Anno quarto & quinto
ANNÆ REGINÆ.

An Act for the better Collecting Charity-Money on Briefs by Letters-Patents, and Preventing Abuſes in relation to ſuch Charities.

WHereas many Inconveniencies do ariſe, and Frauds are committed in the Common Method of Collecting Charity-Money upon Briefs by Letters-Patents, to the great Trouble and Prejudice of the Objects of ſuch Charity, and to the great Diſcouragement of well-diſpoſed Perſons: For Remedy whereof, Be it Enacted by the Queens moſt Excellent Majeſty, by and with the Advice and Conſent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in this preſent Parliament Aſſembled, and by the Authority of the ſame, That from and after the Five and twentieth Day of March, which ſhall be in the Year of Our Lord, One thouſand ſeven hundred and ſix, upon the iſſuing forth of Letters-Patents for Collecting of Charity-Money, commonly called Briefs, Copies thereof, to the Number required by the Petitioners for ſuch Briefs or their Agents, and no more, ſhall be Printed by the Printer of Her Majeſty, Her Heirs or Succeſſors only, at the uſual Rates for Printing, and by ſuch Printer the whole Number of ſuch Copies ſhall be delivered to ſuch Perſon or Perſons only, as ſhall, by and with the Conſent of the Petitioners for ſuch Brief, or the major part of them, undertake the laying or diſpoſing ſuch Printed Copies, in order to the Collection of the Monies to be received thereon, or to ſome or one of them, who, or one or more of them, ſhall give a Receipt for the ſame, expreſſing the Number thereof in ſuch Receipt, which Receipt or an Atteſted Copy thereof, ſuch Printer ſhall forthwith deliver to the Regiſter of the Court of Chancery to be Filed in the Regiſters Office, and thereupon the Perſon or Perſons ſo undertaking ſuch Collection, or ſome or one of them, ſhall cauſe all the ſaid Printed Copies to be Indorſed or Marked in ſome convenient part of ſuch Printed Copy, with the Name of one or more of the Truſtees or Commiſſioners named in ſuch Letters-Patents, Written with his or their own Hand, and the time of Signing the ſame, and alſo Cauſe the ſaid Printed Copies to be Stamped in the manner hereafter more particularly mentioned: And the ſaid whole Number being ſo Signed, ſhall be, with all Convenient ſpeed by the ſaid Undertaker or Undertakers, ſent and delivered to the reſpective Church-Wardens, and Chapel-Wardens of the reſpective Churches and Chapels, and to the reſpective Teachers and Preachers of every ſeparate Congregation, and to any Perſon who hath Taught or Preached in any Meeting of the People called Quakers, in the Counties and Places to be Comprized in ſuch Letters-Patents, to be Read and Publiſhed, and the Charity thereon to be Collected in the ſeveral Churches, Chapels or Places of Meeting to which they belong, who ſhall ſo receive the ſame; And that the ſaid Church-

