

Act inrolled at  
Westminster  
the 13th of June 1714

Drumfries-Shire.

# ACT for Maintenance of the Poor within the Parishes to which they belong, and punishing idle and vagrant Beggars.

**A**T *Drumfries*, the Twenty ninth Day of *October*, One thousand seven hundred and thirty seven Years, The Justices of the Peace met at their Quarter-Sessions held this Day by Adjournment, having taken into their Consideration the Complaints made to them from the several Corners within their Jurisdiction; That notwithstanding the many good Laws made for the Maintenance of the Poor, and the suppressing of Beggars, Vagabonds and idle Persons; Yet, that this Shire is grievously oppressed by Multitudes of strange and idle Beggars and other Vagabonds, and that the Poor who live within the several Parishes are not duly provided for: AS ALSO, having taken into their serious Consideration, the Report made by a Committee, appointed to consider the Case of the Poor within the Shire, and to report their Opinion concerning proper Regulations to be proposed in Parliament, for the Sanction of the Legislature, where the Laws in Being appear to be defective with regard to Vagrants and Maintenance of the Poor; THEY hereby approve of the said Report in all the Heads thereof, with some Observations; and particularly, that an immediate Course should be taken with regard to Vagabonds and Stranger-Poor, their begging within the County, and for maintaining of the Poor, who, according to the several Acts of Parliament made in that Behalf, ought to be provided for within the several Parishes where they have for some Time resided: And for that End, and for preventing the many grievous and notorious Disorders and Abuses by the said Vagabonds and other Beggars, wherewith honest Householders, and Others within the Shire, have of late been much afflicted; and which are likely daily to increase (the neighbouring Counties having of late applied themselves to have the Laws put in Execution, to keep their several Jurisdictions clear of Vagabonds and Stranger-poor, whereby they will be naturally led to run in upon this County, and grievously oppress the same, if some speedy Remedy shall not be put to the growing Evil; DO, in Virtue of the Powers committed to them by Law, Order and Appoint all idle and sturdy Beggars, Gypsies, Vagabonds, Sorners, Minstrels, Songsters, Fortune-tellers, Jugglers, Shipmen, alledging themselves to be Ship-broken (without they have sufficient Testimonials) and Others, described by the 74th Act, *Parl. 6th, James VI. intituled, Act for punishing strange and idle Beggars, and Relief of the Poor and Impotent*, to depart forth of this Shire betwixt and the first Day of *January* next, and to repair to the several Parishes where they were born, or where they have had their Dwelling or Residence for three Years last past, and to keep the ordinary Highways to the same; with Certification, that all such idle, or stranger poor Persons, as shall be found begging within this Shire after the said First Day of *January* next, shall be seized as Vagabonds, imprisoned, and fed with Bread and Water; and if found begging a second Time, shall otherwise be severely punished, agreeable to the Directions of Law in that Behalf; and all House-keepers, and others within this Shire, are strictly prohibited to give any Alms to such begging Vagabonds, other than Bread and Water; and every Person or Persons are hereby discharged, under Pretence of Charity, or any other Colour whatsoever, to give Money, Lodging, set Houses, or grant Relief to any such Vagabonds, under the Pains and Penalties to be inflicted according to Law. And in order to the better Execution of the Law for repressing of Vagabonds and idle Beggars, all Constables are hereby required and commanded to seize and apprehend such Persons, wherever they are found within this Shire, and bring them before the next Magistrate, Justice or Justices of the Peace, to whom it is recommended, that if he or they shall find the Person or Persons so brought before them, upon Trial taken, to fall within the Description of the Law, to grant Warrant for imprisoning the said Person or Persons within the Tolbooth of the Royal Burgh, locally situated within the Presbytery where the said Vagabond, strange or idle Beggar, shall be seized, there to remain, and to be fed upon Bread and Water, until they be liberate in due Course of Law. And in regard such Vagabonds so imprison'd, may become a Burden upon the Burgh where they are imprisoned, the Justices do declare that there shall be paid to their respective Keepers of the Goals, Two-pence *per diem* for every Vagrant that shall be imprison'd, in Pursuance of the Directions of the Laws and Acts of Parliament, upon which this present Act is founded, and that Constables and others, upon Application made to the Quarter-sessions, and sufficient Vouchers produced, that they have been at extraordinary Trouble and Expence, shall be gratified and encouraged, according to the Nature of the Service performed by them. And for the Provision of the Poor within the County, do hereby appoint, That exact Lists be made up within every Parish of the aged, impotent and indigent Persons, who have neither Means to support themselves, nor are in Condition to earn their Bread by Industry and Labour; and that after Trial taken into their Condition and Wants, the Persons intitled to Maintenance shall either have Badges, or proper Certificates, given them by the Heritors and Kirk-Sessions, or such Person or Persons as they shall appoint, whereby they shall be authorized to ask Alms for their Subsistence within the Bounds of the Parish only, or otherwise the Parish may in their Option stent and assess themselves according to Law, for the Support of the said Poor; with Certification, that if any Poor shall go begging without their own Parish, they shall forfeit the Benefit of the Maintenance to be allowed to them; AS ALSO, that if any who are put into the Charity Rolls of the Parish, keep their Children at home, without going to Service, when they are capable of it, they shall be struck out of the said Rolls: And the Justices of the Peace do hereby earnestly recommend it to all Heritors, Kirk-Sessions and others, to join in having this Act put to due Execution, and from Time to Time to lay before the Quarter-Sessions, such Proposals as to them shall seem reasonable for attaining the laudable and good Ends proposed by this Act, which the Justices will examine, and be ready to concur with, in as far as by the standing Laws they are enabled: And the Justices do appoint this Act to be printed and published at the respective Market-Crosses of *Drumfries, Annan, Lochmaben, and Sanquhar*, and Copies to be sent to the Ministers of the several Parishes within this Shire, to be read by the Precentors before the Dissolution of the Congregation from the Forenoon's Sermon; and ordain the several Precentors to report a Certificate of their Diligence, with Certification, &c.

Extracted by

JO. HYND.

