

The Wealth of Great Britain. Some faint conception of the enormous wealth of the people of the United Kingdom may be gathered from figures recently published, giving the total sum paid for Estate Duty during the last financial year—nearly seventy millions of dollars. Of course, the contemplation of such a huge amount serves to illustrate the unequal distribution of money, and might be used by a panderer to popular prejudice to provoke the passions of the poor. But the large majority of people will be content to regard the payment of so many millions as pleasing evidence that the wealth of Great Britain is apparently inexhaustible.

Reforming the Monetary System. The American people having again expressed, with no uncertain sound, their opinion of silverism, the papers devoted to commercial and financial interests are urging the Government to permit nothing to interfere with further progress in the direction of necessary reforms in the monetary system. In view of the possible retirement, in March, of Mr. Gage, from the position of Secretary of the Treasury, the New York "Journal of Commerce" is asking that a banker or a public man, "whose relation to the national finances is a guarantee of his soundness of judgment, as well as his correctness of information" should be Mr. Gage's successor.

There is a strong hint to the present Administration, in this reference to the importance of either inducing Secretary Gage to serve his country another four years, or to select "a large man" to fill the vacancy. The journal boldly says:

"It is not sufficient that he should be an intimate friend of the President; no "original McKinley man," no ambitious person who is using his personal relations for his political advancement, no experimenter, is called for at this time. It is not sufficient that a man should be antagonistic to free silver; that virtue is becoming common enough to lose much of its relative importance."

We hope that this is not intended as a reminder to the President that he has been known to appoint "intimate friends" to positions for which they were eminently unfitted. However, the advice is very sound and timely.

Suicides Among Soldiers.

"Jest roll to your rifle and blow out your brains."

It cannot but suggest melancholy and mournful reflections to know that suicide is becoming more and more prevalent in all countries. At least, so says Mr. Skelton, who has studied the subject and who deals with the question in the "Nineteenth Century," for October. Incidentally, he directs attention to the curious fact that the percentage of suicides among soldiers is much greater than among civilians, and he furnishes the following interesting figures

in support of his contention. Among the English people there are, yearly, 76 suicides per million; among British soldiers, 210 per million; among French soldiers, 280 per million; Italian soldiers, 380 per million; German soldiers, 550 per million, and Austrian soldiers, 1,209 per million. The writer upon this important, even if depressing, matter, attributes the great increase of suicides among soldiers to the terrible discipline and cruelty of officers towards their men. It seems that death is considered preferable by sensitive "rankers," to the sneers, insults and cruelty practiced upon them.

We think something is due in the way of explanation to officers as well as to the men figuring in this depressing story of suicide, and we hope to hear Mr. Skelton's sources of information discredited.

Officers and Men.

Nowhere could be found a more desirable lot of recruits for the Royal Naval Reserve than in Newfoundland, and we are glad to note that the British Government is at last making an effort to induce the men of that sea-girt possession of the Empire to fit themselves for service in case of need on the battle-ships of the nation. On Saturday last, fifty Newfoundland fishermen embarked on H.M.S. Charybdis, for Halifax, where they will undergo a course of training. The result of this experiment will be watched with no little interest.

So far as the immediate future of this scheme is concerned, it will largely depend upon the way in which the men are treated on board the ships of Her Majesty. Its success may be thus retarded or hastened. If the men are treated sympathetically and with good feeling, they will return to Newfoundland says the "Royal Gazette" of St. John's, to "spread the praises of the service around the whole island, and to be centres for the propaganda of the Naval Reserve wherever they live." It should be remembered these Newfoundland fishermen have lived practically untrammelled lives, and, though, of course, they will be subject to the same discipline as others in Her Majesty's service, that to them it will be much more irksome than to Ralph Rackstraw, "the smartest topman in all the fleet." They will be willing and intelligent men, but they must be treated with consideration and more than all else, sympathy. If whoever has charge of the men will endeavour to win their confidence and esteem, we feel sure, that not in Her Majesty's navy will be found more loyal hearts or willing hands.

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