Wardens, Chapel-Wardens, Preachers, Teachers, and Quakers having Taught, as aforesaid, immediately after such Receipt, shall Indorse the time of his or their receiving the same, and Set his or their Names thereto; and the said Church-Wardens and Chapel-Wardens shall forthwith deliver over the said Printed Briefs by them received, to the several Ministers and Curates of the said Churches or Chapels, who shall receive the same; And the said respective Ministers and Curates shall, on Receipt thereof, Indorse the time they respectively received the same, and Set their respective Names thereto; And the said respective Ministers and Curates, Teachers, Preachers and Persons called Quakers, qualified as aforesaid, shall on some Sunday, within Two Months after Receipt of such Copies, immediately before the Sermon, Preaching or Teaching, shall begin, openly Read or cause to be Read such Printed Briefs in their respective Churches, Chapels, and Places of Meeting, to the Congregation there Assembled, and the respective Church-Wardens, Chapel-Wardens, and the Teachers of every such separate Congregation, and such Persons called Quakers, to whom the Briefs shall have been so delivered, as aforesaid, shall Collect the Sums of Money that shall be freely thereon given, either in the said respective Assemblies, or by going from House to House of the Members of their respective Congregations, as the Briefs shall require in that behalf; And on every such Collection made, the Sum that shall be Collected, with the Place where, and Time when the same was Collected, shall be Indorsed, fairly Written in Words at length on such respective Printed Briefs, and Signed by the Minister or Curate, and the Church-Wardens in Churches and Chapels, and by the Teacher and Two Elders, or Two other substantial Persons of every separate Congregation; and that thereupon the said respective Church-Wardens and Chapel-Wardens, and the respective Teachers or Preachers, or other Persons required to make the Collection, as aforesaid, on request of such Person or Persons as shall Undertake to Place and Disperse the Briefs, as aforesaid, or of any Person by them or any of them lawfully Authorized, shall deliver to such Person or Persons, making such request, the respective Printed Briefs so Indorsed, as aforesaid, and the Monies thereon Collected, taking a Receipt for the same, from the Person so receiving such Monies, in some Book to be kept for that Purpose, on pain that every the said Ministers, Curates, Teachers, Preachers, Church-Wardens, Chapel-Wardens and Quakers qualified and required, as aforesaid, who shall refuse or neglect, to do any of the Matters or Things before respectively required of them, shall forfeit the Sum of Twenty Pounds, to be recovered and applied as herein after is directed; And the said Person or Persons who shall so undertake to Place, and Disperse the said Briefs, as aforesaid, shall within Six Months next after the respective Placing or Delivering such Copies in the respective Parishes, as aforesaid, by themselves, or some or one of them, or by some Person or Persons by them or the major Part of them to be Appointed, as aforesaid, Demand from the respective Church-Wardens and Chapel-Wardens of Churches and Chapels, and from the Preacher and Teacher of Separate Congregations, or from such Teaching Quaker to whom the said Printed Briefs shall have been respectively Delivered, as aforesaid, the Printed Briefs so left with him or them respectively, and the Monies respectively by them Received thereon; and on Delivery and Payment made, shall give to them respectively, as aforesaid, a Receipt for the same, on pain

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to Forfeit the Sum of Twenty Pounds, to be Recovered and Diſpoſed of, as herein after is directed.

And to the intent a Speedy, Regular, and Satisfactory Account may be Rendred, of the Sums of Money Collected by Virtue of ſuch Briefs, Be it Enacted by the Authority aforeſaid, That the Perſon or Perſons ſo Undertaking to Place or Diſperſe the ſaid Printed Briefs, or the greater part of them, ſhall make, or cauſe to be made, a fair Entry in a Book for that Purpoſe by them to be kept, (to which all Perſons concerned may at all times reſort) of the Number of the Printed Briefs they ſo Received, and alſo when Signed and Sent away, and to what Pariſhes and Places, and the time of their Receiving the ſame back, and the Monies thereon Collected; and the ſaid Printed Copies ſo Received back, ſhall be Depoſited and Left with the Regiſter of the Court of Chancery, with whom the Receipt given to the Printer for the ſame, as aforeſaid, was Regiſtred, to the End it may appear that the whole Number received of the ſaid Printer is duly returned, and that the ſame may be from Time to Time made Uſe of, as well by the Sufferers and their Agents, as by the ſaid Undertakers and their Agents or Solicitors, in Paſſing the Accounts in the Method herein after Preſcribed; And if the whole Number of Printed Copies of ſuch Briefs ſo Received of the Printer, ſhall not be duly returned as hereby required, the Undertaker or Undertakers ſhall, for every Printed Copy, which ſhall be found wanting and not returned, as aforeſaid, by Default of them or their Agents, Forfeit the Sum of Fifty Pounds, to be Recovered and Applied as herein after mentioned; unleſs he or they ſhall make a ſufficient Proof, to the Satisfaction of the Court of Chancery, of the ſaid Briefs ſo wanting, being loſt or deſtroyed by inevitable Accident, and of what Money was really and truly Collected thereon, and fully Account for, and Pay the ſame; And that in each Pariſh or Chapelry and Separate Congregation, a Regiſter ſhall be kept by the Miniſter or Teacher there, or by ſome Teaching Quaker, of all Monies Collected by Virtue of ſuch Briefs, therein alſo Inſerting the Occaſion of the Brief, and the time when the ſame was Collected, to which all Perſons at all times may Reſort without Fee.

