

296

312

REASONS *humbly Offer'd for*
a BILL for the Encouragement
of Learning, and Improvement of
Printing.



HEREAS many Learned Men have been at great Pains and Expence in Composing and Writing of Books, the Copies of which have been Purchas'd by Booksellers, Printers, and others; It is reasonably Presum'd, that by such Purchases they obtained a Property in such Copies of Books; so that no other Person cou'd, without their Leave, Reprint the same. But divers Persons having of late taken upon them to Reprint very Uncorrectly such Copies, to which the Authors have either reserv'd a Right to themselves, or assign'd their Right to others for valuable Considerations; It is therefore humbly hop'd, that this Honourable House will take this Matter into their Consideration, in order to prevent such Practices for the future.

It seems to be very reasonable, that when a Gentleman has spent the greatest Part of his Time and Fortune in a Liberal Education, he should have all the Advantages that may possibly be allow'd him for his Writings, one of which Advantages is the sole and undoubted Right to the Copy of his own Book, as being the Product of his own Labour; so on the other hand, after such Gentleman has made an Assignment of such Copy to a Bookseller, Printer, or other Person, whether for Money or other valuable Considerations, the Person to whom such Copy is Assign'd, must necessarily claim the same full and undoubted Right as the Author himself originally had. If therefore any Person having no Right to these Copies, shall be suffered to Reprint them upon the rightful Owner, the Consequence is natural, That no Bookseller can then afford to give a Consideration even for the most valuable Copies of Books: By which means, Learned Men will be wholly Discouraged from Propagating the most useful Parts of Knowledge and Literature, Purity of Printing will be Destroy'd, and the Bookseller Undone.

Bookfellers have always thought it as safe to lay out their Money in the Copies of Books, as to Purchase Lands, concluding, that both the one and other were equally Estates left to their Posterity. As an Instance, there was 2500*l.* given to the Widow of the late Arch-Bishop *Tillotson* for the Copies of his Sermons; now if others, besides the Purchaser, are suffer'd to Print the said Sermons, it is so plain an Innovation upon Trade, that no Man can make such a Purchase for the future, without hazarding the Ruin of himself and Family.

3