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An ACT more effectually to provide for the Support, and to extend certain Regulations for the Protection of Slaves, to promote and encourage their Increase, and generally to meliorate their Condition. [April 21, 1798.]

YOUR Majesty's loyal and obedient subjects the commander in chief of your Majesty's Leeward Charribbee Islands in America, and the general council and general assembly of the said Islands, duly convened and assembled at the town of Basseterre in the Island of Saint Christopher, having taken into their most serious consideration the resolution of the Honourable the House of Commons of Great Britain, of the  
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sixth day of April in the thirty-seventh year of your Majesty's reign, recommended to their attention by your Majesty's said commander in chief of your Leeward Charribbee Islands, in obedience to your Majesty's order, communicated by his grace the duke of Portland, one of your Majesty's principal secretaries of state, and having maturely deliberated upon the measures which appear to them best calculated to obviate the causes which hitherto may have impeded the natural increase of negroes already in these Islands, gradually, as they hope, to diminish the necessity of the slave trade, and ultimately to lead to its final termination, and desiring to grant unto the slaves in these your Majesty's Leeward Charribbee Islands every indulgence and encouragement which may tend to their moral and religious improvement, and to secure to them the certain, immediate and active protection of the law, as far as the same can possibly be extended to them consistently with that good order, discipline and obedience, which is absolutely necessary to preserve and maintain in all places where, from inevitable local circumstances, slavery must, with some restrictions, be tolerated, and desiring also to prevent as much as possible any instances of cruelty or oppression, and to compel all persons to treat their slaves with that humanity which is generally prevalent in these Islands; Do humbly pray your Most Excellent Majesty that it may be enacted and ordained,

1st. And be it, and it is hereby, enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, That every owner or director of any slave or slaves within the Leeward Islands shall weekly and every week, under the penalty of ten shillings per head, for each and every slave under his or her direction, for every omission, purchase or provide, at the rate of the following quantities of provision, that is to say, for every slave at the rate of nine pints of corn or beans, or eight pints of pease, or wheat or rye flour, or Indian corn meal, or nine pints of oatmeal, or seven pints of rice, or eight pints of Cassava flour or farine, or eight pounds of biscuit, or twenty pounds of yams or potatoes, or sixteen pounds of eddoes, tancias or tyres, or thirty pounds of plantains or bananas, and also one pound and one quarter of herrings, shads, mackarel, or other salted provisions, or double the quantity of fresh fish, or other fresh provisions, all which said provisions to be of good and wholesome quality; provided nevertheless, that every such owner or director shall have the absolute and uncontrollable right of distributing and dividing all and every such quantities of provision so to be divided as aforesaid, unto and among all and every his slave or slaves, in such proportions, shares and allowances as he shall think proper, according to the different labour, size, age and strength, or otherwise, of all and every such slave and slaves, and as the same shall appear to him in his discretion eligible or right; but notwithstanding such discretionary power such owner or director shall actually distribute, weekly and every week, among all his slaves the whole quantity of provisions herein before directed to be purchased or provided, under the penalty aforesaid for every omission; provided also, that every aged, infirm or sickly slave, and every slave afflicted with any loathsome or contagious disorder, or every slave being incapable of labour, shall receive weekly and every week at least one full rate or rates of allowance aforesaid, notwithstanding the general and discretionary power of dividing the same herein before permitted to the owner, and notwithstanding any other power which he may have: And if any owner or director of any slave or slaves within the Leeward Islands shall omit or neglect, under any pretext whatever, especially under pretext of absence from the said plantation, or that the said slave is wandering about the towns, or other parts of the Island, or that he cannot be found, to distribute and share weekly and every week to any of his aged, infirm or sickly slaves, or to any of his slaves afflicted with any loathsome or contagious disorder, or incapable of labour, such full rate or rates of provisions as aforesaid, he shall forfeit for every such neglect or omission the sum of twenty shillings, unless such slave shall be provided for in the hospital or sick-house.

2d. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That it shall and may be lawful for every owner or director of any slaves employed on any plantation in the Leeward Islands, to reduce and diminish, when he shall be actually making sugar, or cutting canes on such plantation, for the whole week in which he makes such reduction, the quantity of provisions hereinbefore directed to be distributed among his slaves in the proportion which one fifth part of the said provisions bears to the whole thereof, but on no account in a larger proportion; provided nevertheless, that inasmuch as it is necessary for ensuring the subsistence, which is the principal object of this Act, that in some of the Leeward Charribbee Islands, the provisions given to the slaves in crop-time should be increased, and may

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without derogating from such subsistence be out of crop, diminished, that no owner or director of any slave within the Virgin Islands shall be permitted to make the aforesaid reduction, in any week in which he shall be or have been actually employed in the manufacturing sugar, or grinding canes; but every owner or director of every slave worked on any plantation within the said Virgin Islands, shall be permitted out of crop to make a reduction of one fifth part of the dry provisions hereinbefore directed to be given to his or her slaves, whenever he or she shall give and allow to each and every of his or her slaves as much land and time as shall, with his or their labour on such land, for such time, be likely to produce the value of such dry provisions; and provided also, that if the value of such dry provisions shall not be produced by such land, every such owner or director shall make good to every slave whose land shall be less productive, the difference between its produce and the value of the dry provisions to which such slave under this act would otherwise be entitled.

3d. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That money shall on no account be given to slaves in lieu of the provisions hereinbefore directed to be purchased or distributed, unless in case of absolute and unequivocal necessity; and that if any owner or director of any slave or slaves within the leeward islands shall offend against this clause he shall forfeit the sum of fifty pounds.

