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WEDNESDAY, JULY 11, 1900.

DAILY, WEEKLY AND SEMI-WEEKLY

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Michael G. Mulhall, the noted statistician, has been analyzing the latest available figures representing the condition of the United States, with a view to determining how matters stand in the republic at the end of the nineteenth century, and he represents the result of his estimates in the shape of a "Forecast of the Twelfth Census," which is published in the July number of the North American Review. He finds that in population—which he estimates at 76,200,000—wealth, education, mining, manufactures and railroads, the country has made vast strides, whereas the advance in agriculture has somewhat lagged. Says Mr. Mulhall: "The daily progress of the United States during the current decade is briefly shown thus: An increase of 4,000 in population, of 800 school children, of 29,000 acres under farms, of \$7,500,000 in wealth, of \$1,100,000 in manufactures. These figures are really stupendous, but there is motive for serious reflection in the fact that agriculture does not keep pace either with any other branch of industry or with population."

### SUICIDE DISCUSSED.

The subject of suicide has always been of interest to mankind, and it is claimed by many writers that the act is prima facie evidence of an insane mind. That this is frequently the fact all will concede, but there are many instances where the fact of self-killing cannot be attributed to an insane impulse. The earliest records of the human race tell us that the custom of self-destruction existed from the remotest antiquity. Many ancient peoples were taught to look upon the act as logical, and even to regard it, from the standpoint of their religion, as virtuous and praiseworthy. Some religions went so far as to solemnize suicide and to surround it with an impressive public ceremony. The believers in the doctrine of transmigration of souls frequently sought, and I believe at the present time still seek, an improvement in their condition by the performance of the act of self-destruction. In Japan the act of hari-kari was believed to relieve the person committing it of all earthly blame for any misfortune or mistake. Some of the inhabitants of the Grecian Archipelago poisoned themselves after reaching the age of sixty in order that the younger generation could have greater abundance. We are told that the senate of Marseilles, when the latter belonged to Greece, heard the petitions of would-be suicides and approved or disapproved of the expediency of the act, placing poison at the disposal of those whose motives were approved.

Carefully gathered statistics show that suicide during the present century has been steadily increasing. According to Farr, the great English statistician, the annual number of suicides in England and Wales amounted to 62 per million inhabitants prior to 1870. This slightly increased until 1876, when we find a proportion of 66.6 per million. In the year 1882 the number of suicides in England and Wales was 74 per million inhabitants. These figures, when compared to the suicide records of Continental Europe, become quite insignificant. Austria records about 158 suicides per million annually, Belgium 105, Denmark 225, France 191, and Saxony 371. It would seem that the German and Scandinavian races furnish the largest numbers. In this country not all of the states furnish exact statistics, and there are consequently no statistics for the whole United States. It would appear, however, that our suicide rate is slightly in excess of that of Great Britain and not far from 100 per million annually.

Morselli, who wrote a work on suicide, published in Milan in 1879 and translated in New York in 1882, made one of the most careful studies of suicide. This writer is very much against the idea that the act is an evidence of insanity. He says "Suicide is a social fact, and its nature may now be reckoned among the most certain and valuable discoveries of experimental psychology," and further characterizes it "as an effect of the struggle for existence and of human selection which works according to the laws of evolution among civilized people."

The state of New York believes the act to be a rational one, since it imposes a punishment, which of course would not be consistent if it viewed the act as one of insane impulse. Of course, it is conceded that many cases of suicide are difficult to explain or any other theory than that of insanity, for there is frequently a want of motive. But where a definite motive exists, such as the desire to escape from an incurable painful disease or what may seem to be the unbearable hardships of poverty, we cannot look upon the act as one of insanity.

The causes which predispose people to suicide are quite numerous, and it is probable that heredity is one of the most important of these. That suicidal tendencies may be handed down by transmission from father to son is a well-established fact. The offspring of a suicidal parent may inherit a system favorable to the development of nervous affections which predispose to self-destruction.

Among savage races suicide is comparatively rare, and this would lead us to draw the conclusion that education

predisposes to the act. Some occupations have been shown to have a predisposing influence. Physicians and chemists have a high percentage of suicide among their number, probably because they are in such close relation with poisons, means are easy and they are often oppressed by overwork. We also find that widowers, bachelors and divorced women are more apt to commit suicide than those who lead less solitary lives. Many attempts have been made to show that climate and temperature have peculiar predisposing effects in causing persons to commit suicide. Thus the cold, wet climate of England has been looked upon as conducive to self-destruction. Montesquieu declared that England was the best land of these as a statement which statistics quite fail to uphold.

The maximum number is reached in most countries in May and June, a period when nature would seem to make life most pleasant. In Saxony, however, where the greatest number of suicides occur, July is the favored month. It would seem as though the suicide shrunk from burial during the cold winter months, and that the idea that the earth was a more attractive resting place during the spring and summer months determined this warm-weather preference for the act.

In a general way it may be said that anything which depresses the system of an individual tends to direct his mind to self-destruction. The saying and answer—"Is life worth living?" "It depends upon the liver"—would lead one to think that the condition of the liver might play an important part in determining suicide. As a matter of fact, we know that a very large proportion of suicides are those who use alcoholic beverages to excess. These, we know, have a most pernicious effect upon the liver and kidneys, the functions of which are to an extent interdependent. Drunkenness, laziness and selfishness go hand in hand, and it needs no more to tell us that these are predisposing causes and are the real factors which bring about the hard-luck conditions that induce individuals to make their escape from the world.

### After Marriage

They are going to be together just as much as before; going to ride the wheel, take little pleasure jaunts, etc., enjoying everything together. Isn't that what many a young couple promise each other? And yet, how very soon the wife begins to say "No, I don't think I care to go. You go alone, dear." Young women don't reckon on the great physical changes which follow marriage. How can they when they are allowed to grow up in entire ignorance of vital physiological facts? They feel languid, weak and nervous. Sometimes there is headache and backache. The pulse no more leaps in answer to the thought of a spin on the wheel. "Common" who have used Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, know how promptly the languor, headache, backache, nervousness and weakness are cured by this medicine. Many husbands write in gratitude to Dr. Pierce for the medicine which gives them back the wife's companionship, as it gives her back her health.



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