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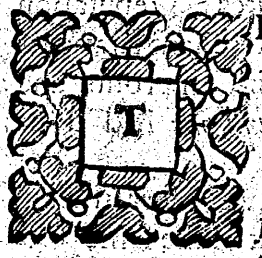
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A discourse briefly shewing the true State and Title of the Comptroller, or Postmaster generall of England, the Lord Stanhopes right to it, and consequently to the forraigne and Inland Letter Offices, as incident thereunto, and more plainly appears by a Report of Sir Robert Heath, then his Maiesties Attorney generall: By a Verdict or Jury of 12. men in the Kings Bench, and a Report in the Commons House of Parliament, in the 4. of our Gracious Sovereigne.

12. Novembris, 37. Henrici Octavi.



He King granted unto Sir William Paget, principall Secretary of State, and John Mason French Secretary, and the longer liver of them, an Office called, *Officium Magistris Nunciorum Cursorum sive Postarum tam infra Regnum nostrum Anglia, quam in quibus-*

cunque alijs partibus transmarinis in nostro dominio existentibus, with a Pension of 66. li. 13. s. 4. d. per annum, To hold, occupie, and enjoy, by themselves, or their sufficient Deputie, or Deputies, during their owne lives, or the life of the longer liver of them, with all profits, commodities, and advantages belonging to the said Office, in such ample and large manner and forme, as Sir Brian Tuke Knight, or any other person, or persons in the said Office, had received or enjoyed for the execution of it.

4. May, 9. Elizabetha. The Queene grants unto Thomas Randolph the same Office in these words, *Officium Magistris nunciorum & cursorum communiter vocatum Postarum nostrarum tam infra Regnum nostrum Anglia, quam in quibuscunque alijs partibus transmarinis in Nostro Dominio existentibus,* with the same Pension of 66. li. 13. s. 4. d. per annum, to hold, as aforesaid, in as ample manner and forme as John Mason, or any other that enjoyed the said Office, &c.

14. Septembris 1569. Thomas Randolph in vertue of the aforesaid Grant, makes a Deputation to *Rafaell Vandepur* to be the Merchant Strangers Post within the cite of London, to enjoy it with all the profits and priviledges that *Christian Susling* enjoyed.

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21. Junii. 22. Elizabetha, the Queene made a Grant of the same office unto John Lord Stanhope, in the same words of Officium Magistrum nunciorum & cursorum communiter vocatum Postarum nostrarum tam infra Regnum nostrum Anglia, quam in quibuscunque aliis partibus transmarinis in nostro dominio existentibus, with the same Pension, and with all the profits, commodities, and advantages in as ample manner and forme, as Sir John Mason, Thomas Randolph, or any body else who had formerly enjoyed the said Office.

18. Decembris. 1. Jacobi & Anno Domini, 1603. John Lord Stanhope, In vertue of the former Grant makes a Deputation unto Matthew Dequester for his life, to be the Merchant strangers Post within the city of London, to enjoy it with all profits and priviledges in as ample manner as Rafael Vandeput had done before him.

25. Julii 5. Jacobi, John Lord Stanhope having surrendered his former Grant, the King makes a new Grant of the same Office, unto the said John Lord Stanhope, and Charles his Sonne, in the very same words, to hold and enjoy during both their lives, & the longer liver of them by themselves, or their sufficient Deputie or Deputies with the same Pension, and all other profits, regards, diet, commodities, and advantages belonging or pertaining unto the said Office, in as ample manner and forme as Sir John Mason, Thomas Randolph, or the same John Lord Stanhope himselfe or any body else in the said Office had formerly enjoyed.

13. April, 17. Jacobi, The King (as is alleadged) erects a new Office of Postmaster of England for forraine parts, out of his Majesties Dominions, conferring it upon Matthew Dequester, the father, and Matthew Dequester the Sonne, for their lives, or the longer liver of them, with power and authotitie to themselves, sufficient deputie or Deputies, servant, or servants, to have the sole taking up, sending, or conveying of all packets and letters concerning the service of us, our heires, and successors, and of all other packets and letters, to have the nominating and appointing of Posts and Carriers necessary and convenient, as well within the Realm of England, as in any forreine parts, for the conveying, exporting, and importing such letters & packets,

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as aforesaid, and from time to time demand and take for the execution of the said Office for their paines of the parties that should imploy them, all and every the like summe and summes of mony, rewards, Rates, and emolluments, respectively as then were, and afterwards should be lawfully, or usually taken, for, or in respect of doing or performing of the same or the like businesse, &c.

