

18. The process to be issued by justices of the peace in civil cases shall be a summons, wherein shall be stated briefly the purpose for which the party is summoned, and made returnable before the justice issuing the same, or before some other justice to be named therein, on a day to be stated in said summons, not exceeding forty days from the time of issuing the same.

19. If the summons shall be returned "summoned," and the defendant shall fail to appear on the return day thereof, then the justice shall fix a day of trial not less than six nor more than fourteen days from the return day, and proceed to try such case *ex parte*, the defendant to have the right to appear at any time before judgment and make any defence he may have, as if he had appeared at the return day of the summons.

20. Where there is more than one defendant, and some shall appear, and some who have been summoned shall fail to appear, the justice shall proceed to try the cause as if all had appeared.

21. A justice of the peace shall issue summonses for witnesses at the instance of either party, and shall compel the attendance of such witnesses by attachment.

22. If the witness shall fail to appear on the return day of the summons, the justice shall issue an attachment of contempt made returnable before the justice issuing the same, who may, at his discretion, fine such defaulting witness in any sum not exceeding three dollars; and shall issue execution for such fine and costs, and the same shall be collected and paid to the justice, who shall, on or before the first day of January annually, pay the same to the clerk of the Circuit Court for the county, or the clerk of the Superior Court of Baltimore city.

23. If either party, on the day of trial, shall ask a postponement, the justice shall postpone the trial to another day, not exceeding fourteen days, if the justice shall be satisfied by the oath of the party or otherwise, that a postponement is necessary to a fair trial of the case.

24. If either party shall fail to appear on the day to which a case is postponed, the justice may proceed to try the case *ex parte*.

25. No special pleading shall be required in any action before a justice of the peace.