

end of four cross roads, with a stake driven through it; and some of us know a very fashionable square to-day, which has been in its time quite a cemetery of suicides. But that was mild compared with still earlier legal practice. A poor fellow took his life not long ago when apparently in possession of his faculties, albeit he had just sustained a blow upon the head. The surgeon in the case told the coroner that it was unconscious suicide, which undoubtedly it was, and that it was psychologically unique, which it was not. Observation teaches that the sight of water or a weapon will impel the victim to suicide quite without his conscious volition.

Our forefathers did not concern themselves with nice points as to the state of mind of a suicide. Self-murder was almost the worst crime in the calendar. Equally culpable with the traitor guilty of high treason, or lèse-majesté, as we then had it, his soul was committed to perdition, his memory to infamy, and his body to the gibbet. There was an attention to detail quite painful. The body was drawn to the gibbet with as much demonstration of cruelty as could be contrived; the doorstep of the house in which he had lain was to be torn up. The impaling of the corpse after its term upon the gibbet had something of superstition behind it. The minions of the law had a horror lest they should see vampires whirling around with fragments of remains which had undergone such fearful indignity. One thing the suicide was spared. His sin was taken as established; therefore his bones were not placed in the felon's dock to be tried, as was done with any person already dead, against whom a *post-mortem* charge of lèse-majesté might be preferred, even after a lapse of years following the man's death.

What glorious spirits the world has lost by suicides: Brave old Hannibal, whom, during his fourteen years' invasion of Italy, from the day that he crossed the Alps with his twenty thousand foot and six thousand horse, until the day he returned to his native Carthage, the legions of Rome never could defeat—he died by his own hand to save himself in old age from the hands of those whose land he had over-run in the day of his strength. Cleopatra, whose tear had "cost a world and made a hero fly," slew herself. Sappho, the greatest poetess of antiquity, seems to have met her end at her own instance, as did Demosthenes, Mithridates, and Cato the Younger. Otho stabbed himself within three months of assuming the imperial purple; Empedocles refused a sceptre to seek his end in the crater of Etna. Chatterton, we still all mourn; Clive's dismal end was one of the tragedies of our Empire-making.

There is a grim humour even in so sad a theme as this, says "The Finance Union," from which the above is quoted. Fancy a man awaiting the verdict of a jury on a charge of murder, perkily cheeking those good men and true into declaring him insane, by declaring that if they did not find him guilty he would commit suicide. That happened at the Old Bailey. And picture the ridiculous act of that Baron of the Exchequer, who gravely bought an umbrella because it was raining when he walked down to drown himself

in the river! But perhaps the most remarkable case that comes to mind in this connection, was that of Chief Justice Hankford, who, resolved upon the happy despatch, was equally determined to cheat the jury out of a verdict of *felô de se*. So, charging his gamekeeper to shoot on sight any whom he suspected of being on the estate to steal deer, he waylaid the man at night, refused to answer his challenge, walked straight on to the muzzle of his blunderbuss, and compelled the keeper to shoot him dead.

PERSONALS.

Mr. F. J. LIGHTBOURN, Toronto, secretary Ontario Accident Company, of the firm, Eastmure & Lightbourn, paid us a visit this week. He speaks of Toronto as being in a very prosperous condition generally, and the several companies represented by his firm as having had a favourable year.

Mr. A. J. RELTON, of London, manager of the Guardian Assurance Co., who sailed from Southampton on Wednesday, 2nd inst., per the S.S. Kaiser Wilhelm II., arrived in Montreal on Wednesday morning, 9th inst., after spending nearly half a day in New York. Mr. Relton will remain in Montreal for some days, and during his stay will consider a re-arrangement of certain sections of the Company's business having regard to the rapid development which has taken place during the past year or two.

Notes and Items.

At Home and Abroad.

OTTAWA CLEARING HOUSE.—Total for week ending December, 1903—Clearings, \$2,220,300; corresponding week last year, \$2,034,676.

WILD-CATS IN GREAT BRITAIN, according to "Searchlight," are multiplying, and it calls for more protection against them being afforded by the government. In older days, the government set a price on wolves' heads, so there is a precedent, and we know nothing can be done in England, unless what is proposed is sanctioned by precedent.

WESTERN ELEVATOR CAPACITY.—In view of the fact that navigation is now practically closed on the Great Lakes, the exact storage capacity for grain west of the lakes becomes a subject of interest. Following are the figures revised up to date, as given by "The Commercial" Winnipeg:

	Elevators.	Warehouses.	Capacity.
C. P. R. in Manitoba.....	479	32	14,411,500
C. N. R. in Manitoba.....	176	13	4,653,400
C. P. R. in N.W.T.....	255	15	7,720,000
C. P. R., lake ports.....	5	..	10,622,000
C. N. R., lake ports.....	1	..	3,350,000
Total, bushels.....			40,756,900

These figures show the total storage capacity in Manitoba to be 19,064,900 bushels, in the Northwest Territories 7,720,000 bushels, and at lake ports 13,972,000 bushels. As compared with the capacity at close of navigation last year there has been an increase in interior capacity of 5,000,000 bushels, and in terminal capacity 5,000,000 bushels.