15. Martii 7. Caroli, The King reciting the former Patent, and taking notice that Matthew Dequester the sonne was dead, and M. Dequester the father still living, grants a Reversion of the said Office unto William Frizell, & M. Thomas Witherings for both their lives, or the longer liver of them, to beginne immediatly after the death of Matthew Dequester the father, and to receive the same benefits, Emollumants and rewards specified in Dequesters Patent aforesaid, &c.

25. Aprilis 13. Caroli, Charles Lord Stanhope was commanded to bring his Letters Patents to the Councell Table.

22. Junii, 13. Caroli, The King (as is alleadged) creates, and erects a new Office, to be called The Letter Office of England, de- claring there should be one Officer from time to time appointed to receive, and send all Letters to and fro within his Majesties Dominions of England, Scotland, and Ireland, where the said Officer shall settle Posts, except such Letters as shall be sent by common knowne Carriers, along with their Carts, Wagons, or Pack-horses, and a letter or more sent by a Messenger on purpose, or by a friend, to have and take for Postage and conveyance thereof certaine rates therein specified: and this Office the King grants unto Master Thomas Witherings during his naturall life to bee exercised by himselfe, his Deputies or Assignes, and the said Master Witherings at the same time covenanting to pay unto certaine Postmasters of the foure principall Rodes of England, certaine summes of money amounting to 2053. li. 11. s. 4. d. according to a Schedule thereto annexed, for which summes of money they were bound to runne in post, and carrie once a weeke both inwards and outwards the Maile or Mailes of Letters without further charge and allowance.

Patent of Mr. Witherings a Monopoly, prohibiting all others to carry Letters but himselfe.

1. Julii. 13. Caroli, The King grants unto Sir John Cooke, and Sir Francis Windbanke, Knights, principall Secretaries of State, Officium Magistrum Nunciorum, & cursorum communiter vocatum Postarum, nostrarum infra dominica nostra, with a Pension of 66.

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li. 13. s. 4. d. per annum, and all other profits, Rights, Regards, Diets, Commodities, and advantages belonging or appertaining unto the said Office, to hold and enjoy the premises by themselves, or by their Deputie or Deputies during their lives, or the longer liver of them in the said Office of principall Secretaries of State, in as ample manner and forme as Sir *John Mason*, *Thomas Randolph*, *John Lord Stanhope*, or any other that formerly had or enjoyed the said Office: and further declares, that for the future, the said Office shall be joynd and annexed unto the Office or place of chiefe Secretaries of State for the time being successively, &c.

Lord Stanhope and his predecessors Postmasters generall of England for 80. yeares.

Mr. Dequester, Lord Stanhopes Deputy.

Nine Curriers or Forreigne Posts.

Dequester had only one tenth part of the fruits outwards, and a noble each voyage inwards. Dequester betraying the Lord Stanhope whose servant he had beene for 20. yeares.

By the fore-recited Patents, it appears how *Charles Lord Stanhope* and his predecessors in the Office were Controllors or Postmasters generall of England, from the 37. of *Henry the 8.* untill the 17. of King *James*, which is about fourescore yeares, and the deceased *Lord Stanhope* did not onely by himselfe and deputies enjoy the said Office without disturbance for thirtie yeares together, but by vertue thereof in *December 1603.* makes a Deputation unto *Matthew Dequester* for his life, to be the Merchant Strangers Post within the city of London, under whom in subordination to the *L. Stanhopes* were nine other, called the forrain Posts or Curriers, who by turnes went to and fro into France, Flanders, and Holland, with all packets, and letters, both of the State, and particular Merchants, and *Matthew Dequester* continually by his place reciding at the Office in London, at the arrivall of each forreigne Post or Currier, received the Letters, and distributed them abroad unto Merchants, and likewise collecting the Merchants letters, delivered them to the Curriers to be exported, and for this labour and paines of his, had a noble a voyage of each Currier inwards, and the tenth part of all the profits outwards, the Curriers enjoying the rest themselves, and this appears by fundry Proclamations, the originall Deputation unto *Matthew Dequester* under *John Lord Stanhops* hand, 18. *Decem.* 1603. *Matthew Dequesters* owne hand writing, and the deposition of thousands still living if it were needfull. *Matthew Dequester* having thus managed the Office for the forraine Letters, as deputie to the *Lord Stanhope* about 20. yeares, either out of vaine-glory, covetousnes, or some sinister respects, or other, finds means to informe the King how the *Lord Stanhops* Patent was only for services to be done in forreine parts within the Kings Dominions; and

