

The first federal law providing for the return of a runaway slave was passed in 1793. The law was none too effective from the southern standpoint and was amended at various times until the passage of the famous Fugitive Recovery Bill of 1850 which proved a powerful influence in creating anti-slavery sentiment in the north. Under this act the question of ownership was determined by the simple affidavit of the person claiming the slave. The testimony of the slave himself was not to be received. There were heavy penalties for harbouring or interfering with the arrest of a runaway. Federal commissioners were paid ten dollars for every slave returned and only five dollars if the fugitive was discharged. Thus a direct premium was paid to convict fugitives. But the clause that particularly irritated the north was that which declared that the federal commissioners might call "all good citizens" to aid and assist in the execution of the law. It was at once pointed out that this made every northern citizen liable to be a slave-catcher. Added were such other injustices as denying jury trial, resting liberty on ex-parte evidence, making habeas corpus ineffective and offering a bribe to the federal commissioner to return the fugitive to slavery.

"The passage of the new law," says one writer, "probably increased the number of anti-slavery people more than anything else that had occurred during the whole agitation."

The period from 1850 to 1861 is filled with incidents arising out of this fugitive slave law. The most famous probably is the case of Anthony Burns, who was arrested in Boston on May 24, 1854. Boston blazed with indignation and a riot broke out in which blood was shed. On the 2nd of June Burns was formally remanded to slavery. The authorities felt it necessary to line the streets with troops and place cannon in the squares on the day that Burns was taken from jail to the boat that was to carry him south. Fifty thousand people standing with bared heads watched the grim military procession pass. Business houses for blocks were draped with black cloth and at one prominent corner a coffin hung suspended over the street. It is not to be wondered at that the *Richmond Examiner* commented: "A few more such victories and the south is undone."

The later life of Burns has a Canadian interest. His stay in the south was brief, money being subscribed to purchase his freedom and provide him an education. He became a clergyman, came to Canada and lived for many years at St. Catharines as a missionary among his own people.

Canada had known slavery at an earlier date but had long since cleared herself of the blot. The French introduced slavery into Canada in an effort to meet the ever prevalent shortage of labour. It existed all through the Old Regime and was not changed by the passing of the country into the hands of the English. Indeed it was not until the beginning of the nineteenth century that slavery disappeared, though at no time and in no locality was it ever existent on a large scale. The early disappearance of slavery in Canada had the effect of creating an anti-slavery sentiment at an early date. In 1829, when the Negroes of Cincinnati were threatened with ruin by the enforcement of the Black Laws, they sent a deputation to York to interview the governor, Sir John Colborne, and find out if they would be allowed to take refuge in Canada. "Tell the republicans on your side of the line" replied the governor, "that we royalists do not know men by their colour. Should you come to us you will be entitled to all the privileges of the rest of His Majesty's