

C H A P.
XVIII.

plus of his salt so refused to be sold, one half to the informer, and the other half to the use of this state.

Agents guilty
of engrossing
to be fined 4
times the va-
lue, &c.

XVI. And be it enacted, That if any continental agent, or other person in office under any appointment made by this state, or the United States, shall be guilty of engrossing any grain, flour, or salt, or any other goods, wares, or merchandises, whatsoever, contrary to the true intent and meaning of this act, such agent or other person in office shall, on conviction, be fined by the court where tried four times the value of the article or articles so engrossed, shall be rendered incapable of holding and enjoying any place or office of trust or profit in this state, and may also be imprisoned, at the discretion of said court, for any time not exceeding twelve months, without bail or main-prize.

Defendant
may plead the
general issue,
&c.

XVII. And be it enacted, That if any action or suit shall be commenced against any person or persons for any thing done in pursuance of this act, the defendant or defendants in any such action or suit may plead the general issue, and give this act and the special matter in evidence, at any trial to be had thereupon, and that the same was done in pursuance and by the authority of this act, and if it shall appear so to have been done, the jury shall find for the defendant or defendants, and if the plaintiff shall be nonsuit, or discontinue his action after the defendant or defendants shall have appeared, or if judgment shall be given upon any verdict or demurrer against the plaintiff, the defendant or defendants shall and may recover treble costs, and have the like remedy for the same as any defendant or defendants hath or have in other cases at law.

XVIII. WHEREAS the great number of purchasers, under a variety of characters, has tended to create the very high and exorbitant prices of grain, and other provisions necessary for the army of the United States: For remedy whereof,

Penalty on
persons buy-
ing wheat, &c.

XIX. Be it enacted, That if any person within this state shall buy within the same, any wheat, flour, rye, Indian corn, rice, bread, beef, pork, bacon, peas, beans, oats, or other dead victual, or fatted cattle or fatted hogs, or if any person within this state shall obtain or get into his hands, by buying, contracting, or promise taking, (other than by demise, grant, or lease of land, or in payment of debt heretofore contracted) any of the articles aforesaid, such person shall, for every offence, forfeit all the articles aforesaid which shall be so bought, or got into his possession, one half to the state, and the other half to the informer, and shall also be fined the sum of ten thousand pounds, and imprisoned one year.

Proviso.

XX. Provided always, and be it enacted, That the buying or obtaining any of the articles aforesaid by any of the commissaries, or other agents of this or the United States, for the public use, or by any person or persons inhabiting and residing in this state, for the use and consumption of the family of such person for the year, or for the use and consumption of labourers, seamen, or tradesmen, for the year, in the employ of such person, or the buying of any of the articles aforesaid by any licensed ordinary keeper for the use of his ordinary, or the buying
any