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and hereupon under 13. Aprill 17. *Iacobi* the King makes a Grant unto *Mat. Dequester* the father, and *Mat. Dequester* the sonne, for their lives, or the longer liver of them to be Postmasters of England for services to be done in forreine parts being out of his Majesties Dominions, and by vertue thereof pretended to settle Posts and Carriers within his Majesties Dominions of England, and began effectually to carry to and fro within the Kingdome, all such Letters and Packets, as were to goe out or come from abroad, by force and vertue of the aforesaid Grant: about which time *John Lord Stanhope* dying, *Charles Lord Stanhope* having notice hereof, made opposition, whereupon on the 19. of *December 21. Iacobi*, the King by his Letters Patents declares, that sithence the making of the said Letters Patents the 17. *Iacobi.* *Charles Lord Stanhope* of *Harington* made complaint that the said Grant unto *Dequester* did trench into the office which the said *Charles Lord Stanhope* held of Postmaster generall, as well within the Kingdome of England, as in whatsoever parts beyond the seas within his Majesties Dominions; his Majestie was pleased to referre the said complaint unto *William* late Earle of *Penbrooke*, *Sir George Calvert*, principall Secretary of State, *Sir Thomas Coventry* his Majesties Attorney Generall, and *Sir Robert Heath* his Majesties Soliciter Generall, who certified under their hands, that the said *Lord Stanhopes* Grant of Master of his Majesties Posts did extend but to such services as were to be done in the Realme of England, and others his said Majesties Dominions, and that *Dequesters* Patent extended onely to services to be done out of his Majesties Dominions; Master *Dequester* notwithstanding continuing to incroach upon the priviledges of *Charles Lord Stanhops* Postmaster Generall of England, and other his Majesties Dominions, the said *Lord Stanhope* petitions King *James* of happy memory for leave to trie his title at Law, and having commenced a sute, after along Evidence obtains a Verdict in *Hillary Terme 22. Iacobi* for the validitie of his owne Patent against *Dequesters*, but the said *Charles Lord Stanhope* being still deluded, was constrained to petition our gracious Sovereigne that now is; Copies of which Petitions, together with his Majesties Reference, and the Report thereupon, extracted from the Originall, hereafter follow.

Lord Stanhopes Grant extend to all services to be done within his Majesties Dominions. Dequesters Patent extended onely to services to be done out of his Majesties Dominions. A Verdict in the Kings Bence for the Lord Stanhopes Patent against Dequester.

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To the Kings most excellent Majesty.

The humble Petition of Charles Lord Stanhope of Harrington.

Most humbly shewing unto your most gracious Majestie,

Lord Stanhops
Petition to the
Parliament,
4. Caroli.

Dequesters frau-
dulent dealing
towards his
old Master.

Dequesters Pa-
tent declared
void by Law.

THat whereas it pleased your Majesties late Father of worthy memory, King James, to invest upon your Petitioner, and his deceased Father, John Lord Stanhope of Harrington, the Office of Postmatter generall of all his Majesties Dominions whatsoever, as well within the Realme of England, as in whatsoever place beyond the seas. And whereas your Petitioners Father did in his life time appoint one Matthew Dequester a Dutch man to be his Deputie for transporting and importing of letters from London, into, and from forreigne parts, which Matthew Dequester (taking advantage of such defects as he supposed to be in your Petitioners Patent) did fraudulently and cunningly procure a Patent from your Highnesses Father, for transporting and importing of Letters out of your Highnesses Dominions, into, and from forreigne parts, thereby supposing to deceive your Petitioner of a great part of his Office, to your Petitioners great dishonour and disgrace.

The Title of your Petitioners Patent, It pleased your Father of famous memory, to give leave to trie at Law, as by the Petition annexed appeareth: And for as much as your Petitioner hath tried his Title at Law accordingly, and recovered his right thereby, by which the Patent of Dequester appears to be void by a Jury and Verdict of twelve men, although the Judges for matter of words in the Declaration, & not for any thing in substance, have staied Judgement. May it therefore please your gracious Majestie, (notwithstanding the Verdict so passed against Matthew Dequester his Patent) for your Highnesses better satisfaction, that the Office is truly belonging to your Petitioner, to call before your Majestie your Attorney Generall, who can (by the Verdict recovered and recorded, and being fully acquainted in all the proceeding) truly informe your Majestie, And that two of the Judges of your Highnesses Bench, namely Justice Dodridge, and Justice Whitlocke may deliver likewise their opinions unto your Majestie for

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for the clearing thereof; which being done, that your gracious Majestie would be pleased to give Order to your Solliciter Generall to draw a Proclamation ready for your Majesties Signature, thereby commanding the said Dequester, and all others whom soever (except your Petitioner, and his deputies and servants under his Hand and Seale already authorized) to surcease the execution of transporting and importing of any Merchants, Tradsmen, or others your Majesties subjects Letters, from, or into the Citie of London, into, or from forreigne parts, according to such Proclamations formerly in the like kinde, and under such paines and penalties as heretofore have beene set downe in the same Proclamation,

And your Petitioner, &c.

