

continues, "I consider that it is self-evident that there can be no *general* system of education, either physical or mental, suitable for all children; consequently I hold that much of the increase of insanity and imbecility is due to

the present system of education, I would say the present high-pressure, forcing system... I believe it is this forcing of the mind at schools that is destroying the mental organizations of so many, and is one of the great causes of insanity....

IS INSANITY INCREASING IN CANADA.

THE question, "is insanity increasing in this part of the country," is being discussed in Ottawa, and in connection with necessary accommodation for the insane in and about the capital where an increased number of these afflicted people are confined in the county jail, a terrible state of affairs. The Evening Journal has interviewed a number of the practicing physicians of the city, soliciting their several opinions on the question. These opinions, as one would naturally expect, as they could not possibly have been based, individually, on much experience with the insane—on fact, differed widely, and are therefore of but very little if any value. We would note here however that it is not easy to understand how in the present state of knowledge on this subject, any physician could give as his opinion, as one is reported to have done, that heredity is not one of the chief causes of insanity. It is the hereditary factor in the causation of mental aberration which perhaps more than any other, associates insanity so directly with the subject of public health, especially the educational part of sanitary proceedings, and makes the affliction preventable. We will not hesitate to record our broad opinion as being just about in accordance with that, as reported in the Evening Journal, of Dr. A. F. Rogers, that "insanity is on the increase the world over," and that the two chief causes are "(1) heredity and (2) the modern high pressure methods of living"—undue excitement, erratic habits, as of diet, drink; &c.

The late eminent and lamented Dr. R. P. Howard of Montreal, it may be here noted, sometime before his death, in speaking on the subject of preventing "the increase of insanity," said: "I hold that much of the increase of insanity and imbecility is due to the present system of education, I would say the present high pressure, forcing system." Dr. Rogers is reported to have said: "Where it would all end he could not begin to say." Some time ago a magistrate in Dorsetshire, England, speaking of the increase of insanity there, said: "If lunacy continued to increase as at present, the insane would be in the majority." It need hardly be said that, before this alarming

point could be reached some more efficient means of prevention would be put into practice which would turn the current.

Gleanings from the leading Medical Journals of the world indicate that in Europe and on the continent insanity is generally on the increase, although a few think this is more apparent than real. Statistics as to the increasing number of inmates in asylums for the insane in all civilized countries, do not it is true prove clearly that there is an actual increase of lunacy out of proportion to the population, but they afford strong corroborative evidence of this contention. According to the United States Census Reports, in 1860 there were in that country but about 18,000 insane persons natives of the States. In 1870 there were 26,000; and in 1880 65,000: In 1860 there were 4 insane native persons in every 6,000 inhabitants; in 1870 there were 5 in the same number of inhabitants; and in 1880, ten,—an increase in 20 years of about 250 per cent. Statistics of suicide are more reliable, being more definite, than those of insanity, and, as we noted last month, according to a recent number of the Lancet, "the present century has witnessed a steadily increasing proclivity to suicide," and that suicide is relatively more frequent among the civilized and cultured." As suicide is closely allied to insanity, it may be fairly assumed that increase in the former clearly indicates increase in the latter. If insanity is everywhere increasing, what is there associated with this section of the country that would make it an exception? The number of cases brought to notice in the capital has it appears largely augmented and apparently out of proportion to the population, in recent years. In the face of this fact, and with even an apparent disproportionate increase generally, in other places, it is too clear that there is an actual increase of insanity in this part of the country, and therefore an absolute necessity for asylum accommodation here. Possibly if a near relative of some one of those in legislative power in Ontario were to be "committed" to the common jail here as a lunatic such accommodation would soon be forth coming.