And for the better Endorſing what Money is Collected on the Back of the Printed Briefs, and for the more Regular Examination thereof, and for the Preventing the Counterfeiting Printed Copies of the Briefs, by which great Frauds have been put in Practice; Be it Enacted by the Authority aforeſaid, That on the Back of every Printed Copy of ſuch Brief, there ſhall be Printed the Form of Indorſement, with the neceſſary Blanks for Time, Place and Sum of Money, to be filled up by the reſpective Perſons aforeſaid; And each Printed Copy of ſuch Brief, ſhall before it be carried to the reſpective Pariſhes wherein the Collection is to be made, be Stamped or Marked with a proper Stamp to be made for that Purpoſe, and kept by the Regiſter of the Court of Chancery, who is to ſee that no greater Number of Printed Copies be Stampt or Marked therewith, than is in the Receipts given to the Printer, and left with the Regiſter, as aforeſaid, Specified and Declared; And if any Perſon or Perſons ſhall Forge or Counterfeit ſuch Stamp, ſuch Perſon being thereof Lawfully Convicted, ſhall be Publickly ſet on the Pillory for the ſpace of One whole Hour.

And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That the said Undertaker or Undertakers, shall within Two Months after the Monies respectively Received, and after due Notice thereof to the Sufferers (who are to be admitted to Controvert the same) Account before One of the Masters of the Court of Chancery, to be for that purpose Appointed by the Lord Chancellor, Lord Keeper, or Commissioners for the Custody of the Great-Seal of England for the time being, for all the Monies by them Received on Account of such Letters-Patents and Briefs, and shall produce before him an exact Account of the respective Printed Briefs by them Delivered out, and Received back, and left with the Register, as aforesaid, and thereupon the said Master shall Proceed to make his Report of what shall be found Due on such Account; And the said Report being Confirmed by the said Court of Chancery as usual, shall be a Charge on the said Undertaker or Undertakers, and shall be carried into Execution against him or them, as if Decreed in a Suit there depending; In taking which Account such Master shall make all just Allowances to such Undertakers, for their Trouble and Pains of Management, over and besides the Charges to be Expended for the said Letters-Patents and Copies thereof; And such Master shall also have Power by the Common Methods of the Court of Chancery, to Examine into all Frauds and ill Practices that shall be Committed by the said Undertakers or their Agents, or any others concerned for or under them in such Collection, and Report the same to the Court, which Report being Confirmed by the said Court, it shall be in the Power of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Keeper, or Commissioners aforesaid, for the time being, to impose such Fine and Costs on every such Offender, as the Nature of the Case shall require; Which said Fine and all other Forfeitures incurred by the said Undertakers or their Agents, shall be only for the Benefit of the Sufferers, for whose Benefit such Briefs shall be Granted, and shall and may be Recovered by the Order of the said Court of Chancery, Founded on such Report so confirmed, as aforesaid, and Carried into Execution, as the Decrees of that Court usually are.

Provided always, That where any Penalties are by this Act inflicted on any Person or Persons, other than the Undertakers, their Agents, Deputies, Substitutes or Servants, such Penalties shall be Recovered by Action of Debt, Bill, Plaint, or Information.

And whereas there hath been an evil Practice in Farming and Purchasing for a Sum of Money, the Charity-Money that should or might be Collected on such Briefs, to the very great Hindrance and Discouragement of Alms-giving on such Occasion: Be it therefore Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, and it is hereby Declared, That all Farming and Purchasing of such Charity-Money is unlawful, and that from and after the aforesaid Five and twentieth Day of March, if any Person or Persons shall Purchase or Agree for any Charity-Money to be Collected on any Briefs or Letters-Patents, or by any Instrument of Covenant or Agreement, by way of Farming, shall or may pretend to Appropriate such Charity-Money, or any part thereof, to his or their Use, contrary to the intent and meaning of such Letters-Patents, by which such Charity-Money shall be Collected, and contrary to the intent and meaning of this Act, such Purchase and Instrument of Covenant and Agreement, shall be void, and each Person agreeing to Purchase the Benefit of such Brief, shall Forfeit the Sum of Five hundred Pounds, to be applied for the Benefit of the Sufferers in such Letters-Patents mentioned, and to be Recovered, as before last mentioned.

FINIS.