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DEAF MUTES.

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During my residence in Toronto, the position which I held in connection with the medical schools required that I should pay particular attention to "Preventive Medicine." It has, naturally, continued to be a favorite theme, and in my ratiocinations on the subject, I have come to the conclusion that it is capable of much wider application than is generally supposed—Whatever tends to ameliorate the condition of the individual, or the race, should come within the scope of preventive medicine.

Recently a school has been opened in our city for a class which, with euphemistic tenderness, is called "unfortunate" by the deputation which waited upon the Government in their interests. Whilst all are agreed that all should be done that science can do to ameliorate the condition of that afflicted class, it is self-evident that the very means used to improve the condition of the class, tends to perpetuate and extend the evil, by placing them in a better position to marry and propagate deaf mutes. I need not here cite any argument in favor of the power of heredity. Now, it is here that I think, in the interests of the race who must bear the burden of supporting these unfortunates, that the aid of preventive medicine should be invoked. The deputation which waited upon the Government reported seventy-five deaf mutes in the province: suppose these grow up and

marry, and propagate deaf mutes, as they almost infallibly will, what will be the result in a generation or two! Now, would it not be in the interests of the race at large to "stamp out" deaf mutism? Would it not be an act of supreme kindness to the unfortunates themselves to render it impossible for them to transmit their own deformity to a future generation? I think that the Imperial Government and the Dominion Government should, in the interests of our common humanity, pass an Act requiring that every hopelessly deaf mute male child should be emasculated; and that every female should be deprived of her ovaries. I need not quote Tait, or Spencer Wells, or Keith, or other authorities to prove that the female would lose none of the graceful softness of her sex, nor be incapacitated for marriage by such deprivation; and the male would not be conscious of the loss of virility, inasmuch as that is an attribute which he would not have possessed. Thus, with benefit to the unfortunates themselves, deaf mutism could be "stamped out" in two or three generations at most.

Before leaving the subject I might direct attention to an instance that will, perhaps, more readily enlist public sympathy. About one hundred and fifty years ago a number of lepers settled in an eastern province—will any one say that it would not have been at once wise and kind to have taken such measures, on the arrival of these unfortunates, afflicted with an incurable disease that is sure to be transmitted, as would have insured the stamping out? The colony of lepers still exists, and is a standing menace to the whole community.

Deaf mutism is an evil of another kind, and, inasmuch as it does not possess any of the loathsomeness of leprosy, it is, pro tanto, more liable to be propagated. It is conceivable that a man should be so much in favor of a quiet life that he would prefer a deaf mute wife—"She wadna be a fligher!"

I have written this suggestively. I would like to learn the views of others, particularly of my professional brethern, on the subject.