JUST BEYOND.

Past the fragrant clover-fields,
Past the forests with their yields
Of dark verdure, resting eyes
That are worn with readings wise;

Past the blue hills, barriers dear
Twixt the homes beyond and here,
Is a place (it must be so)
Whither it is good to go.

For I long for it betimes
Of a morning in my rhymes;
And the evening finds me still
Looking, longing, 'gainst my will.

It is always just beyond
What I see, and should a wand
Touch mine eyes, grown strangely dim,
They might pierce the mountain rim

And discover yonder spot,
That is sweet, but traveled not.
Yet, dim-visioned, I am sure,
Whatsoever I endure,

Bad and sad, that far away
Past the beauties of the day,
As I see them, stretched and dumb,
Is the land of Sweet-To-Come.

That is slander far and fair;
Just beyond the mountains there,
Just beyond the dim blue line,
Just beyond the silver sea,
Just beyond is fair to me and thee!
—*Rob. M. F. Horton, D.D., in S. S. Times.*

HISTORY OF SUICIDE.

It Occurs Most in Summer, and Among the Cultured.

Three Times as Many Men as Women Take Their Own Lives—Day the Favored Time, and Middle Age the Popular Period.

"Any weather," said Dr. Hamilton to a New York *Sun* reporter, "which lowers the vitality of a person strengthens the disposition to commit suicide. There is nothing very strange about that, odd as it seems, to say that the weather influences suicide. We all know how common it is to feel blue and low-spirited on dark, muggy days. The depression of spirits at such times in the case of an emotional person—and emotional people are the ones who commit suicide—may give the decisive and concluding impulse to take his own life. Of course the dark, muggy day alone is not sufficient and does not alone give the suicidal impulse; it merely forms the last straw on the camel's back. We must suppose that the disposition toward suicide from some of the great causes is present in force.

"There have been some very queer notions held on this point. It was an old slander against Englishmen, which Montesquieu quoted, I think, that Englishmen were more prone to suicide than other people on account of the dark, foggy days of their country's climate. It was a plausible statement, and was generally regarded as true until an industrious gatherer of statistics proved that in Holland, where there is much more fog and darkness than in England, there is much less suicide. So November, on account of its gloomy weather has always borne a bad name as a month of suicides; but statistics gathered from all parts of the world show that there are more suicides in May than in November, and that, generally, there are more suicides in summer than in the winter days. It was proven by data collected for nine years in this country, from 1847 to 1856, that there were averaged 374 suicides in May to 131 in November, while the greatest number of suicides was found in the months of June and July. I believe that data gathered since then still bears these figures out. So, you see that the warm weather has more to do with it than cloudy weather. The November days, cloudy as they are, are cold and stimulating, and the vitality of one's system is not lowered a great deal in them.

"To make a general statement, it is upon a day when the dark sky and the high temperature are joined when the friends of the would-be suicide want to look out for him. The warm, humid, cloudy atmosphere—this is what influences suicide in a very appreciable degree. Villaneuve observed this fact at Paris, and he declared that as long as the barometer indicated stormy weather this state of things continued. In June, 1806, at Rouen, France, over sixty voluntary deaths took place, the air at the time being remarkably humid and warm and the days dark; and in July and August of the same year, during the prevalence of the same weather, there were more than three hundred suicides in Copenhagen, Denmark. These facts are well known in medical history. In Italy the effect upon the rate of suicide of sustained high temperature, accompanied by a moisture, has long been noticed."

"Some years ago," continued Dr. Hamilton, "I gave considerable attention to the subject of suicide here in New York, both as regards the point upon which we were talking and other particulars. I found that the people who committed suicide, so far as nationality was concerned, were mostly Germans. This is but natural, considering the intensely emotional character of the German people. Classed by occupations, clerks are the most suicidal set of people, and the reason for this fact is not very far off, either. The young men are struggling for situation and support, and they are exposed, as are hardly any other class of people, to the pitfalls of the great city. The temptations of vice come to them with great force, and when they have once yielded and become entangled suicide is often the next thing thought of.

