

TWIN VICES.

AN Italian savant has been at pains to compile statistics on the matter of suicide, a crime that like divorce is on the increase every year in countries that esteem themselves highly civilized. Of course suicide like divorce, may be the distinguishing feature of the coming civilization; but, like divorce, it has certainly neither part nor parcel in the civilization founded by Christ. Both are diametrically opposed to Christian doctrine and practice from the beginning. Both run very near each other. In countries calling themselves Christian, where divorce or civil marriage is most practiced, will be found a larger crop of suicides than in those where such practice is not allowed or is not common. We draw no inference from this, but simply note a fact which has not been stated by the Italian savant. If an inference is to be drawn, it would be this: that where there is decay of Christian faith there will be decay of public morals, on a large scale. People will live ostensibly within the law up to a certain point. They will not openly commit acts that would condemn and make them shunned of their fellows. They must live in and of the world; and the world being a social community demands and exacts certain laws of public observance for its own preservation. For to the mass as to the individual the wages of sin is death. The history of the decay of once mighty empires and peoples tell this one story. The rise by hardy virtue, courage, self sacrifice, ambition, faith: the fall by inches, corruption, enervation, sin. There is a long succession of deluges in this world. If God does not wipe out the race for their crimes as he did before Noah, they perform the work of self-annihilation themselves. Natural suicides may be slow, but they are effective in the end.

Statistics show that suicides are most numerous in countries where the Christian faith, and consequently the Christian laws have weakened their hold on the masses of the people. Germany heads the list, France, Austria, England, Italy follow in close order. Ireland stands very low down, within one or two of the last which is Croatia. The United States are pushing rapidly to the front, while in the matter of divorces we are still best in the world.

France, Austria, and Italy, which stand so high on this black list will of course be set down as Catholic countries. Well, we do not say that Catholic countries are exempt from vice any more than Protestant countries. But in France, Austria, and Italy from the last century down terrible blows have been struck at the Christian Church by the monarchs and statesmen of those lands. In France the Revolution destroyed the Church altogether for the time being, and the Napoleons only restored it with the view of making it a sort of appendage of their throne. In Austria Joseph II., tried to convert it into a Church of his own creation, a miserable, swaddled State affair. In Italy all the world has seen what befell the Church. So that while there are multitudes of Catholics and very good ones happily in all these nations, the tendency of the ruling power has been against the freedom and development of the Christian Church. Moreover, it is an acknowledged fact that suicide and divorce are equally rare among practical Catholics.

The suicide is a person who has lost practical faith in this world or the next. Things have gone badly with him. He has been living badly. He had a run of pleasure. The pleasure soon palled, and left him a wreck, with nothing more to whet his jaded appetite. Life was actually no longer worth living to him, so he took in his own hands, what he had so persistently abused, and cut the thread that bound it to living humanity. It appeared the easiest exit from a world in which he only saw a miserable future. Let the hereafter see to itself.

For it is not poverty and suffering for misfortune's sake alone that incite to suicide. It is chiefly loss of faith in a helping God and loss of the little sweetness that a man forgetting God finds in life. There is no greater general poverty and suffering in all the world than in Ireland; yet there the percentage of suicide is singularly small as compared with more prosperous countries and peoples. The reason is that the Irish have a strong and abiding faith in God, and having that, they have a strong and abiding faith in themselves and in their own future. So with them while there is life there is hope though they sit by an empty table and a fireless hearth.

The increasing number of suicides in this country is alarming. Misery cannot be assigned as a cause. It will be found in the greater number of cases to be that misery which is brought on by steady indulgence in vicious habits. These drain all that is good and noble in man and leave him among the husks of swine.

While our public press is congratulating the country as being on the whole a very superior country and the people a very superior people, it loses sight of these salient features of our advanced state. If money and an abundance of the good things of life are all that our ambition and hope care to attain, that we have already, as other peoples have had before us. But if we only use these materials to indulge sensuality of whatever kind the fruit garnered in our national barn will soon turn to ashes on our lips. Greater than all wealth or worth is humble faith in a Creator and Lord; in one above us all, who is at once a Saviour and a Judge. Judging by the signs of the times, public faith in Him is undergoing a rapid decay. Even the Churches that we build, saving the Catholic, partake more of a business enterprise than an act of divine worship. A good church and a good preacher pay, as does a good restaurant or a good theatre. But the faith that alone makes a nation steadfast and good is dwindling into an experiment. The result is apparent. We make ourselves the judges of what is good and evil. When we tire of wife or husband we leave them, the law of the land doing all in its power to help us. When we tire of life we take it, and people are not surprised.—*Catholic Review.*

Mr. Thomas James, of Westport, has sent in his resignation of the agency of the N.Z. TABLET Company.

The sum of £51 3s., subscribed at Addison's Flat in aid of the Land League, has been forwarded to the Archbishop of Cashel.

Commercial.

MR. DONALD STRONACH (on behalf of the New Zealand Loan and Mercantile Agency Company, Limited), reports for the week ending 21st December as follows:—

Fat Cattle.—The supply was an average one, consisting of 229 head (of which about 70 were stores or half-fat), and with fair competition last week's decline was recovered. Bullocks fetched up to £10 2s 6d, and cows £7 7s 6d. We sold drafts on account of Mr. Andrew McLaren (fat bullocks) at from £7 17s 6d to £9 2s 6d, and on account of Messrs. Brugh Brothers 74 head of stores and half-fat cattle as reported below. We quote prime beef 22s 6d per 100lbs.

