechancellor to a gentleman, who had particularly exerted himself in defence of the rights of convocation, with an offer that, if the motion for a delegacy could be dropped, he himself should be appointed the *syndic*, or whatever person he should please to name.—That when this last effort was rejected with a suitable indignation, the vicechancellor at length condescended, on the 16th of *july*, to let matters take their regular course; and a delegacy was then appointed to consider what was proper to be done; who, on the 19th, reported their opinion that *five members of convocation* should be appointed *syndics*, with an attorney to be employed *under* them, removeable at their discretion; which report was approved by the house; and a doctor in each faculty, together with a regent and non-regent master, were accordingly appointed; to whom administration, with the will annexed, was thereupon granted by the spiritual court. And they have been so assiduous in their trust, that there is reason to believe the whole of Mr. *Viner's* extensive concerns will speedily be brought to a conclusion.

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(in which they can with pleasure reckon their present governor) are above such narrow conceptions; for those who have more solid foundations on which to build a superior character, will only value their academical distinction, as it gives them a power of being eminently useful to the public.

But after all, how comes the authority of the heads of houses to be drawn into this debate? Have the heads of houses, in their collective capacity, been the managers of the *Oxford* press? It never was charged upon them. Was the *unprecedented* negative on Mr. Owen (for it has not its parallel in our registers) the act of the heads of houses? It was not, it could not be; being a matter quite out of their jurisdiction. If therefore a *very few* gentlemen, who happen to be in that station, will gradually assume to themselves all the *powers*, the *trusts*, the *honors*, and even the *name* of the university; if, when constituted the servants of the public, they will dictate to ^a their very constituents who shall, or shall not, be appointed their fellow-servants; *these individuals* are the aggressors; *these* make the attack upon our liberties; and *these only*, not the heads of houses, are withstood by the members of convocation.

As little foundation is there for the notion of private resentment. The persons, who have interested themselves the most strongly in support of the proctors' nomination, always lived upon amicable terms with the gentleman, who conceived himself principally aggrieved by it. If any alteration has of late happened, he himself (repeatedly forewarned of the consequences) must alone answer for the cause of it. And, as to the proctors, whoever reads their narrative, 19 *oct.* 1756, will see no tokens of personal pique in *their* conduct, but many instances of respect, and some of obligation conferred. But if, instead of being contented with *two* offices of trust, he resolved himself to engross them *all*; and, to that end only, exerted at best a very dubious negative; let any man judge on whose side the grounds of the dispute were *personal*.

As for private attachment to the gentleman named, it is indeed no easy task, for those who have the happiness of his acquaintance, to be totally unprejudiced in his favour. But yet I am well persuaded this motive had only its proper weight. The question was not concerning the *man*, but the *right*; not whether the librarian should be nominated, but whether the proctors had the absolute power of nomination. And let it be remembered, that the exertion of this power was by no means the principal point in view: but was only introductory and subservient to a nobler purpose, the reputation of the *Oxford* press; which can never

^a See the proctors' narrative, pag. 6 and 7.

be effectually restored, so long as that delegacy is considered as a *compliment* of course, to be tacked as a customary appendix to the all-grasping delegacy of accounts.

And having thus, sir, discharged what I thought incumbent upon me, in laying before you and the university the lights which my office has afforded me with regard to the present condition of their learned press, I now take my leave of a subject, with which I have no further concern, as a private man, than every other individual that feels for the reputation of the place. If you and the members of convocation should esteem it not worthy the public regard, I shall dutifully acquiesce in judgments much better than my own, and humbly beg pardon for having thought it so. Thus far I am certain; that if the press itself be a matter of indifference, the nomination of persons to manage it is more indifferent: though if one be an affair of consequence, the other is by no means a trifle.

Should however the spirit of our predecessors again revive, and the care of a learned press be thought no disgrace to a seat of learning, the compiler of these papers will rejoice to become an instrument in promoting so desirable a work, by his utmost attention and diligence, which is all he can promise to contribute. If, on the other hand, his zeal has been judged too importunate, if his presence may prove an obstruction to any future schemes for the public good, he is ready (by the leave of convocation) to relinquish his trust when called upon, with more pleasure than he ever accepted it: happy, if by either continuing, or resigning, he can in any degree promote the honor and peace of an university, to which he has the strongest obligations.

I am, sir, with true respect,

Your most dutiful and obedient servant,

*All Souls College:
21 May, 1757.*

W. BLACKSTONE.

