

SUICIDE AND SCIENCE.

WHY IS IT THAT SO MANY MEN COMMIT SUICIDE?

Nearly All Methods of Self-Murder Have Been Exhausted—A Rare Thing Among Greeks, But Fashionable at Rome.

A prominent physician, who has made a study of suicide, said the other day to a Philadelphia Press reporter:

Why should a man kill himself? The popular answer is, "Because he is crazy!" Scientific men easily disprove that, but are still somewhat at sea in devising a better answer. Was the philosopher Seneca crazy when he entered the warm bath and opened his veins? Were all the hundreds of noble Romans who made happy dispatch of themselves insane? Surely not.

The Greeks rarely committed suicide, but at one time it was quite the fashion in Rome. It is the rarest of rarities for a slave to commit suicide, though a slave owner often does. Extensive inquiry fails to develop a single case of an American negro's committing suicide, though the rebave been a few cases among the mulattoes and octoroons. Shall it be said, then, that the superior race is the suicidal? Surely not, for the Greeks were at least the equals of the Romans. The solution must be sought elsewhere.

Perhaps religious belief has something to do with it, but it would be hard to prove it. One fact, however, gives us a clue. Among the lowest races of mankind, and in the lowest intellectual grades of any society, suicide is practically unknown, and among the very highest in race or culture it is extremely rare, while in the middle or lower middle classes it is most common. It is those who are midway on the course, whether as races or individuals, those who are in the struggle, who lose heart and rush unbidden into eternity. This is only another way of saying that where the battle is fiercest there are the most wounds and sudden deaths; those who have won the victory and those lying idle in camp and designing no struggle are fairly well satisfied with the situation. The cultured well-to-do Philadelphian is, on the whole, as willing to live as the naked Senegambian.

The causes assigned for suicide are to the last degree curious. In many cases well-to-do suicides simply allege that they are tired of life—the monotony of it is too much for them. An English gentleman left a note to the effect that he was tired of "coming in and going out, lying down and getting up, buttoning and unbuttoning." A London cabman wrote that he had exhausted all the pleasure of driving in this world and wanted to see how they drove in the other. Strange to say, love and poverty furnish the smallest number of cases, and mere bodily suffering the greatest. But the saddest cases are those in which a whole family dies together, and of these the Safford case which occurred some years ago was most mournful of all.

He was a druggist's assistant, and was threatened with loss of position and poverty. He succeeded in gaining his wife's consent, as his letter said, that the "whole family should go together," but she did not want to know when the fatal dose was given. So he gave her and the youngest child prussic acid in a cooling drink as they lay down for the night, and in a few minutes they expired without pain. One by one he disposed of the other five children in the same way—"all in peace and without pain, thank God," he wrote. He then drew up his will, went out and obtained the signature of witnesses, returned and wrote four letters, and then swallowed the poison and was soon a corpse. Such a case is beyond analysis by a healthful mind. Yet we cannot say it was insanity.

It is scarcely possible to conceive of any method of suicide not already employed by some one; but whenever one strikes a novel method he is sure to have a host of imitators. Hanging, drowning, poisoning, stabbing or other forms of cutting, shooting, and jumping from high places are most common. Many women have swallowed hot coals, powdered glass and other destructive articles. Cleopatra applied an asp to her bosom, and it is worth noting that she has had no imitators. Women have a horror of serpents, and they are not easily obtained at the time desired. France leads all other nations in suicides, as in the last year for which we have the record 216 persons killed themselves in each 1,000,000 of the population, and the increase is rapid. Of 7,572 suicides in one year one-fifth were in Paris, and smothering by charcoal fumes is the favorite method. In London nearly all suicides are with the knife and razor, and it is a plain truth that in this respect the British are the worst "cut throats" in Europe.

Doing the Next Best Thing.

"You are so English in your tastes I should think you would leave America and live in England."

"We can't afford that, but we make it a point to spend the winter in Bermuda and the summer in Canada."—Judge.

OF THE LONG AGO.

A Religious Opinion Which General Sherman Expressed.

General Sherman related the following anecdote of his experience in Memphis:

"It was in July, 1862, when we entered Memphis. Before the first of the troops reached the town, orders had been issued by the rebel authorities that every shop, tavern, hotel, theater or public place should be closed, and we entered a city as still as the dead. I sent for the mayor and explained to him that Memphis was being visited by American soldiers, his countrymen—that such a reception was inhospitable and must be changed, and that he must order and instruct every house to be opened forthwith. This was complied with, to the immediate satisfaction of everybody. There appeared, however, at headquarters an Episcopal clergyman named Dr. White, who somewhat demurred. I explained to him that the people of Memphis greatly needed Christian enlightenment, and he must promptly open his church doors and administer to their wants.

"But," said Mr. White, "do you know that the ritual of the Episcopal Church has been changed since the war?"

"No," said I; "it hasn't, that I know of. How so?"

"We now pray for Mr. Jefferson Davis, and not for Mr. Lincoln. I suppose I must no longer pray for Mr. Davis?"

"Yes, sir! pray for him by all means. He needs it, if anybody does."

"But am I required to pray for Mr. Lincoln?"

"Oh, no! he's all right. He don't need praying for."

It is not often that birds will attack a cat, but such a thing occurred in Ansonia, Conn. A cat caught a robin but before it had time to kill it four other robins, attracted by the cry of their companion, made such a ferocious attack upon the cat that she let the bird go, and after it had made its escape the other birds flew away.

