

## MENTAL SANITATION, WITH SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CARE OF THE DEGENERATE, AND MEANS FOR PREVENTING THE PROPAGATION OF THE SPECIES.\*

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THERE is no longer doubt that the number of defectives in Canada is increasing beyond the proportionate increase in population. The persons to whom it is sought to call attention in this paper are those who, either physically or morally, are so far below the normal that their presence in society is hurtful to their fellow citizens, or that their unhindered natural increase is a menace to the well-being of our country. Official returns show that in England to-day one in every 301 of the population is insane, while in Ontario one in every 357 is mentally defective. The cost to the Province of Ontario last year for caring for its mental degenerates was over one million of dollars. The chronic insane, the epileptic, the paralytic, the imbecile and the idiot of various grades, the moral imbecile, the sexual pervert; many, if not most, of the chronic inebriates; many of the prostitutes, tramps and minor criminals; many habitual paupers, especially the ignorant and irresponsible mothers of illegitimate children, so often found in our Refuges and Infants' Homes—all these in varying degree, with others that are not mentioned, are classed as being effects of the one cause—which itself is the summing up of many causes—degeneracy. For several of the above mentioned classes special provision has been made for their custodial care, but there are others, who are either hereditary degenerates, or whose condition resembles this so much that they may be treated like them, for whom it seems desirable to make special provision and over whom complete and permanent control might well be exercised.

While the spirit of this age has done so much to encourage preventive medicine, few and feeble have been the prophylactic efforts made in searching for and applying a remedy to check the growth and development of degeneracy in our country. Herbert Spencer well said, "To be a good animal is the first requisite to success in life, and to be a nation of good animals is the first condition to national prosperity." If the best study of mankind is man, the time has surely come when in every University centre there should be a lectureship for the study of the causation of degeneracy, criminality, insanity, pauperism and other defectives. Thousands of dollars are spent every year in Canada in fostering and developing a knowledge regarding the best methods of raising and propagating live stock that will enrich the agricultural resources of the country. At the same time, while we know that the very backbone of a nation

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