His Majesties Reference on the said Petition.

At the Court at Whitehall, the 4. Feb. 1625.

HIS Majestie is graciously pleased, that Master Attorney Generall, Sir Robert Heath, examine the proceedings mentioned in this Petition, and certifye his Majestie concerning the same, with his opinion of the Petitioners right, and if the Patent of Dequesters be void by Jury and Verdict of twelve men, and the true cause why the Judges have forborne to give Judgement, and then his Majestie will further signifye his royall pleasure.

Thomas Aylesbury.

Report of Sir Robert Heath his Majesties Attorney Generall.

ACCORDING to your Majesties command, I have examined the proceedings mentioned in that Petition, and doe finde true, That the Office of Postmaster ship of England is an antient Office, that Dequester was for divers yeares Deputie under John Lord Stanhope (who had this Office) for the forreigne service. That Dequester afterwards found the meanes to obtaine a Patent to himselfe of all the forreigne service, suggesting that the Lord Stanhopes Grants was but for all Packets of Letters within this Realme, and that your Majestie might grant another for those which should be carried out of the Realme.

That

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Dequesters Patent condemned by a Verdict at Law.

That Charles Lord Stanhope now the Postmaster, brought his Action & upon a long evidence, Had a verdict for himself against Dequesters Patent, but the Judges have not given judgement according to the verdict, for some default in the Declaration of the Plaintife, but not for any dislike of the verdict.

That above fifty Merchants trading for the Neatherlands, did certifie under their hands, the prejudice they suffer by Dequesters partiality, in delivering Merchant Strangers Letters (which being the intelligence of their trade) before the Letters of the English.

Lord Stanhopes right to the forreine businesse as Postmaster generall.

Upon which I conceive my Lord Stanhope had right to this employment, as incident to the place of Postmaster Generall.

And it is the more convenient, because your Merchants desire to have a meere Englishman whom they know and trust: and if it be settled with the Lord Stanhope and his Deputy, Matthew Dequester, if he shall finde encouragement, may neverthelesse bring his action, and make an experience, if upon a new tryall hee can procure a verdict for him and his title.

Ro: Heath.

Notwithstanding this benigne Reference from his Majesty, and so ample and just a Report made by so many Honourable Personages, the power and subtilty of Matthew Dequester was such, as the Lord Stanhope was still deluded by him; Whereupon Henry Billingsley, Deputy to the said Lord Stanhope, was forced severall times to have recourse unto the Parliament, quarto Caroli, Copy of his second Petition being this that followes; together with an Order of the Commons House thereupon, and Report of the Committee appointed in that behalfe.

To the Honourable Assembly in the Commons House of Parliament.

The humble Petition of the Merchants of London in generall, and of Henry Billingsley in particular.

Pition of Mr. Hen. Billingsley, Deputy to the Lord Stanhope. 4. Caroli.

Sheweth,

That whereas your Petitioners having heretofore exhibited a Petition to the grand Committee for grievances against one Matthew Dequester, concerning the Postmasters office in conveighing

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veighing Letters beyond the Seas; wherein is set forth the great abuse offered to your Petitioners by the said Dequester in the execution of the said office, a time now long since past was appointed by the Honourable Committee to heare the said cause, but by reason of many other urgent and weighty occasions, and other Petitions of grievances which had priority in the exhibition; your Petitioners complaint hath not as yet been heard, but your Petitioner Billingsley ever since detained a prisoner in the Marshalsea concerning that businesse.

Your Petitioners humbly pray this Honourable Assembly will vouchsafe a speciall Committee to heare their said agrievances, whereby some speedy order may be taken for the reliefe of your Petitioners, and the discharge of the said Billingsley out of prison, as to your wisdom shall seem meete.

And they shall daily pray for the prosperous successe of this Honourable Assembly,

HENRY BILLINGSLEY.

Order of the Commons House upon the said Petition. Sabat. 14. Junii quarto Caroli.