"Of modes of suicide, poisoning is by far the favorite. I looked up the subject between 1866 and 1872, and I found that of over 600 suicides here in these years 212 were suicides by poisoning. The preference in poisons was for arsenic, and this in its commonest form, Paris green. Women almost always poison themselves, uneducated women using Paris green, and educated women chloral or morphine. The frequency with which Paris green is used is due simply to the easiness with which it can be obtained. The laws governing the sale of the different kinds of poison are not stringent enough.

"In London hanging is the popular form of suicide, though voluntary starvation used to be. In France people drown themselves or die from suffocation by inhaling charcoal fumes. It is a singular fact that of the people who shoot themselves seventy-five per cent. shoot themselves in the mouth. At least this was the case at the time I gathered facts about the matter. Suiciding by jumping from a great height is a horrible way of killing one's self, but it is often done. A man is inclined to think that many cases of this character which are set down as such are not intentional suicides, but instances in which the morbid tendency which nearly every one feels when at a great height to throw one's self down, has overpowered the will and the brain. I myself once had a terrible experience of this character when ascending the mountain Corcovado, in the harbor of Rio Janeiro. It was with difficulty that I overcame a fearful restless feeling and impulse to throw myself down into the blue sea, two thousand feet below me. A fellow physician once told me that he had a patient who never dared to sleep on the third and fourth floor of a house because of his fear of yielding to an irresistible impulse to throw himself out of the window.

"In this great city the crowding of poor people into tenement houses lowers their vitality and nervous tone, and makes suicide easy to happen among them. The labor wars, the unsuccessful strikes, the worriment and disasters which trades unions bring—these are causes of suicide among the poor as patent, just now, as any that I know. In the upper ranks it is the continual speculative scheming, the hurry and worry and strain of trying to get rich quickly, that brings on suicide like the night at the close of every business day. The causes which tempt men to commit suicide must be removed by the statesman and the economist rather than by the physician."

Another very eminent physician of the city, who did not want the reporter under any circumstances to mention his name, said that he agreed entirely with Dr. Hamilton's statement that hot, "muggy" weather was the weather which suicide claimed as its own.

"Villaneuve, from whom we get a large share of our information in this particular," said the physician, "tells us that during the seven years in which he gathered statistics in France, in the spring there were 937 suicides; in the summer, 983; in the autumn, 627, and in the winter, 648. Villaneuve also declared that in London, Hamburg, Copenhagen and Rouen, the maximum number of suicides occured in July, and the minimum number in October and November. It has been proven, I believe, that on the continent of Europe suicide diminishes with the lattitude, the Danes committing suicide the most and the Portugese the least. The difference between the prevalence of suicide in Denmark and Portugal is as 35 to 1.

"People should always kill themselves more in large towns than in the country, because in the former places the great causes of suicide, poverty and vice, are most abundant. Suicides take place, too, far more among civilized than among barbarous people; among people instructed and well read more than among the ignorant. Intelligence raises the aspirations of men, and when these aspirations are crushed by the great movements of our complex civilization suicide follows naturally. Quetelet, the greatest statistician that ever lived, proved that wherever crimes against the person are rife and ratio of suicide is comparatively small, but that where crimes against poperty were abundant the ratio of suicide was much higher. These are singular facts, too, that so few suicides take place in the night time, that three times as many men commit suidide as women, and that the favorite age at which people kill themselves is in middle life."

The theory of the learned doctors received strong confirmation by data furnished the reporter by Dr. John T. Nagle, the City's Registrar of Vital Statistics. Dr. Nagle told the reporter that while in this city, Germans committed suicide far more than any other race of people, the Irish committed suicide far less.

"I believe," said the doctor, "that temperament and the national characteristics and peculiarities of people have a good deal more to do with suicide than religion or the weather, that is speaking absolutely. It is said that Germans kill themselves here out of homesickness, but there are as many Irish people here as Germans.

