

An Extract

out of the Preface
of our Eminent Country-man. Major. Ayres
before his Copy-Book of the year 1698, touch-
ing the different State of English & Forreign
Pen-man-ship, at & since the coming-in of
Printing.

The **Librarians**, who of Old (ere Printing was in use) lived by writing of Books, were very curious therein: Witness those Excellent M.S. of theirs, resting with us at this day. But as Printing (for its Cheapness & Dispatch) got into Esteem; their Employment flagg'd, & Art declined. For though the surprising Accuracy wherewith the Printers-Work was all at once performed, to the degree of its passing for twenty Years together generally unsuspected for Writing, put the poor Pen-men under a necessity of applying themselves to the improving their Talents, & succeeded so, as to render the Books they then wrote, the fairest that to that time had ever appeared in the World. Yet by the Advantage first mentioned, of Dispatch & Cheapness, the **Writers Trade** was in little time driven to give way to the Press; & Pen-man-ship in a manner sunk. Witness what remains of the Writing of Henry 7th & Henry 8th Time, to near the End of Q. Elizabeths: When indeed, it began to look up again; & by the Method then first discovered of Engraving Writing upon Copper-Plates became wonderfull to consider, the **Perfection** it was on a sudden raised to, by the concurrent Labours & extraordinary Genius of the great **Vanden Velde** of Holland, **Materot** of Avignon, & **Beaugrand** of Paris; with those of y^e famous **Davis** of Hereford, **Gething**, **Billingfly**, **Goodyear**, & **Gery** of our own Country; followed by a Succession of Masters no less considerable in each Nation to this day, as by their Severall Performances contained in this Collection; beginning with a View of the Competition above mentioned, between the **Pen-men** & **Printers**, & expressed by a Collation of Originall Proofs of the Works of both, exhibited on y^e next Page.

