Anno tricesimo primo

Georgii II. Regis.

An Act for Relief of the Coalheavers working upon the River *Thames*; and for enabling them to make a Provision for such of themselves as shall be Sick, Lame, or past their Labour; and for their Widows and Orphans.

WHEREAS great Inconveniencies have arisen to the Masters and Owners of Ships and Vessels bringing Coals into the River Thames, as also to the Labourers employed in unloading the same, commonly called Coalheavers, for want of an established Method of hiring, employing, and paying, such Labourers: And whereas it has been found necessary, for the more easy Dispatch in the unloading of Coal Ships and Vessels, that Labourers be associated together for that Purpose: And whereas, in the present Method, great Abuses have been practised with regard to such Labourers, and by reason such Labourers are at present subject to no legal Jurisdiction properly impowered to compel them to do their Duty in all Respects, Obstructions and Delays often happen in the unloading of Coal Ships and Vessels, to the great Detriment of the Publick: And whereas a due Regulation in the above-mentioned Particulars, would not only be of great Utility to all Persons concerned in the Coal Trade, but would probably be a Means of lessening the Price of Coals to the Consumers thereof; Wherefore, for the better Preamble.

ter promoting and encouraging the Coal Trade, and preventing the Inconveniencies aforesaid for the future; May it please Your Majesty, that it may be enacted; and be it enacted by the King's 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 Twenty ninth Day of September, in the Year of our Lord One thousand seven hundred and fifty eight, all Labourers who shall enter their Names and Places of Abode, as herein after is mentioned, to be employed in and about the unloading of Coal Ships and Vessels in the River Thames, to be delivered in the Port of London, shall be under the absolute Care and Management of the Alderman of Billingsgate Ward in the City of London for the time being, who, by virtue of such his Office, is Governor of the Fellowship of Billingsgate Porters, to whom, in former Times, the unloading of all Coal Ships in the River Thames did properly of Right belong; and the said Alderman, and his Successors, are hereby authorized and impowered, from time to time, to make such Rules and Orders for the better Government of the said Labourers, as to him and them shall seem necessary, just, and reasonable, and most conducive to the Benefit of the Coal Trade.

Coal heavers put under the Care and Management of the Alderman of *Billingsgate* Ward, for the time being.

His Power to make Rules and Orders for their better Government.

And, for establishing a proper Regulation as soon as may be, it is hereby further enacted, That all such Person and Persons who shall desire to be under the Management of the said Alderman for the time being, as a Labourer or Labourers, in unloading Ships or Vessels bringing Coals into the River Thames, to be delivered in the Port of London, shall appear at such Time, and in such Place, in the Parish of Saint Paul Shadwell, in the County of Middlesex, as shall, by the said Alderman, be appointed for that Purpose, by Advertisement in The London Gazette, or such Publick Daily News Paper, as the said Alderman shall think fit, and shall then and there enter their Names and Places of Abode, in distinct Companies or Gangs, consisting of such Numbers as the said Alderman shall think fit, with such Person or Persons as shall, by the said Alderman, be authorized and appointed for that Purpose, who is and are hereby required to register the Names of all such Persons in a Book or Books to be provided and kept for that Purpose; and every such Company or Gang shall, at the same Time, choose One Person out of their Number, who shall be registered, as their Foreman, and who shall daily attend such Person or Persons, and in such Place or Places, as the said Alderman,

Such as are desirous to be under his Management, are to appear at a Time appointed, and enter their Names in distinct Gangs.

Register thereof to be kept by an Agent to be appointed by the Alderman; and every Gang is to choose a Foreman, who is to attend daily such Agent, when his Gang shall not be employed,