A Petition was this day read in the Commons House of Parliament; Exhibited in the name of Merchants of London in generall, and of Henry Billingsley in particular; Shewing that upon a Petition formerly exhibited to the said House against one Matthew Dequester, concerning the Postmasters office, in conveighing Letters beyond the Seas, and other matters in the said former Petition mentioned, a time now long since past was appointed by the grand Committee, for grievances for the hearing of the said cause, which by reason of many other weighty occasions inceding, hath not yet been heard, but the said Billingsley still detained a prisoner concerning the said businesse. And therefore it was humbly prayed by the said Petitioner, That a speciall Committee might be appointed by the said House, to heare the said complaint; whereupon it is ordered by the said House, that

B Mr. Alderman

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Mr. Alderman *Molson*,
 Mr. Alderman *Cletherow*.
 Mr. *William Cunstable*.
 Mr. *Roydon*.
 Mr. *Edward Basse*.
 Mr. *Rolles* the Lawyer.
 Mr. *Earle*.
 Mr. *Matthewes*.
 Mr. *Ginncr*.
 Mr. *Barker*.
 Mr. *Sherwell*.

Mr. *Oldsworth*.
 Mr. *Strode*.
 Mr. *Kerkeham*.
 Mr. *Waller*.
 Mr. *Bunch*.
 Mr. *Rolles*.
 Sir *Tho: Heate*.
 Sir *Tho: Steward*.
 Mr. *Lawley*.
 Sir *Edward Giles*.
 Mr. *Doughtie*.

shall take consideration of the cause contained in the said Petitions, and for that purpose are to meet on Munday next, at two of the Clock in the afternoone, in the Exchequer Chamber, and *Matthew Dequester*, and all other persons whom this businesse concerneth, are to have notice given of the said time and place, and the said *Matthew Dequester* is then to bring with him his Letters Patents concerning the said office, and the said parties may be then heard with their Counsell if they thinke fit.

This Committee having taken information of the businesse, declared how *Dequester* procured his Patent from the King by untrue suggestions, and that the imprisonment of *Billingsley* by *Dequester* was uniuist, the rather in regard a verdict at Law had passed against the said *Dequester* therein, as more at large in the Report it selfe, which followes.

Martis 24. Junii 4. Caroli.

Report of the Committee, 4. Caroli. Declare *Dequester* to have bene the Lord *Stanhops* Deputie procures a Patent upon untrue suggestions.

Report was this day made from the Committee appointed to consider of the Petition exhibited unto this House by *Henry Billingsley*, against a Patent lately obtained by *Matthew Dequester*, for the sole carrying of all Letters beyond the Seas, and from thence into this Kingdome; upon which Report it appeared, that the said *Matthew Dequester* had for many yeares together carried Letters beyond the Seas, and from thence hither, by vertue of a deputation to him therein made by the Lord *Stanhope*, Postmaster of England, and having so done, did lately upon some untrue suggestions procure to himselfe the said Patent from his Maiesty, and

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and then opposed the Patent of Postmaster granted to the said Lord *Stanhope*, by force whereof himselfe had long time taken upon him the carriage of such Letters. And it further appeared that the said *Dequester* had abused his said Patent in the execution thereof, to the great preiudice of the English Merchants, who being by him restrained from sending or receiving their Letters by any other Post but himselfe, and having cut up some Packets of Letters sent by the Merchants by other Post, did himselfe, being an Alien borne, deliver the Letters of the merchant Strangers before the English, to their great damage, and likewise exacted money from the English merchants, besides the due fee, before they could get their Letters. And that the said *Dequester* procured the said Petitioner *Billingsley*, deputed by the said Lord *Stanhope* to carry the said Letters, to be imprisoned for carrying thereof; which imprisonment the Committee conceived to be unjust; the rather because a verdict at Law hath passed against the said *Dequester* therein. Whereupon it is declared and adiudged by the said House of Commons, that the said Patent so granted to the said *Dequester* is a grievance in the execution. And it is further ordered, that the said Committee shall frame and tender to the House a Petition to be presented to his Maiesty, for the enlargement of the said *Billingsley* out of prison, where hee hath been imprisoned by the space of thirteen weekes. And are to meet at seven of the Clock to morrow morning in the Court of Wards.

Po. E. Brighte.

Thus was the Patent of *Dequester* on all sides found uniuist, and the Honourable House of Commons having then declared and adiudged the same a grievance, would no doubt have put the Lord *Stanhope* againe in possession, had not that Parliament been unhappily dissolved within two dayes after the said Report was made.

But *Dequester*, though incessantly opposed by so much right and reason, did so often imprison *Billingsley*, and perplexe him otherwise, as was his utter undoing in the end, and by that meanes continued by himselfe the execution of his unduly got Patent, till the 20. of *Febr. 1631.* which was twelve yeares: and it is remarkable, that *Dequester* during all the time, did neither more nor lesse about Services to be done out of his Maiesties Dominions, which was the Tenure of the Kings immediate Grant unto himselfe, than what he did before as Deputy to the Lord *Stanhope* for twenty yeares together.