4th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That whenever, or as often as any owner or director of any slave or slaves within the Leeward Islands shall commute or exchange for money, the provisions hereinbefore directed to be purchased or provided for such slaves, or any part of the same, he shall give and pay to and among his slaves at the rate of four shillings per week for each and every slave with whom he shall make such commutation, and also give and allow two half days in each week to such slave, to resort to the best market for laying out to the best advantage such commutation-money; provided nevertheless, that it shall and may be lawful for every owner or director, to divide distribute and share such commutation money among all and every of his slaves with whom he makes such commutation, and exchange in the same manner, and with the same discretionary power as is hereinbefore vested in him with respect to the provisions he is hereinbefore directed to purchase, procure and distribute.

5th. And whereas from the situation and local circumstance of many estates in the Leeward Islands, the owners or directors of such estates are enabled to allot portions of land to their slaves, more than sufficient for their support and maintenance, and from which such slaves grow rich, and it would therefore not only be unnecessary, but even unjust and ruinous to such planters, to compel them to give the same allowance with others who have not the benefit of such provision-grounds; be it therefore enacted by the authority aforesaid, That whenever the quantity of provision-land under cultivation with the owners time upon any estate in the Leeward Islands, shall be in the proportion of one acre of land for every ten slaves worked and employed upon such estate, and the produce of such land shall be in proportion to one half of the quantity of provisions, or in any larger proportion, by this Act directed to be purchased or procured for all the slaves so worked or employed, that then it shall and may be lawful for the owner or director of such plantation to diminish by one half, or in any other proportion, the quantity of dry provisions according to the quantity of provisions produced from such land, directed by this Act to be purchased or procured for and distributed among such slaves; provided the whole produce of the land so under cultivation, or the proportion hereby prescribed, is appropriated to the use of the slaves so employed; and provided also, that the owner or director distributes or causes to be distributed among them their full allowance or rates of salt or fresh provisions aforesaid; and provided further, that such owner or director shall attend the board of council in the Island, where such plantation shall be situate once in every twelve months, and then and there take the following oath, "videlicet."

" I do swear, that there are now slaves upon or  
 " belonging to the plantation under my direction, in the parish or division  
 " of \_\_\_\_\_, and that there is, under the cultivation of provisions  
 " upon the said plantation, at least in the proportion of one acre of land for  
 " every ten slaves thereon; and that the produce of the said land has been  
 " for twelve months last past, or for as much of the said twelve months last  
 " past as I have been owner or director thereof, together with the quantity of  
 " provisions

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“ provisions appropriated or distributed among the said slaves, fully adequate to the ratio of provisions directed by this Act to be purchased or procured, distributed and shared among them, and every other slave for the time aforesaid; and that the said produce has been appropriated, and the said provisions have been shared and distributed agreeable to the directions of this Act, to the best of my knowledge and belief. So help me God.”

6th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every owner or director of any plantation within the Leeward Islands shall allot and give to every slave of which he is owner or director, and who is capable of working the same, a piece or spot of good well laying land of forty feet square at least, immediately round or close to his house, if the same can be done without pulling down or injuring any other negro house, and if it cannot be so done, then every such owner or director shall allot and give to each and every such slave, the same quantity of land in some part of the said plantation on which such negro resides, and commodious for his working the same, under the penalty of five pounds for every offence against this clause, provided there is so much land as is hereby required to be allotted as aforesaid, on the plantation of which he is such owner or director, not usually planted in canes; and if there is not, he shall give and allow to every such slave as aforesaid, in lieu of the same, an annual compensation which shall be equal to the annual value of the land usually allotted as aforesaid, under the like penalty of five pounds for every instance in which he shall omit or neglect to make such compensation.

7th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every owner or director of any slave within the Leeward Islands shall twice in every year, that is to say, on the first day of January and the first day of August, provide for and give to each and every of his male slaves one jacket made of good sound woollen cloth, and one pair of trowsers made of good sound Osnabrigs; and to each and every of his female slaves one wrapper of such woollen cloth, and one petticoat of such Osnabrigs: provided always, that in case any such owner or director shall think proper to furnish such slave with a good and sufficient blanket, and a hat or cap, with the consent of such slave, the same shall be in lieu of one suit of such clothes as aforesaid.

8th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That once in every twelve months each and every owner or director of slaves shall, under the penalty of one hundred pounds, appear before the court of King's Bench, or Common Pleas of the Island where such owner or director shall reside, and shall then and there take the following oath, viz.

“ I, A. B. do swear upon the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God that I have truly and fairly distributed, or caused to be distributed or appropriated, for the last twelve months past, [or for so long as the said owner or director has had the direction of such slaves,] between and among the slaves under my direction, the full ratio of provisions and clothing as directed by an Act, intituled, “ An Act more effectually to provide for the support, and to extend certain regulations for the protection of slaves, to promote and encourage their increase, and generally to ameliorate their condition; to the best of my knowledge, judgment, and belief, and without any fraud or intent to evade the said Act. So help me God.”

9th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every owner or director of any slave or slaves within the Leeward Islands shall give and allow to every such slave who shall be employed in any field-work, or any plantation, or in the carrying, digging, removing, or making up manure, or in the picking grass, or in any plantation labour, in the performance of which breakfast and noon-time is now usually allowed, at least one complete half hour for every such slave to eat his breakfast, and at that time to rest and refresh himself; but no slave shall at such time be permitted to quit the field or place in which he is at work without the particular leave of such owner or director, or of the overseer, or driver acting under him; and every such owner or director shall also give and allow to every such slave two full and complete hours at noon or dinner-time, to rest and refresh himself, or to procure, dress, and eat his dinner, during which two hours no such slave shall be employed in any work, labour, business, or manner whatever; and any person offending against this

this clause shall for every such offence forfeit a sum not less than twenty shillings, nor more than five pounds.