man, or his Deputy, for the time being, shall direct and appoint, from Six of the Clock to Twelve in every Forenoon, Sundays excepted, at all Times when the Company or Gang of which he is Foreman shall not be employed on Board of some Ship or Vessel, there to be ready to receive Orders as Occasion shall offer; and all Masters and Owners, and other Persons intrusted with the Care and Management of any Coal Ship or Vessel, and having Occasion for Labourers to unload the same, shall be at Liberty to apply to such Person or Persons so appointed as aforesaid, who is and are hereby authorized and required forthwith to direct and appoint a sufficient Company or Number of Labourers for that Purpose; and if any such Labourer shall refuse or neglect to go on Board such Ship or Vessel to which he shall be so appointed, and work therein, unless rendered incapable by Sickness, Lameness, or any other unavoidable Accident, the Name of such Labourer shall be forthwith struck out of the Registry herein above appointed, and such Labourer disabled from receiving all or any the Benefits to arise thereby; and if any such Labourer shall depart from such Ship or Vessel before she is cleared, every such Labourer shall, for every such Offence, forfeit a Sum not exceeding Twenty Shillings, to be deducted out of the Money arising from his Share in the said Work, or the next Work wherein he shall be employed; and every Master or Owner, or other Person intrusted as aforesaid, shall, within Three Days after the Delivery of every Ship or Vessel, pay, or cause to be paid, to such Person or Persons so appointed by the said Alderman or his Deputy as aforesaid, the Money due for unloading thereof, whose Receipt shall be a sufficient Discharge for the same, and who shall divide and pay such Money in due Proportions, to and amongst the several Labourers who have earned the same, without any Deduction or Abatement whatsoever, save and except as herein after is excepted.

to receive Orders.

Masters, on Application to the Agent, are to have Gangs forthwith sent to unload their Vessels.

Labourer refusing to go and work in any Vessel he shall be sent on Board, if not disabled, is to be struck out of the Registry, &c.

and quitting the Vessel before she is cleared, forfeits 20 s. to be stopt out of his Wages.

Money due for unloading to be paid over to the Agent within 3 Days after Delivery of the Ship.

Agent to distribute Money amongst the Labourers.

And, for the better and more orderly governing the said Labourers to be registered by virtue of this Act, and adjusting any Disputes or Controversies that may arise amongst them, and for the Punishment of small Trespasses and Offences; be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That the said Alderman, or his Deputy, may determine the same.

The Alderman, or his Deputy, to determine all Controversies, and punish small Trespasses.

And whereas many of the Labourers now exercising the Business of unloading Coal Ships and Vessels, have voluntarily agreed to set apart Two Shillings in the Pound out of all their future Earnings, to erect and keep a perpetual Fund sufficient to answer the extraordinary Expences

that will necessarily attend the Regulation hereby established, and also for enabling them to provide a competent Subsistence for Labourers that shall fall Sick or Lame, and for such as shall be grown old and past their Labour, or be disabled from working by any other unavoidable Accident; and also for the Support of the Widows and Orphans of deceased Labourers, and a Provision for the Burial of their Dead; which Expences now generally fall heavy upon the Parishes to which they respectively belong; be it therefore enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That the Person or Persons to be appointed for stationing the Labourers registered as aforesaid, and paying them their Wages as aforesaid, or such other Person or Persons as the said Alderman shall think proper to appoint for that Purpose, shall, at all Times hereafter, retain at the Rate of Two Shillings in the Pound out of the Earnings of all and every such Labourer and Labourers who shall be registered as aforesaid, to constitute the Fund above-mentioned, out of which, after Payment of the necessary Expences incurred in and about the obtaining and passing this Act of Parliament, all Salaries to the several Persons to be employed by the said Alderman as aforesaid, and all other necessary Expences attending the Regulation hereby established, shall be paid and discharged, and the Remainder thereof shall, from time to time, be applied to the charitable Uses aforesaid in the Proportions herein after mentioned, if such Fund shall prove sufficient to answer the same; that is to say, To every Labourer who shall be sick or lame, or rendered incapable of working by any other unavoidable Accident, the Sum of Seven Shillings per Week during the Time he shall remain under such Incapacity; to every Labourer who shall be rendered totally incapable of working through old Age, the Sum of Six Pence per Day, during the Remainder of his natural Life; for the Burial of every Labourer not leaving sufficient Effects to defray the Expences of his Funeral, over and above the Goods or Furniture of his House or Lodging, the Sum of Forty Shillings; to the Widow of every Labourer the Sum of Five Pounds; and towards making some Provision for every Child of a deceased Labourer, being under the Age of Ten Years at the Time of his Death, the Sum of Forty Shillings; and in case the said Fund shall at any Time hereafter prove insufficient to answer the full Sums herein above appointed for each of the charitable Donations aforesaid, then, and in such Case, an Abatement shall be made in Proportion out of each of the said several Sums above specified.