But now under the 20. of *Febr. 1631.* as aforesaid, *Matthew Dequester* makes a deputation of his forraine Postmastership concerning services to be done out of his Maiesties Dominions unto Mr. *Thomas Witherings*, with all rights and priviledges thereunto belonging, and then Covenants, that if he the said Mr. *Thomas Witherings*, or his Assignes, or any other, shall obtain a new Patent of the office or place aforesaid, the nine forraine Posts and Curriers shall be continued, so long as they behave themselves carefully, honestly, and diligently,

A verdict against *Dequester* Patent

Billingsley done by *Witherings*

Mr. *Wither* covenants keep the forraine Post and Curriers in the office.

and the said Mr. *Witherings* thereby also promises, that the number of the said nine Carriers shall not be encreased, but by him continued as then they were, with all the priviledges and benefits they then usually enjoyed.

Witherings
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Mr. *Witherings* by vertue of this deputation from *Dequester*, and the rever- sion granted *Frizell* and himseife, the 15. of March following, 7. *Coroli*, be- ing in possession and exercise of the forraigne businesse, continued to make use of these nine forraigne Posts or Carriers some few moneths only, and then turned them all out of their imployment and office which they had purchased for their lives, and Mr. *Witherings* himself covenanted with *Dequester* as afore- said, to keep them in, by which device of his, he comes to enjoy the whole fruits of the forraigne office himseife, who before was to have had not above the twentieth part, the other nineteene parts being divided betwixt these nine Carriers, who by this proiect may have suffered already about twenty thousand pounds sterling.

And if it be alleadged, as it may truly, that the said forraign Letters go now more speedily and orderly by this way of *Stasfetta* then formerly ; yet it is as easily replied, that though the good of the weale publique be in no kinde to be omitted, nor advancement of the office neglected, that in such case the im- provement of the office should be alike to all the interessed, and not some all, some none at all, especially in this case of the forraigne Carriers, who equally with Mr. *Witherings* had their offices for their lives, and better title derived from the Lord *Stanhope* ; Whereas Mr. *Witherings* his was only from *Mat- then Dequester* by deputation, or what *Dequester* had in reverfion.

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title bet-
n Mr.
ings his.

The Lord *Stanhope* and his Deputies being thus outed of their profits and employment about forraigne services which their Predecessors Postmasters ge- nerall of England had for above fourescore yeares together enjoyed uncon- trollably, did still continue to carry to and fro within the Kingdomes, all pac- kets of letters both of State and Subiects which were brought unto them for such rates and benefits as was agreed between the parties, every man being free to send his Letters by whom he would, and to pay as little as he could ; and thus it continued till a little before 1637. 22. *Junii*, 13. *Caroli*, at which time Mr. *Witherings* upon misinformation obtains a grant from the King, whereby he since pretends to carry all Letters himseife, which how far it entrenches up- on the freemans liberty, will no doubt be duly weighed and considered of by the Parliament.

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Matthew Dequester 17. of King *James*, upon the obtaining to be Postma- ster of England, for services to be done out of his Maiesties Dominions, al- leadged in his owne Patent, that the Lord *Stanhopes* grant was of service to be done within his Maiesties Dominions only, and so was content to let the Lord *Stanhope* have the inland businesse, which shewed at least he had some conscie- nce, and would tell truth, though not the whole truth, but as *M. Dequester* turned the Lord *Stanhope*, who had right unto them both, out of the forraigne

businesse, by the same Law, and with as much equity, did Mr. *Witherings* turne his officers and his deputies out of the inland businesse, and yet both by *De- quester* and Mr. *Witherings* acknowledged to be postmaster generall of Eng- land, and all other his Maiesties Dominions.

The Lord *Stanhope* thus knowne to be postmaster of England, besides the continuall practice and pres- cription of his predecessors, for fourescore yeares together, the very title and sound of postmaster generall of England is suffici- ent to tell every one, that he and his deputies are they that should likely take charge and carry the Letters to and fro, so long as they are in England : And *Matthew Dequester* in his second Patent, 17. *Jacobi*, confessed himseife to be Post- master for services only to be done out of England, and that the Lord *Stanhopes* grant and his were of distinct places, one within his Maiesties Dominions, the other without his Maiesties Dominions, and yet he by vertue of this Patent for for- raigne services, and those to be done out of his Maiesties Dominions, where the King had no power to grant a priviledge, did totally abridge the Lord *Stanhope* and his deputies from meddling within the Kings Dominions with any packets of Letters either of King or Subiect, which came from abroad into England, or went out of England into forraigne parts.

Dequesters c
fession of th
Lord Stanho
Patent.