10th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no owner or director of slaves belonging to any plantation within the Leeward Islands shall call or turn out to his work any such slave before the hour of five in the morning, nor shall any such owner or director continue any such slave at work after the hour of seven o'clock in the evening, except in crop-time, or from some evident necessity, under the penalty of five pounds.

11th. And be it enacted by the authority aforesaid, That whereas many slaves who have no owners or directors who can be discovered and compelled to provide for them, become incapable, from contagious disorders, old age, sickness, or other infirmities, of labouring to procure a subsistence for themselves, that in all such cases it shall and may be lawful for the vestry of any parish within the Leeward Islands, or the president of the council, or speaker of the assembly, or any justice of the peace, where there is no vestry, to provide, in a suitable manner, for the support and maintenance of such slave or slaves, and to prefer the accounts for the same against the public of the Island in which such slave shall be found or discovered; and the said public is hereby charged with and made liable for the payment of such account out of its treasury, or such other funds as it may choose to apply in payment of the same.

12th. Whereas to avoid the inconveniencies that do sometimes arise from persons manumitting and setting free their slaves when they are rendered incapable of service, by age, infirmity, accident, or calamity, to avoid the expense of providing a proper subsistence for such slave; be it and it is hereby further enacted, That if any proprietor of a slave shall manumit or set free any slave in his or her possession, who shall be rendered incapable of service from any of the causes aforesaid, that such proprietor shall be obliged to pay into the hands of the treasurer of the Island where such slave shall be so manumitted and set free, the sum of three hundred pounds currency, from which sum such slave shall be entitled to draw, half yearly, an interest arising upon such sum, according to the rate of interest in each respective Island, for his or her subsistence, during the life of such slave; and that upon the death of such slave so manumitted and set free the said sum of three hundred pounds currency shall be appropriated to the use of the public.

13th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every owner or director of any slave or slaves within the Leeward Islands shall keep and produce, whenever legally required, a full, true, plain, and weekly account of all the provisions purchased for or distributed or shared out among all or any of his slaves, and also of all commutation-money paid in lieu of the same; and also a full, true, and weekly account of the number of his slaves, under the penalty of five pounds for each and every week in which he shall neglect or omit to keep such account; and also an account of all clothing given to his slaves, with the times of his giving the same, and the number of slaves of which he is the owner or director at such times, under the penalty of twenty-five pounds; and if he shall refuse to produce such account or accounts whenever he shall be thereunto legally required, he shall forfeit the sum of twenty-five pounds.

14th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any white or free coloured person, who is not the owner or director of any slave ill-treated as hereinafter mentioned, shall beat or ill treat any slave, or shall take away, or cause to be taken away from any slave, any article or thing whatsoever, for which such slave shall produce a ticket or note from his or her owner or director, authorizing him or her to sell or possess such article or thing, or shall take away or cause to be taken away from any slave any stock, vegetables, provisions, grass tops, voura, or any article or thing which such slave shall be authorized by any present or future existing laws, usages or customs of the Island wherein he resides, to sell or possess, or shall, after purchasing from any such slave any of the articles or things aforesaid, refuse or omit to pay him or her the price agreed upon for the same, or shall knock off from the head of, or pull away from, any slave, into the dirt or street, or trample on the ground, or scatter about on it, any such article or thing whatever aforesaid, or cause the same to be done, in any of such cases, on complaint made by the owner or director of the said slave, though it may be without oath, to any justice of the peace in or near the parish where the offence is committed, such justice shall and is hereby

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hereby authorized and directed, by an order in writing under his hand, stating the complaint made by such owner or director, to command such person or persons against whom such complaint was made to appear at a time and place to be specified in such order before him, and any other justice who may be then and there present, that such complaint may be examined into; and such justices are hereby authorized to take the examination of such person complained of upon his or her own oath, with respect to the said complaint, who shall be compelled to answer on oath such questions as the said justices may put to him or her; and if such person shall not fully answer such questions, or having been duly summoned shall refuse to appear as aforesaid, he or she shall be considered as convicted of the said complaint; or if such person, having fully answered such questions, shall not fully exculpate him or herself, or shall be otherwise convicted before the said justices, he or she shall be fined by the said justices, in any sum not exceeding ten pounds current money, to be recovered by warrant under the hands and seals of the said justices, directed to any constable, commanding him forthwith to levy on the goods and chattels of such offender, sufficient to pay such fine, with all costs and charges attending all the proceedings aforesaid; and for want of such goods and chattels to commit such offender to the common jail, for any time not exceeding one month; and such constable shall execute such warrant under the penalty of twenty pounds current money aforesaid; and the said justices shall and may, if they think proper, dispose of the fine to the slave so ill treated, as a compensation for the injuries he or she may have sustained.

15th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That in order to remove any doubt which may arise as to the legality or propriety of punishing the owners or directors of any slave for any cruel conduct towards such slave, it is hereby expressly declared and enacted, that if any person shall cruelly whip, maltreat, beat, or imprison, or keep in confinement, without sufficient support, any slave under his or her direction or care, such person shall be indicted for the same in the superior court of criminal jurisdiction for the Island wherein such offence shall be committed; and upon being legally convicted thereof shall suffer such punishment, by fine or imprisonment, or both, as the judges or justices of said court shall think proper to inflict, and the said judges or justices are hereby authorized, if they shall deem it necessary for the further protection of the said slave, to order the marshal, or his deputy to sell and dispose of such slave to any person (except the owner) at public outcry, and at the best price that can be procured for such slave; and the monies arising from such sale, after payment of the fees, shall be paid to the person having the first lien thereon, and in case of no such prior lien, then to the owner of the said slave.