2s. in the Pound to be stopt out of the Labourers Earnings, to constitute a Fund, for defraying the Charges of obtaining this Act.

paying Salaries, and other necessary Expences

the Remainder to be employed in making a Provision, at a certain Rate, for such of them as shall be sick, lame, or past their Labour, for Burial of their Dead, and for their Widows and Orphans.

If the Fund shall be insufficient, Abatement is to be made in each Article proportionably.

Provided

Provided always, that the several Payments last above-mentioned shall not take Place and be made (the Burial of the Dead only excepted) till the Expiration of One whole Year. Charitable Donations, (the Burial of the Dead excepted) not to take Place for 1 Year.

And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That the Person or Persons who shall be intrusted as aforesaid with the Receipt of the said Monies, and making the Payments thereout, shall keep a true and just Account, in Writing, of the Receipt and Expenditure of such Monies; which Accounts all Persons shall have Liberty to inspect at seasonable Times, paying for each Inspection the Sum of Six Pence; and all such Persons so intrusted shall give such Security for the due Execution of their Offices, as the said Alderman shall direct, and shall deliver true Copies of such Accounts, under their Hands, to the said Alderman Once in every Year, on the Twenty ninth Day of September, or within Ten Days thereafter, and at such other Times as he shall require. Account to be kept of the Receipts and Disbursements; to be inspected upon Payment of 6d. Security to be given for the due Execution of such Office. Copies of the Accounts to be delivered to the Alderman yearly.

And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That if after the said Twenty ninth Day of September, any Person or Persons whatsoever shall, under Pretence of Commission, or of Money due for any Liquor, Goods, or Wares, delivered or to be delivered to any Labourer or Labourers employed as a Coleheaver or Coleheavers, or under any other Colour or Pretence whatsoever, deduct or retain (except the Deduction of Two Shillings in the Pound, and the Penalties herein before mentioned) any Part of the Wages or Earnings of any such Labourer or Labourers, every Person so offending shall, for every such Offence, forfeit and pay the Sum of Fifty Pounds, to be recovered, with Treble Costs of Suit, by Action at Law in any of His Majesty's Courts of Record at Westminster, wherein no Essoin, Protection, Wager of Law, or more than One Imparlance shall be allowed; One Moiety of which said Sum of Fifty Pounds, so to be recovered as aforesaid, shall be paid to the said Alderman or his Deputy, and be applied to the Use of the Fund above mentioned, and the other Moiety to the Use of the Person or Persons who shall prosecute or sue for the same; and all other Penalties and Forfeitures to be incurred for Offences punishable by virtue of this Act, shall be applied to the said Fund. 50l. Penalty on deducting or stopping Money out of Labourers Wages, other than the 2s. in the Pound before-mentioned, and Penalties. Application of the said Penalty; and of Penalties in general.

And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That if any Action or Suit shall be brought or commenced against any Person or Persons for any Matter or Thing done or to be done in pursuance of this Act, then, and in such Case, such Action or Suit shall be brought or commenced within Six Calendar Months next after the Fact committed, Limitation of Actions.

A

ted, and not afterwards, and shall be brought, laid, and tried, in the City of London, and not elsewhere; and the Defendant or Defendants in such Action or Suit shall and
General Issue. may plead the General Issue, and give this Act and the Special Matter in Evidence, at any Trial to be had thereupon; and if the Plaintiff or Plaintiffs shall become Nonsuited, or discontinue his, her, or their Action or Actions, Suit or Suits; or if, upon Verdict or Demurrer, Judgement shall be given against the Plaintiff or Plaintiffs, the Defendant or Defendants shall and may recover
Treble Costs. Treble Costs, and have such Remedy for the same, as any Defendant or Defendants hath or have in any other Cases by Law.

Publick Act. And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That this Act shall be deemed, adjudged, and taken to be a Publick Act; and be judicially taken Notice of as such, by all Judges, Justices, and other Persons whatsoever, without specially pleading the same.

FINIS.