

C H A P. XLV. validity as if the same had been originally made with the parents of the said child, or with the orphans court.

Justices, on petition, may inquire, &c.

VII. **And**, whereas by reason of the inaccuracy of apprentices contracts, disputes frequently arise between the parties, **Be it enacted**, That the justices of the county or criminal courts, on the petition, in writing, of any master or mistress of any apprentice so as aforesaid bound out, shall and may inquire into, hear and determine, any and every dispute that may arise on any contract or agreement so as aforesaid made; and if it shall appear to the said county or criminal court, that the said contract has been violated on the part of the master or mistress, or that the complaint of such apprentice so petitioning as aforesaid, is well founded, the said court may proceed to fine the said master or mistress according to the offence, a sum not exceeding ten pounds current money for the first offence, for the second offence any sum not exceeding twenty pounds current money; and the said county or criminal court may, in their discretion, discharge any apprentice because of imposition, or of the ill behaviour of the master or mistress, or of the hardness or unreasonableness of the terms of the contract, and shall provide for the said apprentice a new master, of the same trade or occupation with the first, and if the original contract was hard and unreasonable, such new contract shall be made as the court shall direct; which new master shall be bound to do and perform the contract in the same manner that the original master ought to have done, and shall also pay unto the original master of said apprentice such sum of money as shall be adjudged reasonable by any two or three persons of the same trade or occupation, to be appointed by the court before which court the change of the master shall be made; and the said county or criminal court shall and may, upon the petition of the master or mistress as aforesaid, discharge him or her from his or her contract, because of an incorrigible temper, or of the ill behaviour of the apprentice; and in case the contract, whether defective in form or not, hath been partly executed, the said county or criminal court may award and compel the terms, or any part of the terms, to be performed by the master or mistress, or by the apprentice, as justice and equity may require; and the master or mistress of any apprentice may detain the said apprentice in his or her service till such apprentice is or shall be discharged by the court aforesaid; and the said master or mistress may maintain such action against strangers, as if such apprentice had been legally bound to serve; and if an apprentice shall abscond or run away from his master or mistress, or in any other way absent himself from the service of said master or mistress, the court may, during the whole of the remainder of the time which such apprentice hath to serve, or at any time within three years thereafter, award such compensation to be made by such apprentice to his master or mistress aforesaid, either by service or by payment of money, as justice and equity may require, and may enforce payment of the money so awarded by an attachment of contempt against his person, or *fieri facias* against his goods.

Penalty on persons concealing, &c.

VIII. **And be it enacted**, That if any person or persons shall conceal, harbour, or in any way promote or facilitate the running away, of apprentices, he, she or they, shall be subject to the same fines and penalties as the harbourers of servants now are subject to by the laws of this state.

Justice, on information, may summon any master, &c.

IX. **And be it enacted**, That any judge or justice of the peace, when he shall receive good information, or upon his own observation of cruel or improper usage from any master or mistress before him, and may require and take a recognizance of such master or mistress, with reasonable and proper security, to be forfeited in case the said master or mistress shall not appear at the next county or criminal court, to answer and abide the determination of the said court upon any complaint that may be exhibited by such apprentice, or in default thereof may take away such apprentice from his master or mistress, and place the said apprentice, so cruelly used, under the care of some other proper person, who shall be bound to have the apprentice before the next county or criminal court, to abide such determination as shall be made.

X. **And**