ANNO TRICESIMO SEPTIMO

Georgii III. Regis.

CAP. CXVIII.

An Act for regulating the Height between Decks of Veſſels entered outwards for the Purpoſe of carrying Slaves from the Coaſt of *Africa*. [19th *July* 1797.]

WHEREAS by an Act of the Thirty-fifth Year of His preſent Majeſty, intituled, *An Act for regulating the Shipping, and carrying Slaves in* Britiſh *Veſſels from the Coaſt of* Africa, it was enacted, that the whole Space between Decks in ſuch Veſſels ſhould be allotted for the Reception of Slaves, in order to their greater Comfort, and better Accommodation: And whereas it has been found, that ſufficient Proviſion was not made by the ſaid Act, for the Comfort and Accommodation of the Slaves in their Apartments between the Decks of Ships ſo employed; for Remedy whereof, 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 paſſing of this Act, no *Britiſh* Ship or Veſſel ſhall clear outwards from any Port in His Majeſty's Dominions for the Purpoſe of ſhipping or carrying Slaves from the Coaſt of *Africa*, in which the Space between the Decks allotted for

Preamble. 35 *Geo.* III. Cap. 90.

No Veſſel to clear outwards for carrying Slaves from *Africa* unleſs the Space al-

Slotted for the Slaves be of a certain Height.

for the Reception of Slaves, under the Proviſions of any former Act, ſhall not be, in every Part throughout the whole Length and Breadth thereof, of the full and complete perpendicular Height of Four Feet One Inch at leaſt, meaſuring from the upper Surface of the Lower Deck to the under Surface of the Upper Deck.

One decked Veſſel to have a falſe Deck in the Hold.

II. And whereas Ships and Veſſels having only One Deck are ſometimes uſed for ſhipping and carrying Slaves from the Coaſt of *Africa*, be it further enacted, That in all ſuch Veſſels a Floor or Falſe Deck ſhall be fixed in the Hold, for the Reception of the Slaves, which ſhall be taken and conſidered as her Lower Deck, for the Purpoſes of this Act.

No Veſſel to be cleared out till admeaſured, and certified by the Officer of the Cuſtoms, for which he ſhall receive 10*s.*, and which Certificate muſt be produced to the Officer at the Port of Arrival in the *Weſt Indies*, &c.

III. And be it further enacted, That no Ship or Veſſel ſhall be permitted to clear out from any Port in *Great Britain*, for the Purpoſe of ſhipping and carrying Slaves from the Coaſt of *Africa*, until the proper Officer of the Cuſtoms at ſuch Port ſhall have examined and admeaſured ſuch Ship or Veſſel, and ſhall have found her to agree in Admeaſurement, and to be in every other Particular conformable, to the Regulations and Reſtrictions required and directed by this Act, and ſhall have certified the ſame in Writing to the Collector of His Majeſty's Cuſtoms at ſuch Port, for doing which he ſhall be entitled to demand and receive the Sum of Ten Shillings from the Maſter or Owner of the ſaid Veſſel, and the ſaid Certificate ſhall be annexed to the Clearance of the ſaid Veſſel, and ſhall be produced therewith to the Collector or Comptroller, or other proper Officer of the Cuſtoms, at every Port in the *Weſt Indies* or *America*, belonging to His Majeſty, at which the ſaid Veſſel ſhall arrive, before any Slave or Slaves ſhall be permitted to be landed out of the ſaid Veſſel at any ſuch Port.

Falſe Deck not to be removed till the Slaves are landed, on Penalty of 200 *l.*

IV. And be it further enacted, That after the Surveying Officer ſhall have examined and meaſured any Ship or Veſſel as herein-before directed, it ſhall not be lawful for the Maſter or Owner thereof to remove, or cauſe or ſuffer to be removed, any Floor or Falſe Deck which ſhall have been fixed in the Hold for the Reception of Slaves, as herein-before directed, except for the Purpoſe of loading or unloading his ſaid Veſſel on the outward bound Voyage, or other unavoidable Neceſſity, or to do, or cauſe or ſuffer to be done, any other Matter or Thing whereby the Height of the Places or Apartments allotted for the Reception of Slaves ſhall be diminiſhed, until all the Slaves which ſhall have been taken on board ſuch Ship or Veſſel ſhall have been diſcharged or landed therefrom, under the Penalty of Two hundred Pounds for every ſuch Offence.

Where Penalty may be ſued for, which may be within Three Years after the Offence.

V. And be it further enacted, That the Penalty inflicted by this Act may be proſecuted, ſued for, and recovered, in any Court of Record in *Great Britain*; and in every ſuch Action or Suit the Party againſt whom Judgement ſhall be given, (whether Plaintiff or Defendant), ſhall pay Double Coſts of Suit; and every ſuch Action ſhall and may be brought at any Time within Three Years after the Offence committed, and not afterwards, and every ſuch Action ſhall be carried on without wilful Delay.

FINIS.