

cowardice of heart, a feebleness of spirit, not only contemptible, but destructive of all those qualities which go to the making of a great and self-respecting and, especially, a Christian people. We say nothing of the religious aspect of the question, for a truly religious person would no more commit the acts which lead to suicide than he would resort to suicide to avoid the consequences of the crime.

It is, however, remarkable that such a state of things should exist where the restraints of religion are very fully exercised, and very generally regarded. It is equally surprising that it should exist in a country which is peaceful and prosperous, where poverty in its extreme form is almost non-existent—where both civil and religious liberty prevail to the fullest extent, where public opinion is very tolerant, and where even the law is not extreme to mark what is done amiss—where, in fact, as compared with many other countries, no conditions prevail which would seem to give a plausible excuse for the commission of the crime, for crime it is, of self-destruction.

From a legal aspect, how should this question be regarded? Can the law in any way step in to put a check upon a practice so sinful and degrading? From the legal as well as the religious aspect *felo de se* is a crime, and as such, in olden times, it was regarded, and, as far as possible, punished. To reach the criminal personally after he had put himself out of all jurisdiction was of course not possible, but he was branded as an outcast, his body was refused Christian burial, and was interred at a cross-road with a stake driven through it. Modern sentiment is less severe. If a jury is called on to deal with the cause of death it decides, whatever the circumstances were, that the act of self-murder was committed under stress of temporary insanity. The same merciful view is taken by the church, and the crime is practically condoned at the grave. The law might deal with suicide as it does with treason by confiscation of the worldly effects of the guilty party, and to those who were leaving property behind them it might be a deterrent to know that such would be the case. In many cases, however, suicide is the