16th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any person shall beat or maltreat any slave not belonging to himself or herself, such offender shall not only be indicted and punished for the same in like manner, but any punishment inflicted by the court of criminal jurisdiction for such offence shall not be considered as a bar to any action or suit at law which may be commenced by the owners of such slave, or be considered in mitigation of any damages which may otherwise be given or recovered for such trespass or injury.

17th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That in case any justice of the peace shall receive any complaint or intelligence, which he in his own discretion shall think probable, that any slave hath been mutilated, cruelly punished, or otherwise maltreated, or confined without sufficient support, it shall be lawful for such justice of the peace to call to his assistance some other justice, and then such two justices shall be and are hereby authorized to order any constable to bring such slave before them, or, if the case shall require it, they are hereby authorized to go to such place where such slave shall be and direct such slave to be produced and shown to them, that such inquiry and other proceedings may be made and had as shall be necessary for the further prosecution of the offence; and that if such justice shall think it proper or necessary, they shall be and they are hereby authorized to send such slave to some public place of security, or to the workhouse, if any is provided in the Island where such slave shall live, to be there kept and detained, and supported at the expense of the owner or director of such slave until further inquiry shall be made into the fact according to law.

18th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That if any owner or director of any slave within the Leeward Islands shall fix round the neck of any slave any iron collar, with projecting bars, hooks, or any collar with a chain or weight thereto,

thereto, or shall put or fix upon any slave any chain, or any piece or ring of iron, either round the leg or any other part of the body of such slave, other than such as are absolutely necessary for securing the person of such slave, it shall and may be lawful for any justice of the peace, on information or view of the same, to order such collar, chain, weight, hooks, bars and rings, other than such as are necessary as aforesaid, to be taken off such slave, at the expense of such owner; and it shall also be lawful for such justice to issue his warrant to bring such owner before him; and if he is of opinion that such owner or director has acted wantonly and cruelly in the putting on or fixing as aforesaid any such collar, chain, weight, hooks, bars or rings, or that he was not influenced solely by the motive of preventing the future desertion of such slave, such justice shall and may bind over every such owner or director to appear at the next court of King's Bench to be held for the Island where such offence shall be committed, then and there to answer for the same; and, upon conviction thereof, to be fined at the discretion of such court, in any sum not exceeding one hundred pounds current money.

19th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That any owner or director of any slave within the Leeward Islands, who may from sickness or any other cause stand in need of medical assistance, shall without loss of time procure such assistance for such slave; and also shall provide for and furnish such slave with all such food, wine, nourishment, and with all and every such other necessary and necessaries of every kind as the medical person, whose assistance he may call in, shall order or direct, under the penalty of fifty pounds for every omission.

20th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That whenever any slave not under the age of six years, nor from natural decay, who shall die suddenly without having been visited at least forty-eight hours before his or her decease by some medical person duly qualified to practise physic, it shall and may be lawful for the coroner, or where there is no coroner, for some justice of the peace, and he is hereby authorized and commanded to hold an inquest, not consisting of less than three persons, on the body of such slave, to enquire into and return the cause of his or her death; and if any owner or director of any slave within the Leeward Islands, shall omit to give notice to the coroner or justice aforesaid, of the decease of any such slave under the circumstances aforesaid, within six hours after such decease, or shall bury any slave so dying, before he shall have given such notice, or within eighteen hours after the same, he shall forfeit for every such offence the sum of one hundred pounds; provided that the person taking such inquest shall in no case receive more than the sum of three pounds six shillings, to be paid by the public of said Island.

21st. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every white or free person charged with the murder or maiming of any slave, whether such slave belong to such person or not, shall be tried and punished for such murder or maiming, in the same manner, without any sort of distinction or privilege, as if he or she were charged with the murder or maiming of any white or free person whatever; provided nevertheless, that if he or she shall be convicted, such conviction shall not extend to or occasion any corruption of blood or forfeiture of lands or tenements, goods or chattels.

22d. And whereas the marriage of slaves cannot give any particular right either to the contracting parties or to their children, and it being unnecessary and even improper to enforce the celebration of any religious rites among the slaves in order to sanctify contracts, the faithful performance of which can be looked for only by a regular improvement in religion, morality, and civilization, and should not be immediately enforced by any compulsory methods, lest the violation of sacred vows be too often added to the crime of infidelity: And whereas it seems more eligible to encourage than compel such improvement in religion, morality, and civilization among such slaves, for the purposes aforesaid, and for other good purposes; BE it therefore further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every owner and director of any slave on any estate within the Leeward Islands, shall within two months after the publication of this Act, and also on the first day of January every year, convene and assemble together the slaves under his direction, and enquire which of them have a husband or wife, or more than one, and if an acknowledgment be made, in consequence of such enquiry, of more than one husband or wife, then such owner or director shall compel such slave making such acknowledgment, to elect some one slave only as his or her husband or wife; and when such election is made, such owner or director shall enter the same in a book to be kept for that purpose, and make the same as public as possible,

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possible, by convening once in every twelve months all the slaves upon such plantation, and reading to them the same in a distinct and audible voice, at the same time extolling the good behaviour of those who have been faithful to their engagements, and reprobating the misconduct of those who have acted to the contrary, doing his utmost to keep together in harmony the parties who have made such election, and to encourage all the other slaves of which he is manager, master, or director, as they shall arrive at the age of maturity, to make such election as aforesaid, and adhere as strictly as possible to the same; and every owner or director of any female slave who shall have a child while she preserves her fidelity to such engagement as aforesaid, or is reputed so to do, shall in six weeks after the birth of such child, if the same be then living, pay and give to the mother of such child four dollars, and the same sum, with one dollar more, for every other child she shall bear and have under the same circumstances; and if any owner or director shall omit in any respect to comply with and fulfil the directions of this clause, he shall forfeit the sum of fifty pounds for every such omission.

