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ALL THE WORLD OVER.

*"I must have liberty,
Withal as large a charter as the wind—
To blow on whom I please."*

STRIKES and depressed business, low prices and no profits, reduced output and consumption still more reduced, fill most persons with despair in these days. But it is only in such times as prevail now that the foundations of abundant prosperity are laid. The strain of low prices and reduced demand is in all establishments, forcing economy and efficiency. New processes are being worked out, small savings are made, machinery is improved, new plant is found necessary, the standard for workmen has to be raised. Poor hands are dropped. More are required of the good ones. Pay lists are revised. Purchases are made more sharply. Much neglected when business is rushing is now looked after and straightened out. While this is going on outside of all establishments in the general world of trade and manufacture, the remorseless selection of the fittest is taking place. The weaker establishments are crowded to the wall. Only plants which can work at the narrowest margin can be kept going at all. The rest shut down or go out of business. Factories and mills poorly placed or provided with inefficient plant are closed never to be reopened. They will stand for years melancholy industrial ruins. These changes and improvements and this rigorous selection work infinite suffering and loss; but in time the country gets down to bed-rock. Cheap prices can be met with profits. In

spite of the hard times, establishments with the best plant and well managed with rigorous economy, find they are making little money. At length prices begin to lift a bit, and the long, hard preparation produces its effect in a sudden expansion of product, joined to great profits due to the cheapness of production secured under pressure of hard times. Above all and besides all, these are days when everybody is saving, and the savings of everybody fast create a great mass of capital on whose flood-tide legitimate business is built. When a swift-going stream is checked by obstacles in its natural course, it may be impeded and dammed, but it is certain to break away and move onward to the outlet. It is the same way with trade, and the impediment which it has received from a variety of causes has long held it back from its true channels. For some months it has been gradually gathering force to sweep remaining obstacles, and the time is not far distant when it will be found again flowing onward in an irresistible current which has gained in volume and power by its temporary restraint.

That man should voluntarily rob himself of life is in direct opposition to the primary instinct of self preservation. It has been strongly urged by some that suicide is reprehensible under any circumstances. Irrespective of the nature of the suffering to which some may be subjected, they claim that the suicide flies in the face of Providence. All nations have discountenanced self-destruction, many religions showing their disapproval by relegating suicides to the most desolate place in the burying ground, and permitting nothing in the way of memorials. Again, it is held that so strong is the desire for life with the normal being, that it is only on the supposition of temporary mental derangement that we can in any way reconcile self-destruction with the laws of Nature.

Men suffer untold miseries without one ray of comfort. It is not living, but mere existence. They are part of the universe, but do not partake of its benefits. Their lives in no way conform to the functions for which they were created, and yet they drag out their weary days. To discuss suicide in all its phases would be a most exacting ordeal. Shakespere epitomizes its every feature in Hamlet's Soliloquy on Death:

Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourne
No traveller returns, puzzles the will;
And makes us rather bear the ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of.

It follows that the suicide must abandon faith in present and future, in God and man. Hope is dead. Were there the faintest semblance of hope, despondency would hesitate before rending the thread of life. The pulpit has aimed to discourage man doing away with himself by threatening that such an act would forfeit all claim to salvation. The Redeemer endured the tortures of the Cross with patient resignation, and we are exhorted to bear our cross with the same trust, that we are carrying out some great purpose, the ultimate benefits of which we have not the remotest conception.

It is indisputable that in many cases self-destruction is the result of calm pre-determination, in which the pros and cons are weighed by a mind that sees in life only a prolongation of unhappiness. The causes of suicide are as varied as life itself. Disappointment or frustration of cherished hopes, by reverses in business or love is, no doubt, responsible in most cases for the sudden plunge, the deadly vial, or self-inflicted mortal wound of pistol or knife.

Now that there is such a prevalence of distress, it behooves creditors to show humanity, and not drive their debtors to such an extremity, that death is eagerly sought as the only panacea for earthly solicitude and endless care.

Men with comfortable homes and fat bank accounts can be found in this city to-day mercilessly hounding honest toilers, whose inability to liquidate is entirely due to extraneous circumstances, which could not be foreseen or guarded against. But such is the greed for gold, such the insatiable desire to possess more than one's neighbor, that men, professedly Christians, who attend church every Sunday and pose as exemplary beings, without a pang of remorse, instruct the bailiff to distrain for rent. The unfortunate tenants of wealthy landlords are turned penniless in the street, and yet these same landlords, whose hearts have no room for compassion, have no doubt filled their money bags from the earnings of the poor by methods which cannot bear scrutiny. These mercenary creatures, who look with callous indifference on the