The government has been for nine years digging up and putting together the vast collection of fossils that will occupy fully one-half of the National Museum in Washington. In the collection are the gigantic skeletons of prehistoric reptiles 100 feet in length, flying dragon with a twenty-five-foot spread of wings, and other curiosities well worth seeing.

A man will reveal more of his true character in one evening of what than in a whole winter of prayer meetings.—*Elmira Gazette.*

TAKE YOUR CHOICE

OF JESUITS OR AMERICANS.

The Grand Island Independent says the Obligation Printed Alongside the Jesuit's Oath Below, is Used by the A. P. A.—It is Not—You Can Decide What Class You Would Rather Have Govern This Country.

JESUIT'S OATH.

I, —, now in the presence of Almighty God, the blessed virgin Mary, the blessed Michael the archangel, the blessed St. John the Baptist, the holy apostles St. Peter and St. Paul and the saints and sacred host of heaven, and to you my ghostly father, I do declare from my heart, without mental reservation that the pope is Christ's vicar-general and is the true and only head of the universal church throughout the earth, and by virtue of the keys of binding and loosing given to his holiness by Jesus Christ he hath power to depose heretical kings, princes, states, commonwealths, governments, all being illegal without his sacred confirmation, and they may safely be destroyed. Therefore, to the utmost of my power, I will defend this doctrine and his holiness' rights and customs against all usurpers of the heretical or Protestant authority, especially against the now pretended authority and church in England and all adherents, in regard that they be usurped and heretical, opposing the sacred mother church of Rome.

I do renounce and disown any allegiance as due to any heretical king, prince or state, named Protestant, or obedience to any of their inferior magistrates or officers.

I do further declare the doctrine of the church of England, of the Calvinists, Huguenots and other Protestants, to be damnable, and those to be damned who will not forsake the same. I do further declare that I will help, assist and advise all or any of his holiness' agents, in any place wherever I shall be and to do my utmost to extirpate the heretical Protestant doctrine, and to destroy all their pretended power, regal or otherwise. I do further promise and declare, that notwithstanding I am dispensed with to assume any religion heretical for the propagation of the mother church's interest to keep secret and private all her agents counsels as they entrust me, and not to divulge, directly or indirectly, by word, writing or circumstance whatsoever, but to execute all which shall be proposed, given in charge or discovered unto me, by you my ghostly father.

All which I, —, do swear by the blessed trinity, and blessed sacrament which I am about to receive, to perform, on my part to keep inviolably; and do call on all the heavenly and glorious host of heaven to witness my real intentions to keep my oath. In testimony whereof, I take this most holy and blessed sacrament of the eucharist, and witness the same further with my hand and seal, in the face of this holy convent.

Now, what do you think of that? Is that not a nice thing for an American(?) citizen to wear around in this country? Swears to support the holy church (the pope) without a mental reservation, no difference in what country he may be. Swears to help destroy all heretic (Protestant) governments. Swears that he will not obey Protestant officers or magistrates. Swears that all governments are illegal unless confirmed by the church. Swears to aid in breaking down Protestantism. Swears to be solely and wholly a Roman—the obedient servant, to willing tool of the man in Rome.

A. P. A. OBLIGATION.

Grand Island Independent: The following is the obligation taken by persons joining the A. P. A. as shown by the working book as explained by cipher explanation of blank spaces found in said book:

WORKING BOOK OBLIGATION.

Deputy—You will repeat after me the following obligation, giving your name in full. (Persons affirming will raise the right hand.)

I, —, in the presence of Almighty God, and these witnesses, do solemnly promise, declare and swear, that I will support and defend the constitution of the United States, and the state where I reside; I will keep inviolate the secrets of this organization; I will obey its constitution and laws; I will use my best endeavors to promote civil and religious liberty; I will not knowingly vote for, recommend for, nor appoint, nor assist in electing, or appointing a Roman Catholic nor any person sympathizing with Roman Catholicism, to any political position whatever, and in all my public and political action will be governed by the principles of this order; I will oppose all attempts to use the public funds for any sectarian purpose whatever and will ever maintain the great principle of one general unsectarian free school organization; I will never reveal any of the signs, grips, words, passwords or other mysteries of this order, or the names of any of its members, or its numerical strength, to the uninitiated; I will hold these principles above my party affiliation; I will always give a brother of this order preference in all matters of business and also in my act of elective franchise, all things being equal. I will make prompt reports to the chief recording secretary of every initiation made by me. I will advocate the principles of this order. I will use my best endeavors to initiate all true men, and in this way help spread the order; all this I voluntarily promise, declare and swear (or affirm) without hesitation or mental reservation, or any self evasion of mind in me, whatever, so help me God." (Recently incorporated as the American League.)

How many of you who have taken the A. P. A. obligation would recognize the above as that used by the order? What outsider, after reading the Jesuit's oath in the preceding column, believes even that obligation wrong? Is it not the height of impudence for rascals, for traitors, to try to call a halt in the American movement? That oath shows what the Jesuits are here for. It shows they wear the livery of heaven to serve the devil in. While they fawn upon short-sighted Protestants they have their minions working to destroy the government which furnished them a haven when driven from nearly every nation upon the earth. For our part we would not hesitate to choose between the two oaths. We are purely and simply an American, who believes it the duty of every man who comes to live in this country and swears allegiance to the United States, to so swear allegiance as not to have a mental reservation in favor of the pope. We believe in the above obligation, and care little who knows it.