Again Mr. *Witherings* will not deny the Lord *Stanhope* to be postmaster ge- nerall of England, and the Posts of England to be his deputies, at least he pre- tends not to be such himseife, and yet constrained the posts upon all the Rodes to carry his Mailes of Letters, suffering no body else to carry Letters but these posts deputies to the Lord *Stanhope*, and appropriated the whole benefit unto himseife, without the least acknowledgement unto the Lord *Stanhope*, or no- tice of the posts his deputies, unlesse it were to turne some of them out of their places, make others pay a second fine, and reduce the wages of the rest from above 4000 li. per annum, to 2053. li. besides the want of their arreares, being many thousand pounds, to the utter undoing of many families, as in their own Remonstrance more at large appears.

Mr. Wither
oppression
the inland
Posts.

But besides the invalidity of Mr. *Witherings* his patent derived from *Deque- ster*, which so plainly trenches upon the Lord *Stanhope*, who by that meanes was illegally put out of his possession, Mr. *Witherings* was further accused of sundry misdemeanours ; as first, opening of packets and letters : 2. Not ad- vising the Kings Ministers the receipt of their letters in due time. 3. Exaction of greater postage of letters. 4. Exportation, or conniving at exportation of gold and goods unaccustomed, under colour of his office. 5. Not suffering the officers to search his passage boate. 6. Not holding correspondency with forraigne postmasters for want of languages. 7. Not payment of duties to for- raigne postmasters. 8. Misdemenours of his deputies and seryants in both of- fices. 9. Putting some of the postmasters out of their office, who had bought it of the Lord *Stanhope* for their lives. 10. Forcing others to give a second fine. 11. Detaining part of their wages. 12. Forcing them to carry his

Mr. Wither
severall m
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Mailes for nothing. 13. Detaining some mens Letters longer then others. 14. Refusing to send away the Kings packets. 15. In making a Monopoly of his patent, by the ill execution of it. And last, of his not discharging of the trust the King reposed in him for execution of the said offices, and although all these reasons were not specified in the sequestration, together with the nullity of *Dequester* and Master *Witherings* his patent, by a verdict in the Kings Bench, and the Committees Report to the Commons House of Parliament, 4. *Caroli*, a reference to two Honourable personages, and his Majesties Attorney, and Soliciter generall, the oppression of the 9. forraine posts, oppression of all the inland posts, Carriers, Wagons, foot-posts, and others imprisoned and undone by Mr. *Witherings*, yet his Majesty his privy Counsell, and the Secretaries of State were made therewith acquainted, as doth appeare by the originall petitions, and sundry passages at Counsell Table, how these were joyntly a meanes with those declared therein, to bring on the sequestration, which could not well have been deferred any longer : 1. Because the objections against Mr. *Witherings* were many. 2. Of a high and heinous nature. 3. In regard that offices of this kinde have a tacite condition and obligation annexed unto them of the officers good behaviour, and due performance, the failing wherein becomes a forfeiture, *Ipsa facto*, and 4. Because the King was then upon departure for the North, and for good government of his owne affaires, and better usage of his subjects, both which were more liable to suffer in his Majesties absence, yet was it not intended that Mr. *Witherings* should be outed quite without a faire and legall triall, for at the same time the King gave order (as appeares) for a Bill to be put against him in Star Chamber, the fruits of the offices being only retained in *deposito* for him, till he make good his Title, and cleare himselfe of the misdemeanours he was accused of, some whereof are iustified in the House of Commons, and at a Committee, and others, too tedious for this discourse, will likewise be made appeare when the Committee pleases but to give leave ; Yet since Mr. *Witherings* is on a sudden so importunate of dispatch, to give a touch hereof in briefe may perhaps, being suddenly dispersed, more speedily informe the Honourable Court of Parliament, and save them many a tedious and troublesome sitting.

That Letters have beene opened, quite miscarried, and some mens longer detained than others, is proved in the House, partly *viva voce*, and partly by severall Letters, and a Petition from the English Merchants living in Italy. Now since, all this and much more may be done by Mr. *Witherings* in such manner, as will be impossible to be proved against him, that is, when there is no witness by, in like cases to prevent inconveniences, such proofes are accepted of, as can be had, which in this case must bee by obliging Mr. *Witherings* to cleare and purge himselfe, as thus:

All letters that have beene opened, must have beene opened before they came to Master *Witherings* his hand, or afterwards, if before, then Master

Witherings should have writ to the Postmaster of Antwerpe, Venice, Mantua, or from whence they came, and that said Postmaster was to cleare himselfe for sending letters open, which diligence if Mr. *Witherings* cannot prove to have done so often as letters came open, he is to be charged with the opening of them himselfe, otherwise he may open them all, and as often as he please, and say he received them so from the Postmaster of Antwerp, and the Postmaster of Anwerp may open them at Antwerpe, and say it was the Postmaster of England, and so the whole world be continually abused by a couple of Postmasters, there being no other possibility of redresse.