23d. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every owner or director shall give to every male and female slave who shall live together faithfully and peaceably as aforesaid as man and wife, one dollar each for every year that they shall so live together.

24th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That as soon as any female slave shall have six children living, and who have been born during such cohabitation as aforesaid, the youngest of which shall be seven years of age, the owner or director of such female slave shall not oblige such female slave to do any other than light work, under the penalty of twenty pounds.

25th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That no owner or director of any slave, nor any overseer, nor any other description of white men on any plantation, shall weaken the effect of the exhortations and enquiries enjoined by this law, by his own irregular conduct in cohabiting or having criminal commerce with any female slave who shall have elected her husband as aforesaid; every such person, for every such offence, being thereof convicted by legal testimony before any two or more justices of the peace, shall forfeit and pay the sum of one hundred pounds.

26th. And whereas it appears to be impracticable and ineffectual to endeavour to compel any slaves to adopt and conform themselves to any religious establishment, although they may be brought gradually to a considerable degree of religious knowledge by attention on the part of their owners and directors and the clergy; BE it therefore further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That in case any owner or director shall in any manner whatever restrain or prohibit, or cause to be restrained or prohibited any slave (excepting such whose services are necessary on a Sunday) under his or her direction, from receiving religious instruction by attending on Sunday at any church or chapel, or any other place of worship held by the regularly established clergy of any religious christian sect tolerated in the Leeward Islands, or by receiving baptism according to the rites of the regularly established church or other tolerated christian church, such owner or director, for every such offence, shall forfeit the sum of five pounds; and in case any regular clergyman who has any living in any of the Leeward Islands shall refuse or neglect, when thereto reasonably required, to baptize any slave without fee or reward, on any Sunday immediately after divine service, such clergyman shall forfeit and pay for every such refusal and neglect the sum of thirty shillings; provided that such clergyman shall not be compelled so to do in case of the ignorance or ill character of such slave so requiring to be baptized, but that in all such cases such clergyman shall endeavour, by exhortation and instruction, to qualify such slave as he may so reject, to be thereafter baptized and received into the faith of Christ's church.

27th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That when any slave shall be sick, or unable from any accident or cause whatsoever to perform his usual duty or labour, his or her owner or director shall cause such slave to be visited by some person duly qualified to practise physic and surgery, according to the laws of the respective Islands where such slave shall live, and shall cause such medicines, food and other necessaries, as such qualified practitioner shall from time to time reasonably order or direct, to be duly administered to such slave, under the penalty of five pounds.

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28th. And,



28th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every medical man so qualified as aforesaid, or a proper white assistant, shall attend each estate, to the care of which he shall be appointed, at least two days in every week, whether thereto especially called or not, unless he has notice in writing from the proprietor or director of such estate that his presence is not required; and such medical man or white assistant as aforesaid shall further attend at all times when especially called upon so to do by proprietor or director of the slaves respectively; and if any medical man shall offend against this clause, he shall forfeit the sum of five pounds.

29th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the said practitioner, or his assistant, shall attend within eight hours after the call has come to his or their knowledge, under the penalty of ten pounds.

30th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every owner or director of slaves shall have, under the penalty of one hundred pounds, on the estate or place where the slaves usually reside, a commodious hospital or sick-house, furnished with proper conveniences for the sick, and a sufficient number of attendants; and shall, under the penalty of twenty shillings, either in his own person or by some white person under his direction, attend as often as may be requisite, at the hospital or sick-house, to see that the sick are furnished with the medicines that may be ordered for them by the said practitioner or his assistant in the manner so ordered, and also with such diet as the said practitioner or his assistant shall reasonably direct to be given.

31st. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That a book or register shall be provided and kept on every such estate by the owner or director, under the penalty of forty shillings, in which the practitioner or assistant shall also, under the penalty of forty shillings, write in English language, opposite to the name of each slave so being sick, his directions as to the time or times of administering the medicines he intends to prescribe, stating the form in which they are to be sent, whether in pills, powder or mixture, or in whatsoever other form, and also as to the diet to be provided for the slave; and at the end of the same directions he shall write his prescriptions, in the form usually followed by medical practitioners.

32d. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That whenever any owner or director of any slaves shall have occasion to send a special call to the practitioner who shall have the care of the slaves under his direction, he shall send the same in writing in the said book or register, stating the time of the day or night when he sends for the same, to the best of his knowledge, and the name, age, sex, and bodily appearance of the slave or slaves on whose account such call is made, together with the most material or urgent symptoms which such slave exhibits, and any other circumstances that he may think will assist the said practitioner in forming a judgment of the case, and may enable him to carry with him such medicine as he may from such statement judge to be proper, if he can go immediately to visit the said slave, or to send such medicines or directions as may be of use, until he can visit him or her, or cause him or her to be visited by his assistant or some other practitioner, if he has such other urgent medical business to attend as to prevent his visiting the said slave immediately; and that the said practitioner, his assistant, or some other free person who may be kept to make up and dispense medicines for him, shall insert in the same book or register, immediately after the statement hereinbefore directed to be made by the owner or director of the slave, the time as nearly as he can when the said call shall arrive at the dwelling or other house of the said practitioner as aforesaid, under the penalty of forty shillings.

