

These reflections were painfully forced upon us, when perusing the leading editorial in the last number of our Upper Canada contemporary, upon the recent inquest in connection with the Provincial Lunatic Asylum, in Toronto, the details of which we chronicled in our own last issue; and, while we refer our readers to that report, we shall, at present, merely advert to some of its leading particulars.

A patient in the Provincial Lunatic Asylum, named Andrews, died on the 11th November. An inquest was held on the body on Sunday the 12th, and the remains in their supposed integrity were sent to the grave-yard for interment on Monday the 13th. In assisting the grave-digger to remove the coffin, a gentleman remarked its lightness, which led to investigation, and the disclosure that the body was minus its head and neck, and right superior and inferior extremities. On the following Wednesday, doubtless in consequence of the rumors afloat, and popular excitement, the missing members were sent to the grave-yard in a deal box, and at a second inquest held on the following Saturday, they were identified as parts of the same body, and, in Dr Lyons' language, presented the following appearances: "the head had been sawn in two, and put together again—the sinews of the neck were gone—the arm, head, and leg had been partially dissected, and the leg had been taken off, apparently for the purpose of practising amputation at the thigh bone."

Such are the simple facts of the case; and that the citizens of Toronto should have felt indignant at such wanton mutilation of the remains of an unfortunate inmate of their Asylum, is not in the least surprising to us; and, in our opinion, it was deserving of much graver condemnation at the hands of the Commissioners of the Asylum, than that which it really received, who merely passed a vote of censure on their medical superintendent, for "indiscretion and a want of judgment."

Now, no one who reads the description which the ~~dismembered parts presented~~ will credit the assertion so speciously advanced by the *Upper Canada Journal*, that they were abstracted for the purpose of pathological investigation, or to detect some "structural peculiarity." The existence of such a peculiarity is, in all cases, questionable. It is rare that a *priori* reasoning will indicate it. That they were retained for the purposes of dissection, and were, in accordance with that intention, literally so used, there can be no manner of doubt. We object not to the medical Superintendent's maintaining his knowledge of anatomy in the only proper way by which he could do so, viz: by dissection; but there are legitimate, as well as illegitimate modes of effecting that object; and in this instance, he emphatically selected the latter, with concomitants,—as regards his position in the Asylum,—which expose him to the heavy censure of every right-minded member of the Profession.

But our contemporary further declares that "he was justified by the law of the land, in making a *post mortem* examination of the body." And so he was. And let us ask, why did he not do it at the proper time and place, viz: at Mr Coroner Duggan's inquest at the Asylum? * It was not done at the very time the law directs, the consequence of which laxity resulted in the remarkably indefinite verdict that "the deceased died of disease of the

* The *U. C. Journal* alleges that "it was proved that Dr Scott had made a *post mortem* examination of the body prior to giving his evidence before Mr. Coroner Duggan." We ask where the proof exists? On the contrary, Mr Burns, the door-keeper and apothecary at the Asylum, deposed, at the second inquest, "that no *post mortem* examination took place either before or after the inquest, that a *post mortem* examination did take place on Monday morning," (twenty-four hours after the inquest.—*Ed.*) "and that Dr Scott cut off the head and limbs for anatomical purposes, &c."—See page 362.