Fat Calves.—18 were offered and sold at up to 27s each.

Fat Sheep.—The supply was very small, consisting of only 908 head, 400 being merinos, the remainder cross-breds. Trade demand, though not very spirited, resulted in an improvement on last week's low prices to the extent of 1s 6d to 2s per head. Cross-breds ranged from 10s 6d to 13s, and merinos from 5s 6d to 8s 3d. We sold drafts as follows: On account of Messrs. J. and S. Wilson, 126 cross-breds at 10s 3d; and on account of Mr. James Mein, 20 at 10s 9d; on account of Messrs. Millington Bros., 193 merinos at 7s 6d per head. We quote cross-bred mutton fully 2d per lb.

Fat Lambs were in good supply, 662 being penned, which sold at from 5s to 9s 9d. We sold drafts on account of the following constituents:—Messrs. Ross Bros., 100 at 7s to 7s 6d; Mr. William Shand, 84 at 8s to 8s 6d; Messrs. J. and S. Wilson, 90 at 8s 9d to 9s 9d; Mr. Johnston, Kaitiaki, 40 at 4s 3d to 5s; Mr. James Mein, 20 at 8s per head.

Fat Pigs.—190 were sold at from 5s to 41s per head.

Store Cattle continue in good demand. We sold on account of Messrs. Bright Bros. seventy-four head of store and half-fat cattle at from £4 15s to £8 12s 6d for bullocks, £2 7s to £3 17s 6d for cows, and 30s for yearlings.

Store Sheep.—Young sheep are still very scarce, while the demand continues very strong.

Wool.—We held our first regular wool sale for the present season at the Otago Wool Stores on Tuesday, the 19th inst. Competition for the better descriptions of cross-breds was fairly sustained, but for merinoes was not so brisk. Prices showed a slight decline on opening rates of last year, following the course of the London markets. We sold 342 bales and fourteen bags. Cross-bred realised as follows:—Greasy, 8½d to 10½d; scoured, 1s 2d to 1s merino (greasy), 9d to 11½d; washed, 12½d; and scoured, 1s 2d to 1s 10½d.

Sheepskins.—We offered a good catalogue on Monday before a representative attendance of buyers. Competition was, however, lacking in spirit, and we must report a decline of about 6d each on heavy skins. Butchers' cross-breds realised from 4s 9d to 5s 11d, and merinoes 4s to 5s 8d; lambskins, 1s to 1s 7d; and pelts, 6d to 1s 1d.

Rabbit-skins.—We did not offer any this week.

Hides.—We have placed all coming to hand at last quotations—say 4d to 4½d per lb for wet-salted, according to condition and weight.

Tallow.—Our sale on Monday showed a decided improvement in the market, biddings being active at an advance of 1s per cwt. We cleared all lots offered as follows:—Well-rendered tallow, 30s to 30½ 6d; fair, 28s 6d; low, 23s to 23s 6d per cwt. Butchers' rough fat: Fair to good, 19s to 21s 6d; inferior, 10s per cwt.

Grain.—There is no alteration to report in the grain market. Wheat is still in limited demand; prime samples would find buyers without difficulty, but are scarce. We repeat quotations: Prime milling, 4s 4d; medium, 3s 6d to 4s; inferior, 2s 3d to 3s 3d per bushel. Oats are dull at last prices, which are nominal—say, prime milling, 1s 11d to 2s; good bright feed, 1s 10d to 1s 10½d; inferior and discoloured, 1s 6d to 1s 8d. Barley: Nothing to report.

PRODUCE MARKET—DEC 14, 1881.

MR. F. MEENAN, Great King street, reports:—Wholesale prices: Oats, 1s 8d to 2s per bushel; milling wheat, 4s 3d to 4s 6d per bushel; fowls' feed, 2s to 3s; barley, malting, 2s 6d to 3s 6d; feed, 1s 6d to 2s 6d per bushel; hay, £4 per ton; chaff, £3 15s per ton; straw, £2 per ton; bran, £3 15s per ton; pollard, £4 10s per ton; flour, £10 to £10 10s per ton; oatmeal, £10 10s to £11 per ton; butter, fresh, 6d to 8d, salt, 6d to 7d; eggs, 10d; bacon, in rolls, 7d to 7½d; side, 7½d; hams, 10d; fresh pork, 4d per lb.; potatoes, old, £2 to £2 10s per ton; new, 9s per cwt.

MESSRS. MERCER AND McDONALD, Rattray street, report:—Fresh butter, best and favourite brands (in 1lb. and ½lb. prints), 8d to 9d; good ordinary butter, 6d; eggs, 9d per dozen; roll bacon, 7d per lb. Good salt butter, in kegs, no demand; cheese 4d per lb, new cheese 4½d per lb.

The Queen's Hotel, Oamaru, now opened by Mr. James Markham is a building that, of its kind, can hardly be surpassed in the colony. Travellers and visitors will find it, in every respect, a first-class establishment, and the enterprise of the proprietor deserves encouragement by obtaining a large share of public patronage.

Messrs. G. and T. Young, of Princes street, Dunedin, have just received from Europe a very fine selection of watches, jewellery, clocks, silver and plated goods, especially chosen with the view of offering to their patrons and the public generally a choice stock from which to select their Christmas and New Year's presents. The firm are able to offer their goods at exceptionally low prices.

Mr. L. Grimaldi invites inspection of his excellent stock of tea, sugar, and general groceries, of which he is engaged in disposing, at unprecedentedly low prices, at the Hillside Grocery Store, South Dunedin.