33d. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every practitioner shall keep, under the penalty of five pounds, on every estate under his respective care, a small quantity of such medicines as may with safety be left in the hands of a person unskilled in the science of medicine, to be at hand in case of sudden emergency, with such directions as to their use as he may judge sufficient for the information of the owner or director of the slaves, which directions ought to be inserted in the first page of every new book or register so to be provided and kept as aforesaid, under the penalty of forty shillings.

34th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every proprietor of an estate shall employ some medical gentleman properly qualified, by the year, provided the proprietor of the said estate is not a medical man himself, and provided

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provided such medical assistance can be procured upon reasonable terms, under the penalty of ten shillings for every slave upon such estate.

35th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That upon the first day of January in every year, or at the first meeting of the council and assembly of the Island wherein the estate hereafter mentioned may be situated, the owner or director of every plantation within the Leeward Islands shall, under the penalty of one hundred pounds, return upon oath before the council and assembly of the said Island a just and true account of all the births and deaths of the slaves on such plantation, and also of the manner in which, to the best of his opinion and judgment, the said slaves have been attended and provided for when sick for the preceding year, or during such time as he hath had the possession or management of such plantation; and if any proprietor, manager, or director shall quit a plantation where he has resided at any time between the first of January in one year and the first of January in the ensuing year, such proprietor, manager, or director, shall within ten days after he has so quitted such plantation, make out such return as before directed, up to the time when he does so remove, under the penalty last aforesaid.

36th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the doctor or surgeon of every plantation, shall on the first day of January in every year, or at the first meeting of the council and assembly of the Island wherein such estates shall be situated, return as aforesaid upon oath an account of the slaves who have died upon such plantation in the preceding year, or during such time as he hath had the care of such slaves, with the real causes of such deaths, to the best of his knowledge, judgment and belief, and also of the manner in which, to the best of his knowledge and belief, the invalid and sick slaves have been treated and attended to, under the penalty of one hundred pounds for every such offence against this clause.

37th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every owner or director of any female slave within the Leeward Islands, who shall be five months gone with child, shall keep and detain such female slave upon the estate to which she belongs, at all times when the other slaves are at work, but not employ her otherwise than in taking care of the children on the estate or other light work, and such owner or director shall upon no account suffer such female slave to quit the said estate at the times the other slaves are at work and employed thereon, nor shall any such female slave be punished in any other manner than by confinement, and if any owner or director as aforesaid shall offend against this clause in any respect, he shall forfeit for the same the sum of five pounds.

38th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That whenever a negro woman slave shall be pregnant with her first child, every owner or director of such negro woman slave shall erect and build for her a roomy and commodious negro house of two rooms, provided she has no such house, and such proprietor shall not chuse to compel her to lay-in in the ward or hospital for lying-in women hereafter mentioned, under the penalty of twenty pounds.

39th. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That where the number of female slaves in any of the Leeward Islands in which a cargo of slaves shall be imported, shall not exceed the number of males, the sum of ten shillings shall be paid for every male so imported, and also that the sum of fifty pounds shall be paid for every aged and infirm negro slave imported into any of the Leeward Islands in any cargo, after the expiration of two years from the publication of this Act.

40th. And it is hereby further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That every penalty and forfeiture imposed by this Act, not otherwise recoverable, shall be recovered by warrant under the hands and seals of any two or more justices of the peace directed to the provost marshal or his lawful deputy, who is hereby authorized to levy the same on the goods and chattels of every person or persons offending against this Act, and who shall be convicted thereof before such justices, and shall bring the same to sale within ten days after such levy, and for the want of such goods and chattels such offender shall be committed to the common gaol of the Island where such offence shall be committed, for any time not exceeding six months nor less than five days, at the discretion of such justices, and all such penalties and forfeitures shall go and belong to the persons informing against such offender: Provided nevertheless, that every person so convicted may appeal to the next superior court of criminal jurisdiction, if he conceives himself aggrieved.

41st. And

41st. And whereas many persons have often been prevented from supplying their slaves with sufficient food and clothing by the encumbered state of their property, their plantations and slaves being sometimes charged with mortgages or other encumbrances to so great an amount, as upon a levy and sale thereof to leave no surplus or fund for the satisfaction of debts due for provisions or clothing furnished for the necessary subsistence of their slaves, and merchants have therefore been discouraged from selling provisions or clothing to persons in doubtful or embarrassed, to the very great distress and danger of the slaves, and also to the manifest prejudice of mortgagees, or other creditors whose securities may either wholly or in a very great measure depend upon the lives or good condition of such slaves; BE it therefore also enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, That all debts which from and after the publication of this Act, shall be contracted by the proprietor or possessor of any piece or parcel of land cultivated and carried on as a sugar, cotton or coffee plantation, or by any proprietor or possessor of slaves, not less than twenty in number, generally employed as a task-gang, or by the lawful attorney or agent of such proprietor or possessor, for any species of provisions or clothing hereinbefore mentioned and directed to be provided for slaves, shall be deemed and considered as specific or prior liens or incumbrances upon all and every slave and slaves belonging to such plantation or task-gang, as far as the estate or interest of the proprietor or possessor of such slaves doth or can extend to pay and satisfy the same; and that all and every such debt or debts shall be paid and satisfied in preference to any other debt or incumbrance whatsoever, although existing before the passing this Act, except debts now due or hereafter to become due to His Majesty, his heirs or successors; provided such provisions or clothing shall have been actually sold and delivered within the space or term of twelve calendar months next before the commencement of any action or suit for recovering or enforcing payment for the same, and that such action or suit be commenced, proceeded upon, tried and determined in the manner and form hereinafter mentioned.

