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Henry Hills, Official Printer.

IN 1684 a broadside was published to show the seamy side of the life of Henry Hills, senior, late Warden of the Stationers' Company. It quite bears out its title, " A view of part of the many traiterous, disloyal, and turn-about actions of H.H. senior, sometimes printer to Cromwel, to the Commonwealth, to the Anabaptist Congregation, to Cromwell's army, Committee of safety, Rump Parliament, &c." When the adjectives and adverbs are neglected, plenty of dated facts are alleged; (and they may be supplemented by a few others). Here then is an outline of the man's public career, as an enemy chose to tell it.

His father was a rope-maker at Maidstone. He became postillion to Thomas Harrison, who apprenticed him to a printer, but on the outbreak of war he ran away and enlisted. He was a musketeer at the battle of Edgehill in October 1642. In the next few years he was involved with the Levellers. When the Army began to take an active part in politics, and needed some way of explaining itself to the public, Harrison bethought himself of Hills and had him taken out of the ranks, appointed as Printer to the Army. In this capacity he moved with the army, and issued many of its manifestos, then many ordinances of the Rump Parliament. His last appearance in camp was at Worcester, in Fleetwood's tent.

On the return of peace, he enticed away the wife of Thomas Ham, a tailor in Blackfriars, and lived with her. For this he was mulcted in £260, and was committed to the Fleet prison. In 1651 he published a pamphlet, " The Prodigal Returned," with commentations from William Kiffin and Daniel King; and soon was made Printer to the Anabaptist Congregation. (He certainly did print the important books by John Tombes, next year, and a huge folio by Samuel Fisher of Kent. In July 1653 he was prominent enough to be one of nine who sent forth a circular advising the formation of Associations everywhere; he was a member of Kiffin's church.) He was appointed Printer to the Commonwealth, and did all the official work. At the same time he was a prominent preacher among the Anabaptists, and treasurer of a fund of theirs; this however was absorbed by him and Jeremy Ives. (No date is offered for this; but in 1654 he published for Tombes, Collier, Howet, Turner and Patient; next year for Lawrence, Hobson, Clarke of Rhode Island. No

allusion to the alleged defalcations has yet been found in any Baptist book.)

In 1659 he issued a Pocket Bible, which was notorious for omitting " not " from the seventh commandment. (He and Field did buy for £500 the monopoly of Bible printing. Their duo-decimo in 1656 was very inaccurate, but next year Hills printed a fine two-volume folio version of the Dutch Authorized Version, with all its notes. There was a petition in 1659 by the workmen-printers who were citizens of London, that parliament would end this monopoly; but it failed. Hills was also printing for Black-wood, Collier, and Tombes, so evidently retained Baptist confidence.)

Having been official printer to the army, Cromwell, the Commonwealth, Richard Cromwell, the Rump, the army, the Committee of Safety, and the Rump again, he now became official printer to the king in 1660; and to make himself secure, took out a particular pardon for all the past, becoming a kind of Church-of-England man or a modest Presbyterian. (There was however an interlude when Monk's army entered London; he ceased to be the official printer then, and worked only for many Baptists. An attack was made on him as a fanatic, coupled with Ives, Simpson, Overton, Powell, and Kiffin; to this he made an effective answer by printing the Baptist manifesto disowning the Fifth Monarchy rising in 1661, and Tombes' plea that the oath of allegiance ought to be taken. But thereafter he lost all Baptist custom, and so presumably he did quit the denomination.)

(On 7 July 1660 he and Field bought from the university of Oxford its privilege of printing Bibles, and exercised it for four years. The university itself however began printing Bibles at the Sheldonian Theater, so in 1678 Hills arranged with the Barkers, who held the king's patent, and resumed.) He became Warden of the Stationers' Company (and as nothing is alleged against him in all this period, was presumably doing honest business. In 1672 he published a Justification of the War with the Netherlands, and Stubbe's Vindication of the Declaration for Liberty of Conscience. Three years later he was denounced as an unregistered printer.) At this time his works were at the Bell in St. Paul's courtyard.

In 1678 he signalized himself in connection with the Popish Plot, hunting out papists, especially in the official printing offices (as may have been his duty. He certainly printed one pamphlet about papists, for Tooke, a leading loyal bookseller.) Next year he was even more violent, and involved with Dangerfield. When the excitement died down, he was sued by a peer, who obtained heavy damages. Therefore to obtain royal favour, he turned Roman Catholic. (While his attention was taken off his Bible

trade, young Thomas Guy came to terms with Oxford, and in 1679 laid the foundation of his fortune by selling Bibles at the corner of Little Lombard Street; so Baptists were well represented again. The rivalry between Hills and Guy was marked for several years. Hills, Newcomb, and the assigns of Bill, were appointed Printers to the King's most excellent Majesty, and did all the official work, as for example, an Abridgement of the Military Discipline. It is curious that in Commonwealth times, a similar drill-book was written by Vernon, a Baptist.) Yet as he coveted the office of Master of the Stationers' Company in 1684, he qualified for candidature by taking the sacrament in the Church of England; but he was not elected.

(Here the diatrite ends. Hills strengthened his position as a Catholic, became printer to the royal court and chapel, issued many Catholic books, while continuing work under the Bible patent. It was piquant that in 1686, when Guy was selling an Oxford Bible, Hills was selling a royal Bible, without apocrypha, and also a Jesuit book whose running title was " The Bible is not our judge," followed with " The Roman Church is our infallible judge." Somehow Hills missed the tide at the Revolution, and did not become printer to William and Mary. Nor does his own imprint appear on any Bible after 1689, though he continued to own a share in the patent. His partners came to terms with Thomas Guy, who in 1692 issued a Bible with a portrait of King William as frontispiece.

(As he was a soldier in 1642, he must have been fairly old by now, and the fact that in 1684 he was styled Senior, shows that he had a son of the same name, in public life. One or other of them, in 1697, broke new ground by printing and selling a book of " Chimical Secrets," medicines made up by Dr. William Russell and Richard Russell; the former was chemist to the king, and also a Messenger of the General Baptists, preaching at Dean Street. It is not clear when Henry Hills the elder died, but in 1709 his executors sold the Bible-patent to John Baskett and others. Next year an act of parliament spoke of his piracies, and ordered how they were to be remedied. The Henry Hills who died in 1713 must have been the son.)

YORK had a Baptist congregation flourishing about 1646, when one of the members, Anne, was married in the presence of the congregation to a pious man who in later days became a First Publisher of Truth, otherwise a Quaker. See the current Journal of the Society of Friends.