

1792.

CHAPTER MDCXXV.

An ACT for the relief and support of poor confined debtors.

WHEREAS many persons confined for debt in the prison called the debtors apartment, in the city of Philadelphia, are so poor, as to be unable to procure food for their subsistence, or fuel or covering in the winter season, and it is inconsistent with humanity to suffer them to want the common necessaries of life :

SECT. I. *Be it therefore enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly met, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same,* That the inspectors appointed, and to be appointed, by the mayor and aldermen of the city of Philadelphia, and the justices of the county of Philadelphia, for the regulating and inspecting the common gaol of the said county, under an act of assembly of this commonwealth, passed the fifth day of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety, entitled "An act to reform the penal laws of this state," shall likewise be inspectors of the said debtors apartment, and shall attend at the said debtors apartment, at least once in each week, and shall examine into and inspect into the management thereof, and the conduct of the keeper and his deputies, and shall make such orders and regulations, with regard to the well ordering and cleanliness of the said apartment, as shall be approved of by the mayor of the said city, and the president of the court of common pleas for the county of Philadelphia.*

SECT. II. *And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,* That it shall be part of the duty of the said inspectors, to examine into the condition of the several persons confined in the said debtors apartment, with regard to their want of the common necessaries of life, and to provide fuel and blankets for such of them as are incapable of obtaining them by reason of his or her poverty; the charges of such provision for the said debtors, respectively, to be paid by the county treasurer of Philadelphia county, out of the county stock, under orders of the commissioners of the said county, who are hereby directed to draw such orders, from time to time, on certificates from the said inspectors, allowed by the mayor of the said city of Philadelphia and president of the court of common pleas of Philadelphia county; and the said inspectors shall make an allowance of seven cents per day for food to each of such poor debtors, as is incapable of supporting him or herself, the said latter allowance to be paid weekly by the plaintiff or plaintiffs, at whose suit or suits such debtor is confined; and the neglect or refusal of payment of such allowance, by or on behalf of such plaintiff or plaintiffs, on every Monday, after ten days notice hath been given of such allowance by the inspectors to the said plaintiff or plaintiffs, or his, her, or their attorney, or agent or agents, shall operate as a discharge from confinement of such poor debtor.

SECT. III. *Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,* That the said keeper of the debtors apartment in the city of Phi-

[* See vol. 1, pa. 181, chap. 315, and the notes thereto.]

Inspectors of the gaol to be inspectors of the debtors apartment;

attend once a week, and make regulations,

Duty of the inspectors.

Allowance to be paid by plaintiffs weekly.

Salary of the keeper of the

* The rules and regulations made for the debtors' apartment, have been inadvertently printed, in vol. 2, pa. 545, to which the reader is referred.

Philadelphia shall have and receive the annual sum of five hundred dollars, in quarterly payments, in lieu of all fees from the county stock, for his care, trouble and services, and that of his assistant or assistants in the said office, on orders to be drawn, from time to time, by the commissioners of Philadelphia county, on the treasurer of that county. 1792.

debtors apartment: how to be paid.

SECT. IV. And whereas it may be necessary that alterations be made in the debtors apartment, in order to render the same convenient: *Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,* That the commissioners of the county of Philadelphia are hereby authorized, to make such alterations in the said debtors apartment as they shall judge necessary, provided the expense of the said alterations does not exceed the sum of four hundred dollars, which expense shall be paid by orders to be drawn by the commissioners on the treasurer of the said county.

Alterations to be made in the debtors apartments.

SECT. V. And whereas it may not be practicable at present to extend all the provisions that are herein made for the debtors confined in the debtors apartment in the city of Philadelphia, to all the gaols of the several counties in this commonwealth: Therefore, in order to prevent the want of the common necessities of life to such persons as are or may be confined for debt in the several gaols of the different counties, *Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid,* That the courts of common pleas in the several counties of this commonwealth be, and they are hereby, empowered and enjoined to make the like allowance and provision for fuel and blankets, for the use of such of the debtors confined in the gaols of their respective counties, as are incapable of obtaining them by reason of his or her poverty, the charges of such provision for the said debtors, respectively, to be paid by the treasurer of the county, out of the county stock, under orders of the commissioners of the said county, who are hereby directed to draw such orders, from time to time, on certificates of the said courts; and the said courts shall make an allowance, not exceeding seven cents per day, for food, to each of such poor debtors as is incapable of supporting him or herself, the said latter allowance to be paid weekly by the plaintiff or plaintiffs, at whose suit or suits such debtor is confined; and the neglect or refusal of payment of such allowance, by or on behalf of such plaintiff or plaintiffs, on every Monday, after notice given thereof by the said courts to the said plaintiff or plaintiffs, or his, her, or their attorney, or agent or agents, shall operate as a discharge from confinement of such poor debtor.

Allowance of necessities to confined debtors how to be made.

The charge how payable.

A weekly allowance to be paid by plaintiffs;

and in case of neglect the prisoner discharged.

Passed 4th April, 1792.—Recorded in Law Book No. IV. page 353.

CHAPTER MDCXXVIII.

An ACT to provide for printing, publishing, and distributing the laws of this commonwealth, and to direct a proper index to be made of the records of the executive department.

WHEREAS it is the duty of those who are entrusted with the administration of the public affairs, to make an early and accurate

(Ante. pa. 8, post. chap. 1655.)