An Ordinance for the Regulating of Printing. [14 June, 1643.]

Whereas divers good orders have been lately made by both Houses of Parliament, for suppressing the great late abuses and frequent disorders in Printing many false, forged, scandalous, seditious, libellous, and unlicensed Papers, Pamphlets, and Books to the great defamation of Religion and Government. Which Orders (notwithstanding the diligence of the company of Stationers to put them in full execution) have taken little or no effect: By reason the Bill in preparation, for redress of the said disorders, hath hitherto been retarded through the present distractions, and very many, as well Stationers and Printers, as others of sundry other professions not free of the Stationers Company, have taken upon them to set up sundry private Printing Presses in corners, and to print, vend, publish, and disperse books, pamphlets and papers, in such multitudes, that no industry could be sufficient to discover or bring to punishment all the several abounding Delinquents; And by reason that divers of the Stationers Company and others being Delinquents (contrary to former orders and the constant custome used among the said Company) have taken liberty to Print, Vend and publish, the most profitable vendible Copies of Books belonging to the Company and other Stationers, especially of such agents as are employed in putting the said Orders in Execution, and that by way of revenge for giving information against them to the Houses for their Delinquences in Printing, to the great prejudice of the said Company of Stationers and Agents, and to their discouragement in this publike service.

It is therefore Ordered by the Lords and Commons in Parliament, That no order or Declaration of both, or either House of Parliament shall be printed by any, but by order of
one or both the said Houses: Nor other Book, Pamphlet, paper, nor part of any such Book, Pamphlet, or paper shall from henceforth be printed, bound, stitched or put to sale by any person or persons whatsoever, unless the same be first approved of and licensed under the hands of such person or persons as both, or either of the said Houses shall appoint for the licensing of the same, and entered in the Register Book of the Company of Stationers, according to ancient custom, and the Printer thereof to put his name thereto. And that no person or persons shall hereafter print, or cause to be reprinted any Book or Books, or part of Book, or Books heretofore allowed of and granted to the said Company of Stationers for their relief and maintenance of their poor, without the license or consent of the Master, Wardens and Assistants of the said Company: Nor any Book or Books lawfully licensed and entered in the Register of the said Company for any particular member thereof, without the license and consent of the Owner or Owners thereof. Nor yet import any such Book or Books, or part of Book or Books, formerly printed here, from beyond the seas, upon pain of forfeiting the same to the Owner, or Owners of the Copies of the said Books, and such further punishment as shall be thought fit.

And the Master and Wardens of the said Company, the Power to search and seize.

Gentleman Usher of the House of Peers, the Sergeant of the Commons House and their Deputies, together with the persons formerly appointed by the Committee of the House of Commons for Examinations, are hereby Authorized and required, from time to time, to make diligent search in all places, where they shall think meet, for all unlicensed Printing Presses, and all Presses any way employed in the printing of scandalous or unlicensed Papers, Pamphlets, Books, or any Copies of Books belonging to the said Company, or any member thereof, without their approbation and consents, and to seize and carry away such Printing Presses Letters, together with the Nut, Spindle, and other materials of every such irregular Printer, which they find so misemployed, unto the Common Hall of the said Company, there to be defaced and made unserviceable according to ancient Custom; And likewise to make diligent search in all suspected Printing-houses, Ware-houses, Shops and other places for such scandalous and unlicensed Books, Papers, Pamphlets and all other Books, not entered, nor signed with the Printers name as aforesaid, being printed, or reprinted by such as have no lawful interest in them, or in any way contrary to this Order, and the same to seize and carry away to the said Common Hall, there to remain till both or either House of Parliament shall dispose thereof; And likewise to apprehend all Authors, Printers, and other persons whatsoever, employed in compiling, printing, stitching, binding, publishing and dispersing of the said scandalous, unlicensed, and unwarrantable Papers, Books and Pamphlets as aforesaid, and all those who shall resist the said Parties in searching after them, and to bring them afore either of the Houses or the Committee of Examinations, that so they may receive such further punishment, as their Offences shall
demerit, and not to be released until they have given satisfaction to the Parties employed in their apprehension for their pains and charges, and given sufficient caution not to offend in like sort for the future. And all Justices of the Peace, Captains, Constables and other Officers, are hereby ordered and required to be aiding, and assisting to the aforesaid persons in the due execution of all, and singular the premises, and in the apprehension of all Offenders against the same. And in case of opposition to break open Doors and Locks.

And it is further Ordered, that this Order be forthwith Printed and Published, to the end that notice may be taken thereof, and all Contemners of it left inexcusable.