42d. And in order to prevent persons in distressed and embarrassed circumstances from fraudulently disposing of, or otherwise misapplying any negro provisions or clothing which they have procured in consequence of this Act, to the prejudice of their former or other creditors; and that such frauds may the more easily be detected and punished; BE it also enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, That whenever any negro provisions or clothing shall be sold, and the person or persons selling the same is or are desirous that the slaves of the person or persons to whom or for whose use such provisions or clothing are sold and delivered, should be specifically bound for the payment of the monies due or owing for the same, a memorandum in writing of such sale and delivery, shall upon the same day be made and entered in a book to be kept for that particular purpose, and such memorandum or entry shall be signed by the person or persons to whom or for whose use the said provisions or clothing were sold and delivered, or by his her or their lawful attorney or attorneys, or known agent or white servant; and if the person or persons to whom or for whose use such provisions or clothing have been so sold and delivered, or his her or their attorney or known agent or servant shall sell, give away or exchange the said provisions or clothing, or any part or parcel thereof, then and in such case the person or persons so offending, shall for every such offence forfeit and pay the sum of five hundred pounds; and if such fine shall not be paid during the sitting or session of the court before whom the said offence shall be prosecuted, such offender or offenders shall suffer one year's imprisonment without bail or mainprize, in lieu of the said fine.

43d. And be it also enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, That whenever any complaint or information in writing of or concerning the selling, giving away or exchanging any negro provisions or clothing, contrary to the true intent and meaning of this Act, shall be made or exhibited to any justice of the peace, it shall and may be lawful to and for such justice, and he is hereby required to order and direct any person or persons, having in his her or their custody, possession or power, any book or books wherein any memorandum or acknowledgment in writing, of the sale and delivery of any negro provisions or clothing, shall be made or entered in pursuance of this Act, to produce before him such book or books, and also to examine upon oath such person or persons, or any other person or persons whom he in his discretion shall think proper touching the said book or books, or the entries made or contained therein, so far as the same shall appear to be necessary or material for the proof or support of the said complaint or information, and also to require or

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take from the person or persons having in his her or their custody, possession or power, such book or books, a recognizance in and for the sum of five hundred pounds current gold or silver money, conditioned for the appearance of such person or persons at the court wherein such complaint or information is intended to be further prosecuted, and for his her or their producing before the grand jury and petit jury of the said court, such book or books or writings as in the said recognizance shall be particularly mentioned and specified, and for his her or their duly attending to give evidence or testimony at or upon the trial of any indictment or information, which shall be preferred or prosecuted for the selling, giving away or exchanging any negro provisions or clothing contrary to the true intent and meaning of this Act, or to the like purport or effect; and if such person or persons shall refuse to produce such book or books, or to be examined touching the same as aforesaid, or to enter into a recognizance to the purport or effect aforesaid, he she or they shall, by warrant under the hand and seal of such justice, be committed to the common goal, there to remain without bail or mainprize, until he she or they shall submit to produce such book or books, and be examined touching the same, and to enter into such recognizance as aforesaid.

44th. And be it further enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, That if upon the trial of any indictment or information which may be prosecuted for the said offence, it shall appear to the court and jury before whom such indictment or information shall be tried, that within the space of three calendar months next before the commission of the fact charged in such indictment or information, any negro provisions or clothing have been sold and delivered in pursuance of this Act, for the use of the slaves belonging to the plantation or task-gang in the possession or under the care or direction of the defendant or defendants to such indictment or information, and that a memorandum or entry of such sale and delivery in manner and form hereinbefore mentioned hath been duly made, and the said defendant or defendants shall not be able to prove that the negro provisions and clothing, for the sale, gift or exchange whereof the said indictment or information is prosecuted, were not purchased and delivered in pursuance of this Act, but upon the credit of the person or persons to whom and for whose use the same were sold and delivered, such omission or want of proof by or on the part of such defendant or defendants, shall be deemed and taken as sufficient evidence or proof to the grand jury and petit jury, that such negro provisions and clothing have been sold, given away or exchanged, contrary to the intention of this Act.

45th. And be it also enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, That when any action or suit shall be commenced and prosecuted for the payment or recovery of any monies due or owing for negro provisions or clothing, and it is intended that such action or suit shall operate or take effect as a prior charge or lien upon the slaves of the defendant or defendants to such action or suit, or of his her or their testator, testatrix or intestate, under or by virtue of this Act, the declaration or counts in such action or suit shall not mention or contain any article, consideration or cause of action whatsoever, other than the sale and delivery of such provisions and clothing; nor shall the jury upon the trial of such action or suit find or assess any other or greater damages, by way of interest or otherwise, than the amount or value of the provisions or clothing actually sold and delivered to such defendant or defendants, or his her or their testator, testatrix, or intestate within the said term of twelve calendar months next before the commencement of such action or suit; nor shall any damages whatsoever be found or assessed in such action or suit, unless a particular account of the several quantities of the said provisions or clothing, and the price or prices at or for which the same were actually sold and delivered, be produced and proved in open court, and it be also proved that a memorandum or acknowledgment in writing of the sale and delivery of such provisions or clothing was duly made and entered in the manner and form hereinbefore mentioned and required; nor shall any other admission, acknowledgment or confession of the defendants or defendant in such action or suit, or of any other person or persons on his her or their part or behalf, be received or admitted as proof of the sale or delivery of such provisions or clothing or any part thereof, any law usage or custom to the contrary notwithstanding.

