

*An ACT for the more effectual Punishment of certain Offenders ;
and for taking from them the Benefit of Clergy.*

FORASMUCH, as all the Laws heretofore made for the Punishment of Offenders, and for securing honest Men in their just Property, are found, by Experience, to be insufficient for these Purposes; and that the poorer Sort of People, who are obliged, for want of better Conveniencies, to keep their Goods in Tobacco-houses, and other Out-houses, are more exposed to be pilaged and robbed of their Substance, than Persons of greater Ability; and that considerable Part of the Property of People of all Conditions, are kept in Out-houses, not only remote from their Dwelling-houses, but also very weak in themselves, and easily broken; which hath given frequent Opportunities to Offenders to break into such Houses, and to steal from thence, divers Goods and Chattels, to the utter undoing of some poor Persons, and the Prejudice of all Sufferers. And whereas, several other Offenders have stolen Boats and other Vessels, and even Slaves; which Practice is of the most dangerous Tendency, and may, if not timely prevented, occasion Piracies, and all Manner of Villanies; and that Offenders have been encouraged to commit the said Crimes, by the Lenity of our Laws, and Expectation of having the Benefit of Clergy, when detected.

FOR the more effectual Prevention of which Crimes, and Punishment of such Offenders, as shall commit any of them: *Be it Enacted, by the Right Honourable the Lord Proprietary, by and with the Advice and Consent of His Lordship's Governor, and the Upper and Lower Houses of Assembly, and the Authority of the same,* That any Person or Persons who shall, after the Tenth Day of *September* next, break any Tobacco-house, or other Out-houses whatsoever, and steal from thence any Goods or Chattels, to the Value of Five Shillings *Sterling*; or who shall counsel, hire, command, aid, or abet any Person or Persons, to commit the said Offences; or who shall be Accessories to any of the said Offences, and be thereof convicted, by Confession, upon his, her, or their Arraignment, Verdict of a Jury, or be Out-lawed; or who shall obstinately, or of Malice, stand mute, or peremptorily challenge above Twenty, shall suffer Death as a Felon or Felons, without Benefit of Clergy.

PROVIDED ALWAYS, That such Tobacco-house, or other Out-houses, shall be well boarded, or otherwise substantially built, and the Door or Doors thereof secured with a Lock or Locks, or bolted in the Inside, or nailed.

AND BE IT LIKEWISE ENACTED, *by the Authority, Advice, and Consent aforesaid,* That any Person or Persons who, after the said Tenth Day of *September*, shall steal any Ship, Sloop, or other Vessel whatsoever, out of any Place, within the Body of any County within this Province, of Seventeen Feet, or upwards, by the Keel, and shall carry the same Ten Miles, or upwards, from the Place whence it shall be stolen; or who shall steal any Negro, or other Slave; or who shall counsel, hire, aid, abet, or command any Person or Persons, to commit the said Offences; or who shall be Accessories to the said Offences, and shall be thereof legally convicted, as aforesaid, or Out-lawed; or who shall obstinately, or of Malice, stand