

velopment. This intellectual weakness is a permanent state, it is the manner of life of the individual; it was anterior to the crimes committed; it existed at the time of their trial, just as it exists at present. That is to say, that they are individuals who have not enough intelligence to understand the nature of their acts, nor the consequences thereof, nor to resist the impulses of their weakened inclinations. These persons were evidently incapable of conducting their defence on account of their mental state.

All these individuals were condemned to several years of detention in the penitentiary, and they had been at the time undergoing their punishment for a certain time. We do not know what became of them all, but the sending of one of them, viz., C. L., the second mentioned above, to St. Jean de Dieu Asylum gives us an opportunity of relating his strange story, which one of us presented to the authorities in the following report.

"I believe it to be my duty to send you a special report on the case of C. L., admitted to the asylum on November 21, 1897, from the Kingston Penitentiary. This patient was admitted to Beauport Asylum on June 20, 1879. After 14 years confinement he escaped from the asylum, August 13, 1893. On the 22nd August, viz., nine days after his escape, he was met near a barn that was on fire, and immediately arrested on suspicion of having set it on fire. The following day, August 23, he was brought before the Police Magistrate at Montreal, and, after the testimony of some witnesses, he was remanded to stand his trial before the Court of Queen's Bench. On September 29 following, he was found guilty of the crime of which he was accused, by a jury in the Court of Queen's Bench, and sentenced to five years imprisonment in the penitentiary. In the month of October, 1896, on the occasion of a casual visit to the penitentiary, I met C. L. I examined him and found that he was an imbecile. I left a report to this effect in the hands of the warden. It was after that visit that C. L. was transferred to the insane department of Kingston penitentiary, but he had already undergone more than three years of his punishment.

It is really astonishing that an imbecile, escaping from a lunatic asylum, where he had been confined for 14 years, who was incapable of reasonable conversation, could, a few days after his escape from the asylum, be brought before the criminal court without exciting any suspicion as to his mental condition. The witnesses, who gave evidence at the trial could not swear to anything, except the fact alone that he had made threats and had been seen near the barn after the discovery of the fire, but they all recalled his incoherent talk and his strange manner of acting, which drew their attention to him. The following account of his previous history was very kindly given me by Dr. Vallee, medical superintendent of the Quebec Asylum."