

Then, again, tubercular subjects seem to be more prolific than the rest of the community, and therefore it is all the more important that they should not be allowed to marry.

If this means of preventing the propagation of those who inherit a tubercular tendency prove ineffectual, it might be even reasonable and proper that at least those who are rescued from the ravages of the disease by the efforts of others and largely at their expense, should be required to submit to sterilization.

This would doubtless meet with strong opposition on the ground of individual rights, but we already compel the vaccination of children before they are allowed to enjoy the benefits of a public school education, and may we not with equal reason demand that those who enter a public sanitarium shall be prevented from handing down a tubercular tendency to others.

It would seem that these persons themselves might, in many instances, willingly submit to such treatment, when they consider the danger of their producing sickly and weak offspring. Besides they would probably be more ready to do so when they learn that this procedure would not necessarily imply the production of impotence.

Again the marriage of near relatives is often a source of danger to their progeny. While it may be quite true that the children of first cousins, who are themselves the subjects of no weakness of either body or mind, may be and often are even more than up to the average in intellectual ability and of good physical development, yet the instances are not rare in which these children are idiotic, weak-minded or chronic epileptics, and others in which cataract and other eye defects are met with. Such cases have several times come under my own observation.

I think, therefore, that it would be wise to forbid such unions.

Another question to be considered is how to remedy the apparent increase in the number, from whatever source they arise, of the weak-minded in the population.

According to a paper read by Dr Helen MacMurchy at the British Medical Association last year, there are over twelve hundred feeble-minded unmarried women in the Dominion of Canada. These must necessarily be a constant source of menace to us, because of the great risk of their bearing children of a like character. The strictest care and supervision are required to prevent such a consequence. They ought therefore to be segregated in some public institutions, where such supervision can be had, or, perhaps better, be sterilized. This can now be done, even in females, with very little risk of life, and we think ought to be done in all these cases.