

bee after the conquest, was made in 1784. There were then in Quebec, 88; Three Rivers, 4; and Montreal, 212, total, 304.

All proceeded smoothly enough for slave owners, and few serious difficulties occurred in the relations between masters and slaves in Lower Canada until 1793, when a bill abolishing slavery was framed and presented to the Provincial Parliament by Mr. P. L. Panet, seconded by Mr. L. Dunière. It failed, however, to pass the House. It met with a like fate the following session; but the seeds of unrest were sown.

In February, 1798, a negress named Charlotte, belonging to a Miss Jane Cook, of Montreal absented herself without leave, and having positively refused to return to her service, she was arrested and brought before a Magistrate. When persistently refusing to return to her mistress she was committed to jail. On petition before Chief Justice Monk, she was granted a writ of Habeas Corpus and liberated thereupon without bail.

This was the signal of great rejoicing among the slaves at Montreal and vicinity, and their excitement became such that there were well grounded fears of rebellion, and to a limited extent, a repetition of the horrors of the St. Domingo and Havti negro revolt, was in the minds of the timorous. Another negress named Jude, belonging to a merchant named Elias Smith who had purchased her in Albany for £80 American currency, absented herself from her master's house as the afore-named Charlotte had done. She was committed to gaol, but she also obtained a writ of Habeas Corpus on the 8th March. The Chief Justice at the same time declaring that he would act in a similar manner with all such cases brought to him from the inferior courts.

These legal decisions of the Chief Justice gave a very serious complexion to the relations previously existing between masters and slaves. The masters had but one recourse left, appeal to the Legislature, exposing the injustice and serious loss they were suffering and praying for Legislation to clearly define the