46th. And be it also enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, That immediately after the verdict of the jury shall be given in such action or suit, the secretary or clerk of the court shall add to the entry of such verdict the following words, viz.

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“according to the form and effect of the Act of the general council and general assembly of the Leeward Charribbee Islands,” and the same words shall also be mentioned in the entry of any judgment which shall be obtained upon such verdict, and in any writ of execution issued upon such judgment, and also in the entry or notice of such execution in the books of the provost marshal, deputy provost marshal or other person to whom the the said writ of execution shall be delivered.

47th. And be it also enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, That all slaves belonging to the person or persons to whom or for whose use such provisions or clothing were sold and delivered shall be bound and be liable for the payment or satisfaction of any writ of execution which shall be issued upon any judgment obtained in such action or suit, in the manner and form hereinbefore mentioned; provided such judgment shall be obtained within the space or term of nine calendar months next after the commencement of such action or suit; and that when any writ or writs of execution have been already issued against the defendant or defendants in such action or suit, or his or their ancestor, testator or intestate, the plaintiff or plaintiffs in such action or suit, or some other person or persons on his her or their behalf, shall make oath before any judge or justice, of the writ wherein such action or suit shall be commenced of the monies which according to the best of his her or their knowledge and belief, are really and bonâ fide due or owing unto such plaintiff or plaintiffs, and deliver a true copy of such affidavit or deposition, after the same hath been filed in the proper office, unto the provost marshal or other officer whose duty it may be to levy the said writ or writs of execution, together with a notice in writing signed by such plaintiff or plaintiffs or his her or their counsel or attorney, requiring the said provost marshal, deputy provost marshal or other officer, if any money should be received by him under or by virtue of the said writ or writs of execution, to keep and retain so much of the said monies as will be sufficient to satisfy any judgment which may thereafter be obtained in such action or suit.

48th. And be it also enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, That all judgments recovered against any executors or administrators for monies due or owing for negro provisions and clothing sold and delivered to their testator or intestate in pursuance of this Act, shall be paid and satisfied in preference to any other judgment, incumbrance or debt whatsoever, other than debts due to His Majesty, his heirs or successors; provided that an action or suit for the recovery of the said monies so due and owing for negro provisions and clothing be commenced within one calendar month next after the will of the person to whom or for whose use the said provisions or clothing were sold and delivered hath been proved and recorded, or letters of administration of the goods and chattels, rights and credit of the person to whom or for whose use such provisions or clothing were sold and delivered hath been obtained, and that such suit be prosecuted to judgment with effect, and without any improper or unnecessary delay whatsoever.

49th. And be it also enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, That if any doubt or difficulty shall arise upon the construction of any section, clause or sentence contained in this Act, such section, clause or sentence shall always be favourably construed in such manner and form as will best tend to promote and secure the protection and comfort of slaves, according to the true intent and meaning of this Act.

50th. And be it also enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, That if any action, suit, or prosecution shall be commenced or prosecuted against any justice or justices, or any other person or persons, for any matter or thing done or performed under or by virtue of this Act, it shall and may be lawful to and for the defendant or defendants in such action, suit, or prosecution, to plead the general issue, and to give the Act and the special matter in evidence; and if the plaintiff or plaintiffs, prosecutor or prosecutors in such action, suit or prosecution, shall be nonsuited, or discontinue such action, suit or prosecution, or judgment shall be given against such plaintiff or plaintiffs, or prosecutor or prosecutors, upon verdict, demurrer or otherwise, such plaintiff or plaintiffs, or prosecutor or prosecutors, shall pay to such defendant or defendants treble costs of suit, for which such defendant or defendants shall have the like remedy as any other defendant or defendants have or may have in any other actions or suits.

51st. And be it also enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, That nothing hereinbefore contained shall extend or be construed to extend to prevent or hinder

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hinder the Legislature of any Island or Islands within the government of the Leeward Charribbee Islands from making and passing any law or laws which may be thought necessary or proper for the better subsistence or protection of the slaves in such Islands, or for explaining or amending any of the clauses or sentences in this Act hereinbefore mentioned and contained; so as such law or laws do not contain any clause, matter or thing which shall in any degree lessen or restrain any protection, privilege, or indulgence provided or granted to slaves by this Act according to the true intent and meaning thereof.

52nd. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all penalties hereby imposed and not hereinbefore provided for, shall be recoverable by indictment or information, in any of His Majesty's courts of record, within any of the said Islands where such penalties may be incurred; and that such penalties, when so recovered, shall be paid into the public treasury of the said Island, to be appropriated for the public uses thereof.

Provided always, and it is hereby expressly declared, That this Act shall not be in force or have any effect or operation whatsoever, until approved and confirmed by His Majesty, and such approbation and confirmation shall have been duly signified and published.

Dated in Saint Christopher, this twenty-first day of April, in the thirty-eighth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord, George the Third, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, and so forth; and in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-eight.

Read and passed the General Assembly, this sixteenth day of April one thousand seven hundred and ninety-eight.

*O. Y. Ash*, Speaker.

*Jas. Ward*, Clerk of General Assembly.

Read and passed the General Council, this twentieth day of April one thousand seven hundred and ninety-eight.

*E. Moore*, Clerk of General Council.