In like manner totall concealing, or detaining some mens letters longer then other some, falls flat upon Mr. *Witherings*, thus ; All Letters directed from London to Venice, Mantua, Antwerp, or any other place, should be made up together by themselves in a bundle, and sealed with the Postmasters knowne seale, and from thence to London reciprocally ; and if the severall bundles come thus to hand, sealed up, then will all letters of one date come together, and not miscarry, or be delayed ; but if they come open, or sealed with a strange seale, then is Mr. *Witherings* to make the severall Postmasters respectively to cleare themselves ; which diligence since Mr. *Witherings* proves not to have used, nor made a Role or Inventory of all letters, as he was commanded by his Majestie and privie Counsell, and practised by his predecessors, all miscarriage, and detaining some mens letters longer then others, must light upon Mr. *Witherings*, otherwise he and such Postmasters may delude the whole world, in quite concealing or longer withholding of their letters, just as in opening them at his pleasure, as aforesaid. But it is proved in the House, and acknowledged that Mr. *Witherings* did not seale up the Portmantle according to order of his Majestie, and Counsell Table, but left it open, by which meanes gold was conveyed out of the Kingdome, as it is proved in the Honourable House of Commons, and the leaving open the Mailes, flatly signifies some such ill intent, or a most notorious carelesnesse, and neglect, in that the portmantle being open, as Mr. *Witherings* used to send it, every rascall postilion boy, or other, that had the said portmantle in his power, might be invited or inveigled to convey away his Majesties packets, or fill his pockets with letters worth five or tenne pounds, or what he pleased, and deliver them to any Marriner or passenger in the packet Boat which went to Callis or Dunkerke, whether the said letters were directed, the said Marriners or passenger might deliver them as well as the postmaster himselfe, and receive the ready money for them ; now were it not that Mr. *Witherings* was contented to endanger his Majesties packets and affaires, and run an imminent hazard of his owne losse, contrary to his Majesties command, through the expectation of a farre greater unlawfull gain by transportation of gold, and other prohibited and unaccustomed goods, which is as well proved against him, as such deeds of darknesse can well bee, then will his negligence and indiscretion be so farre called in question : as make

Mr. *Witherings* chargeable with all letters delivered open

Mr. *Witherings* chargeable with all letters detained, &c.

Gold conveyed out of the Kingdome by Master *Witherings* his mailes.

Carelesnesse of Master *Witherings*.

him altogether incapable to execute an Office of such trust and consequence.

Besides Mr. *Witherings* his refusall to send his Majesties packets, was so evident, as being but considered of, may chance make it a lesser evill, that Mr. *Witherings* his Offices (if his they be) be deposited (though otherwise illegall) in such hands as know better how to mannage them for him then himselfe, rather then his Majesties packets should not be sent away, till Mr. *Witherings* had been convicted by a two or three termes sure at Law, in which interim the affaires of King and State might have suffered irreparably.

It is then humbly motioned unto the Honorable Committee, that though all the reasons here mentioned, with some others, were not specified in the sequestration, since really they were motives thereunto, and well hoped by such as it concernes, that it will be found both just and equitable, especially with this supreme Court of equity, that those together with the rest be all examined before the sequestration be removed.

But if Mr. *Witherings* doe still persist declining the triall of his Patent, and the examination of his misdemeanours, exaggerating his illegall putting out, and importuning for a repossession, in case this Honorable Committee should be inclined thereto, may they please onely to reflect upon, how the Lord *Stanhope* (whose predecessours enjoyed these Offices for fourescore yeares, as is notorious to all the world) had the Broad Seal of England likewise, was put out of possession illegall, & that the same Law which M. *Witherings*, implores to put him in again, may be thought inclinable to repoesse the Lord *Stanhope* first, therather in regard, that if the Lord *Stanhope* had not beene first turned out illegallly Mr. *Witherings* had never come in at all, as also because there is no Petition besides the Lord *Stanhopes* before this Honorable Court, which layes claim to either forrain or Inland Office, unlesse the Earle of Warwicks, a Copy of whose Deputation, in such case we humbly crave, and a competent time to answer to it, since the Lord *Stanhops*, and the Postmasters petitions have beene put in these twelve moneths, and the Earle of Warwicks not full twelve dayes since, which being but once taken notice of, we doe not onely hope, but rest assured it may stand with the Justice and Equity of this Supreme Assembly, to grant us our request; whereunto we must submit ourselves howsoever.

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