

—Suicide appears to be on the increase. In the United States, it is said to prevail specially among the Germans. If this is true, the tendency is perhaps connected with the spread of Pessimistic opinions, though a less intellectual cause may be found in the sufferings and the home-sickness of the emigrant. Whatever may be the explanation, the fact has raised a debate about the lawfulness and expediency of suicide, which, like all other ethical questions, is brought up by the Agnostic revolution for examination in a new light. Hume wrote an essay in defence of the practice; but he did not venture to publish it in his lifetime. In moral scepticism he was before his day; now his age has come. If, he argues, suicide is an offence, it must be an offence against God, your neighbour or yourself. It cannot be an offence against God, because God governs through the laws of Nature, and the death of a man is as much a consequence of the operation of those laws as any other physical event. It cannot be an offence against your neighbour, who is not injured by your departure from the world any more than he would be by your retirement from active life, and in some cases it may be beneficial to him, for instance, when a man cognizant of a conspiracy to overturn a noxious tyranny destroys himself to escape torture which he knows would wring from him a revelation. It cannot be an offence against yourself, because every one shrinks from death, and is sure not to throw away his life till it has become worthless. The argument on the first head is evidently half ironical, and presents, beneath a thin veil of verbal Deism, Hume's belief,

of Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, &c." We thought that we were merely recording the general judgment of scholars. Our critics say that the translation is right as it stands, if you only substitute "Avenger" or "Vindicator" instead of "Redeemer." But this makes all the difference. Neither "Avenger" nor "Vindicator" has the theological sense which "Redeemer" has acquired. The Hebrew term has no equivalent in English, nor can it be rendered by any single English word. It denotes the kinsman to whom, under the Hebrew law, belonged the privilege and duty of avenging blood and redeeming the ancestral estate. Besides, surely, it is admitted that the rest of the passage has been translated under the influence of the preconceived idea that it spoke of the Resurrection, as the Anglican Burial Service assumes.