

**CHAP. 323.**Such meetings  
deemed unlawful.Duty of constables  
&c to disperse  
them.Incur penalty for  
neglecting.Magistrates duty  
to inflict the penal-  
ty.  
Return proceed-  
ings.

Proviso.

Further exception  
— Baltimore and  
Annapolis.Free negroes  
found associating  
in such unlawful  
meetings, liable to  
be punished as  
slaves.Purchasing from  
negroes forbid.Articles mention-  
ed.Without certifi-  
cate.

they shall be considered as unlawful and tumultuous meetings, and it shall be the duty of the nearest constable, or any other civil officer knowing of such meetings, either from his own knowledge or the information of others, to repair to such meeting, and disperse the said negroes or slaves; and if any such constable shall fail to comply with the provisions of this act, he shall be subject to a fine of not less than five nor more than twenty dollars, at the discretion of a justice of the peace of the county in which he resides, whose duty it shall be to impose the fine, on information being given of such neglect; and return the proceedings and judgment on the same to the clerk of the county, who shall enter it upon the proper docket to be collected and applied as other fines and forfeitures now are; *Provided*, That this act shall not interfere with any right of an owner or employer of any slave or slaves, to allow his own servants or those employed by him or her, to have prayers or other religious service upon his own land; *And provided also*, That nothing contained in this act shall be construed to prevent the assemblage, within the limits of Baltimore city and Annapolis city, of such slaves, or free negroes and mulattoes for the purpose of religious worship, if said meetings are held in compliance with the written permission of a white licensed ordained preacher, and dismissed before ten o'clock at night.

*Sec. 8. And be it enacted*, That all free negroes or mulattoes who shall be found associating, or in any company with slaves, at any unlawful or tumultuous meeting, either by day or night, or who shall in connection with any slave or slaves, as principal or accessory, be guilty of, and convicted of, any offence for which slaves are now punishable, before a justice of the peace, such free negro or mulatto shall be subject to the same punishment, and be liable in every respect to the same treatment and penalty as slaves thus offending.

*Sec. 9. And be it enacted*, That it shall not be lawful for any person or persons to purchase of any free negro or mulatto, or from any slave or slaves, any bacon, pork, beef, mutton, corn, wheat, tobacco, rye, or oats, unless such free negro or mulatto shall, at the time of such sale, produce a certificate from a justice of the peace, or three respectable persons residing in the neighborhood of said negro, of the county in which such negro resides, that he or they have reason to believe and does believe, that such free negro or mulatto came honestly and bona fide into possession of any such article so offered for sale, or unless such slave shall produce a written authority from his or her owner, employ-