

SLAVERY IN CANADA.

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Some well-informed Canadians are incredulous respecting the existence of slavery at any time in Canada. The fact, however, that slaves were held in various parts of the territories now included in the Dominion is beyond question.

The first slave sale recorded in Quebec was that of a negro boy from Madagascar, sold by David Kertke in 1628 for fifty half-crowns. Indian slaves, known as Panis, belonging to a distant conquered tribe, were also sold to French Canadians. In 1689 a royal mandate was issued by Louis XIV., giving permission to Canadians to import African slaves, a number of whom they brought from the West Indies. On the transfer of the colony in 1760 to the English crown, it was stipulated that owners of slaves should still be permitted to hold their human property.

It is not probable that any slaves were held by the French Acadicians. That any were brought to the earliest English capital, Annapolis, or to Canso, a point of much importance, is uncertain; but at Halifax slaves were found at, or very soon after, its settlement in 1749. Their presence there is clearly proved by an advertisement in the Boston *Evening Post*, in September, 1751:—

“Just arrived from Halifax and to be sold, ten strong, hearty negro men, mostly tradesmen, such as caulkers, carpenters, sailmakers and ropemakers. Any person wishing to purchase may inquire of Benjamin Hallowell, of Boston.”

In the *Nova Scotia Gazette*, issued on Saturday, May 30th, 1752, Halifax readers found this notice:—

“Just imported and to be sold by Joshua Mauger, at Major Lockman’s store in Halifax, several negro slaves, viz., a very likely negro wench, of about thirty-five years of age, a Creole born, has been brought up in a gentleman’s family, and capable of doing all sorts of work belonging thereto, as needle-work of all sorts and in the best manner; also washing, ironing, cooking, and every other thing that can be expected from such a slave: also two negro boys of about 12 or 13 years old, likely, healthy, and well-shaped, and understand some English: Likewise two healthy negro slaves of about 18 years of age, of agreeable tempers and fit for any kind of business: And also a healthy negro man of about 30 years of age.”