

Canada Law Journal.

VOL. XLIV.

JULY.

NOS. 13 AND 14.

THE CRIME OF SUICIDE.

The number of cases of suicide occurring both in Canada and the United States is simply appalling. Not a day passes without mention of some instance of a person either having ended, or tried to end, a life which seemed to be no longer worth living. Neither sex, nor age, nor any condition of life, appears to be exempt from the temptation of thus seeking to cure the ills which all flesh is heir to. Family disputes, a disappointment in love, financial difficulties, depression of spirits, ill health, worry of any kind, are all given as reasons why men and women, and even boys and girls, choose rather to face the actualities, or what they may fancy to be the possibilities of a future state, than to struggle against the often very trifling difficulties sure to be met with in our present existence.

A man quarrels with his wife—he first shoots her and then, to save further trouble, he shoots himself. There is a grave humour about this method of settling matrimonial differences that seems to be a fascination—so many instances of it do we read about. A man speculates with other people's money—loses it, becomes a defaulter, and then, sooner than face the consequences of his own acts, seeks refuge in some method of suicide. Two lovers fall out, and the man kills the woman to punish her for her want of appreciation, and then kills himself by way of expiation. Men and women of all ages and conditions, suffering from ill health, or giving way to worry of any kind, or often from no conceivable motive whatever, take their own lives without any more apparent sense of wrong-doing than they would feel in committing the most venial of offences.

The existence of this state of things is a public calamity of the most serious character, for it shews, as to the mental condition of a large class of the population, a want of moral rectitude,