

C H A P.
XXXIV.

other writings, without the consent of the authors or proprietors of such books and writings, to their great injury: For preventing therefore such practices, and for the encouragement of learned men,

Property con-
firmed to au-
thors, &c.

II. *Be it enacted, by the General Assembly of Maryland,* That the author of any book or books, writing or writings, already composed and not printed and published, or that shall be hereafter composed, and his executors, administrators, or assigns, shall have the sole liberty of printing and reprinting such book or books, writing or writings, for the term of fourteen years, to commence from the day of the first publishing the same; and that if any other person whatsoever, within the time granted and limited by this act as aforesaid, shall print, reprint, import or bring into the state, or cause to be printed, reprinted, imported or brought into the state, any such book or books, writing or writings, without the consent of the proprietor or proprietors thereof first had and obtained in writing, signed in the presence of two or more witnesses, or knowing the same to be so printed, reprinted, imported or brought into the state, without the consent of the proprietors, shall sell, publish, or expose to sale, any such book or books, writing or writings, without such consent first had and obtained as aforesaid, then such offender or offenders shall forfeit such book or books, writing or writings, to the proprietor or proprietors; and further, that every such offender or offenders shall forfeit two-pence for every sheet which shall be found in his, her or their custody, either printed or printing, published or exposed to sale, contrary to the true intent and meaning of this act.

Title of books
to be entered,
&c.

III. *And,* Whereas many persons may through ignorance offend against this act, unless some provision be made, whereby the property in every such book as is intended by this act to be secured to the proprietor or proprietors thereof may be ascertained: Therefore, *Be it enacted,* That nothing in this act contained shall be construed to extend to subject any person whatsoever to the forfeitures and penalties herein mentioned, or by reason of the printing, reprinting, importing, bringing into the state, or causing to be brought into the state, selling or exposing to sale, of any book or books, writing or writings, without the consent of the proprietor or proprietors, unless the title to the copy of such book or books, writing or writings, hereafter published, shall, before such publication by the proprietor or proprietors, be entered in a register, to be kept by the clerk of the general court for that purpose; which register may, at all reasonable and convenient times, be resorted to and inspected by any person, for the purpose before mentioned, without any fee or reward; and the clerk aforesaid, when and as often as thereunto required, shall give a certificate under his hand of such entry or entries, and for every such certificate may take and receive a fee of three shillings and nine-pence.

Actions to be
brought with-
in 12 months,
&c.

IV. *And be it enacted,* That all actions or informations for any offence that shall be committed against this act, shall be brought and commenced within twelve months after such offence committed, or the same shall be void and of none effect.

Proviso.

V. *Provided always,* That after the expiration of the aforesaid term of fourteen years, the sole right of printing or disposing of copies shall