

Enclosure 1, in No. 32.

NEVIS:—An Act for regulating the Solemnization of Marriages among Slaves, and for declaring such Marriages valid and effectual in the Law.

ST. KITTS.

WHEREAS it is expedient to encourage lawful marriages among the slaves of this island, and as far as can be to abolish the irreligious mode of living together between the sexes; May it therefore please Your most excellent Majesty, that it may be enacted, and be it and it is hereby enacted, by the Commander-in-Chief for the time being of Your Majesty's Islands of Saint Christopher, Nevis, Anguilla and the Virgin Islands, and the Council and Assembly of this Island of Nevis, and by the authority of the same, that if any slave shall hereafter be desirous of entering into the holy state of matrimony with any other slave, or with any free person, it is hereby declared to be lawful for him or her or them so to do: Provided always, that such slave or slaves shall first obtain and produce to the proper minister the consent thereto in writing of the owner, lawful possessor, manager or director of such slave, or both parties being slaves, of each of them respectively; but in case the owner, lawful possessor, manager or director of any such slave or slaves shall refuse or omit to give his or her consent as aforesaid, then and in such case it shall and may be lawful for such slave or slaves, or for any magistrate to whom such slave shall or may complain, to represent the same to the ordinary or the deputy ordinary of this island for the time being; and such ordinary or deputy ordinary is hereby authorized and required to summon to appear before him, within three days after such representation shall have been made, the owner, lawful possessor, manager or director so refusing or omitting as aforesaid; and if thereupon such owner, lawful possessor, manager or director shall fail to appear, or appearing shall not show just, reasonable and lawful cause for withholding his or her consent to such intended marriage, then and in every such case the said ordinary or deputy ordinary shall grant a license under his hand and seal, thereby authorizing any minister of the United Church of England and Ireland, or of the Kirk of Scotland, to solemnize such marriage after due publication of banns, notwithstanding such license in the same form, mode and manner as he would and should do if the parties were of free condition; provided nevertheless, that nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, in any manner whatsoever, by means or reason of any intermarriage with a slave or between slaves, to take away, alter or annul any right, title or property which the owner or master of such slave or slaves might or could have in or to them, or either of them, or in or to their issue, or in or to their services, by any law or custom of this island heretofore established, or give any authority to the husband over the wife or her children, or to endow the wife with any property of the husband, or to give any rights whatsoever, to either of them except those of a religious nature, or to confer on any such slaves or their issue any rights whatsoever inconsistent with the duties which such slaves and their issue owe to their owner, lawful possessor, manager or director, or to the government, or which may be at variance with those rights and authorities which the owner and the government respectively are by law entitled to assert and exercise over such slaves and their progeny, or to render any such marriage valid or effectual which would be illegal or void if the parties thereto were of free condition; or render any marriage, in like cases heretofore solemnized within this island, valid or effectual which was illegal or void before the passing of this Act; anything in this Act contained, or any law, custom or usage to the contrary thereof, in anywise notwithstanding.

And be it further enacted, that no marriage henceforth to be solemnized within this island, wherein a slave shall be a party, shall be lawful or valid, or be deemed or taken so to be unless the same shall be solemnized by a minister of the United Church of England and Ireland, or of the Kirk of Scotland.

And be it further enacted, that any magistrate, ordinary, deputy ordinary or other person shall not receive any fee or reward for any thing done by virtue of this Act relating to any marriage under the same, and not any fee or reward shall be demanded by any minister for solemnizing any such marriage.

Dated at St. Christopher this 9th day of October, in the ninth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Fourth, by the grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland King, Defender of the Faith, and in the year of our Lord 1828.

(signed) *Wm. Pemberton,*
Speaker.