"Now, 235 people killed themselves here last year, and of these 114 were Germans. The number of suicides, by months was as follows: January, 10; February, 15; March, 22; April, 18; May, 24; June, 15; July, 20; August, 23; September, 19; October, 20; November, 21; December, 18. So you see the greatest number of suicides were in May, July and August, in the hot, "muggy," months. Of the 235 suicides 183 were men and 52 were women. Only one of these 235 was a colored person. It is an exceedingly rare thing for a colored person to commit suicide. In 1881 I made a comparison of the suicidal statistics for the past eleven years, and discovered the almost incredible fact that of 1,521 deaths by suicide in this city only three of the number were among the colored population. The statistics for these eleven years showed a state of things precisely similar to that of last year. Six hundred and twenty-six out of the 1,521 suicides were Germans. More suicides were committed in the hot months than in the cold; 503 people of the 1,521 took poison, and over 200 of the 503 took arsenic in the form of Paris green. After poisoning, shooting and hanging were the favorite means of self-murder. The proportion of men and women held curiously the same—1,193 men to 328 women.

"At the same time that I dug out these eleven-year statistics I sent inquiries to cities all over the world asking for statistics of suicide in the past year—1880. Here is a statement which shows the suicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants in some of the prominent cities. I don't think New York fares very badly."

Dr. Nagle handed the reporter the statement, as follows:

	Rate per 100,000.	Relative Order.
New York	13.19	12
Philadelphia	8.03	15
Brooklyn	5.47	16
Boston	1.04	13
San Francisco	7.65	2
Baltimore	5.32	17
London	9.54	14
Berlin	27.44	5
Vienna	26.67	3
Copenhagen	29.15	4
Geneva	37.21	1
Buenos Ayres	4.43	18
Glasgow	2.7	20
Edinburgh	3.05	19
Aberdeen	1.94	21
Stockholm	19.97	8
Brussels	21.8	6
Havre	22.00	7
Madrid	16.92	9
Melbourne	16.74	10
Calcutta	13.50	11

"The city which had by far the greatest rate of suicide," continued Dr. Nagle, "was Gera, in Germany, which presented the enormous rate of 92.01 per 100,000 inhabitants, or pretty nearly one man in a thousand. I received no information to account for this. Neither do I understand why the rate of suicide in San Francisco, in our country, is so large. The low rate in Scotland is remarkable.

"Writers have claimed that there have been epidemics of suicide in foreign countries, but I have never been able to find any trace of such a thing in this city. A table of the proportion of the suicidal deaths to the total population of the city since 1804 shows that the rate rises or falls year by year in accordance with laws, which we do not yet understand. The highest rate of suicide we have ever had was in 1805, when there was 1 suicide to every 3,017 inhabitants. This rate gradually lowered until 1812, when there was 1 suicide in every 29,367 inhabitants. The very next year came a fearful drop to 1 suicide in every 9,507 of the population. The lowest proportionate number of suicides was in 1864, when there was 1 suicide to 23,827 people. In 1874, right after the great financial panic, the suicides were more in number than at any time for forty years—1 in every 5,515 people.

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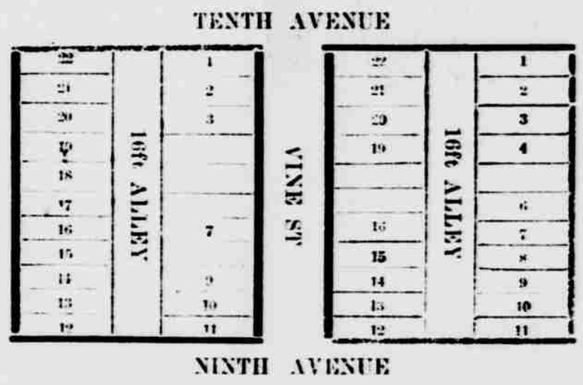

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