

LIBEL AND SLANDER.

32 *Geo. III.*,
c. 60.

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AN ACT to remove Doubts respecting the Functions of Juries in
Cases of Libel.

WHEREAS doubts have arisen whether on the trial of an indictment or information for the making or publishing any libel, where an issue or issues are joined between the King and the defendant or defendants, on the plea of not guilty pleaded, it be competent to the jury empanelled to try the same to give their verdict upon the whole matter in issue :

Be it therefore declared and enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same,

That, on every such trial, the jury sworn to try the issue 32 Geo. III., c. 60.
may give a general verdict of guilty or not guilty upon the
whole matter put in issue upon such indictment or information ;
and shall not be required or directed, by the Court or Judge
before whom such indictment or information shall be tried, to
find the defendant or defendants guilty merely on the proof of
the publication by such defendant or defendants of the paper
charged to be a libel, and of the sense ascribed to the same in
such indictment or information.

2. Provided always that on every such trial the Court or
Judge before whom such indictment or information shall be tried
shall, according to their or his discretion, give their or his opinion
and directions to the jury on the matter in issue between the
King and the defendant or defendants, in like manner as in
other criminal cases.

3. Provided also that nothing herein contained shall extend,
or be construed to extend, to prevent the jury from finding a
special verdict in their discretion as in other criminal cases.

4. Provided also that, in case the jury shall find the
defendant or defendants guilty, it shall and may be lawful for
the said defendant or defendants to move in arrest of judgment,
on such ground and in such manner as by law he or they might
have done before the passing of this Act, anything herein con-
tained to the contrary notwithstanding.

On trial for
a libel, jury
may give a
general verdict
upon the
whole matter
in issue.

Court may
direct jury as
in other
criminal cases.

Jury may find
a special ver-
dict.

Defendants
may move in
arrest of judg-
ment.

