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THE NECESSITY FOR ANOTHER LUNATIC ASYLUM.

The sad occurrence which took place in our Jail on the 23rd of April last, suggests reflections which cannot be forced into abeyance. On that day an unfortunate lunatic, labouring under the worst species of insanity, that of the homicidal type, deliberately deprived of life another. To account for such a fact occurring in the Jail of Montreal, it is necessary to observe that the only Lunatic Asylum, in the Lower Province, is that at Beauport, and that when that Institution is overcrowded, the supernumeraries of this unfortunate class of patients can secure no other local habitation than our Jail, into which they cannot get an admission unless upon testimony, that their free agency is likely to be attended with grievous bodily injury to their neighbours; while at the time of this unfortunate occurrence, no less than twenty-nine other lunatics were confined in the building, seven of whom were in the ward in which the homicide occurred, the instrument of destruction having been the fire poker.

This has not been the first time that an occurrence of this character has taken place in this self-same Institution. About fifteen or eighteen years ago, a like occurrence happened, but scarcely through homicidal impulse. On this occasion it originated out of a feeling of curiosity to see how another lunatic would feel with his head off. Quite a number of lunatics were at this time confined in the prison, and having been turned out into the yard for the purpose of recreation and fresh air, chance brought two of them near the wood-house, where an axe was lying. The idea was suggested by one lunatic to another, who immediately submitted by laying his head upon a block of the wood. In a minute the axe, was raised and descending severed the unfortunate man's head from his body, with which the executioner was amusing himself when the bloody deed was discovered. It has been alleged that the present Jailer was blameable for permitting murderous weapons to be within the reach of these unfortunate victims of mental aberration. But we see little cause for attributing blame or neglect to that officer, whose strict attention to duty, and humanity, with kindness to those placed in his custody, are everywhere recognized. If blame