

selves together in England for the purpose of defending "Mother Church" from spoliation. It is just possible that Dissenters will be sorry for their mistake in hounding on Liberationists, when they come to realize that they have made a weapon to be used against themselves. Let us hope, however, that they will see, before it is too late, their mistake.

RURAL DEANS are supposed to be so called and elected to office because of their superior knowledge and wide experience fitting them to give advice and direction to the younger (or less wise) clergy. Different dioceses have their different specifications of duty: but all agree in giving some sort of direction about qualifications as to "how to run a parish," and "how to manage a congregation"—two lines of practical clerical work not usually included in the wise provisions of our theological seminaries. Too many parishes are suffering for the want of these qualities in their clergy. Still, laymen must remember that parsons are *made*—very gradually! Not born.

"LIVING PICTURES"—a very fair translation of our old friend, "Tableaux Vivants," seem to indicate a serious departure from the decency which used to characterize that favourite church entertainment. Like the line between the sublime and the ridiculous—proverbially not far apart—so the line between the proper and the indecent seems to be easily passed. This new departure seems to be a product of the "World's Fair"—that part of it called the "Midway Plaisance," and devoted to the representation of the customs (including dances) of all the nations of the world. One must expect in such a *conglomeration* of bad and good a great necessity for the "weeding out" process. It is to be hoped that our Canadian "Masters of Morals" will scrutinize these performances very closely.

"COMPLIMENTING PREACHERS" is a corruption in expression of our public sentiment which one is very sorry to see introduced into Canada. This "applause after service" indicates a total misapprehension of the object of preaching, as if it were intended to tickle men's ears with inflated oratory, instead of edifying them with sound discourse. It *lowers preaching* from the important and dignified position of prophecy—heralding the will of the Lord of Hosts—to the level of the effort of a political "stump orator," or an "after-dinner spouter." Imagine Ezekiel, or John the Baptist, or St. Paul being "complimented" on their excellent sermon! They were much more likely to be "hailed over the coals" by some officious deacon, warden, or steward, on the plea that they "would soon empty the church!"

PRAYERS FOR RAIN.—A good deal of sly comment has appeared in American newspapers of late aimed against this practice—the inference suggested being that the number of vain petitions lately uttered indicates that the practice is so much waste of breath. A Canadian Bishop is even sometimes quoted as stating that there is no use in such prayers, *unless* some clouds are visible at the time. Advocates of the efficacy of prayer do not, as these weak-minded persons would seem to imply, expect their prayers to be complied with as a matter of course; but only if found consistent with designs of Providence.

The Rev. William H. Barnes, formerly of Tweed, Ont., now of College Point, Long Island, with his son and a companion, was nearly drowned lately, clinging all night to an upturned skiff.

#### SUICIDE AND SIN

A quasi-romantic case of suicide—double—in New York has brought into prominence, through a pamphlet of Ingersoll's on the subject, the whole question of the *sinfulness* of that form of murder—self-murder. The question is an especially "burning" one at the present time, when the general prevalence of *hard times* naturally increases the tendency to this form of fancied relief from one or more of those ills to which flesh is heir. The boy to whom his parents refuse the indulgence of a bicycle; the girl refused to or by a lover; the labourer out of work—all these and many more now swell the list of those who fill the columns of our newspapers with sensations, illustrating how to utilize modern facilities for "artistic suicide"—gas, rough on rats, trolley cars, railway tracks, etc., dividing the honours (?) with the older plans of drowning, shooting, throat-cutting, and jumping down precipices; in fact, facilities seem to increase the actual number of attempts, more or less successful, to end worthless lives. The relief which is experienced from this idea is our only consolation from the cessation of so many "cumberers of the ground." The real question before the public is—are such lives really worth preserving? We do not mean to say that this is the only question; but, merely, that it is for the world at large the only *very practical* one in the premises. If a person decides, on deliberation, that his or her life is not worth preserving, other people are very likely to coincide with that view, and say, "all right; I guess he (or she) knows best, or ought to." Yes. "Ought to!" That is the point exactly. But do these people know best what they themselves are worth? The probability is that they have not really looked at the matter in that light. *Impatience* would, perhaps, best describe the chief ingredient in their state of mind at the time of suicide.

#### THE LAW DOES NOT HESITATE

at a valuation, however rough, of the impropriety of the act. It is, at least, a "public nuisance;" and such should be put down. Attempting suicides do not get treated as ordinary murderers, and get tried for their life. Perhaps this would seem like a connivance at their wishes; though we fancy that the vast majority of suicides would object to being ushered into the next world otherwise than by their own chosen method of self-execution. The adoption of some *ignominious* form of public punishment might have a deterring effect on the practice. It would not seem "so romantic" if it were docketed by law with common, vulgar murder. Many of the victims of their own folly appear to prepare themselves for their exit from this world, and entrance into the next—if they believe at all in a "next"—as if they were going in for a sensational stage performance.

#### THE NATURE OF THE SIN

is best gauged by a reference to its *motives*. It may be objected, however, that the motives are various. No doubt they are. Still, we feel sure that a careful study of any given group of reported suicides would reveal the fact that, as we have already said, *impatience* is the chief ingredient—impatience with the decrees of Providence. At bottom there is usually the feeling or impression that they are not being treated as well as their merits demand. They are not valued as highly as they deserve. They probably have a vague impression that, if they would only *wait*, their merits would presently be better seen and more highly appraised; but this suggestion

adds no "balm" to their wounded feelings—it rather "adds insult to injury," in their opinion. So, with some idea of doing despite to "the powers that be," generally—not only on earth, but elsewhere—they determine to put a sudden period to their trial or probation.

#### DO THEY RECOGNIZE PROBATION?

Hardly, we should think. There underlies their action the theory that this life—if not "all"—is, or ought to be, *complete* in itself. They do not realize that this world "hinges" on the next, or is only a "link" in a chain of existence. Therefore, they require that every step should be perfect in its appointments and compensations—self-adjusting! This is just what the Almighty Arbiter, in His *perfect wisdom*, has ordered otherwise. Hence the supreme folly of the whole proceeding. Nothing that we mortals can do will alter the "eternal fitness of things," or prove Divine calculations and arrangements wrong. Running one's "head against a stone-wall" is only a very faint description of the nature of a suicide's action. It is probably consistent in this respect—it is the logical climax and culmination of a life of folly.

#### A CRUSADE OUGHT TO BE PREACHED.

If ever there was a subject calling for such action—or counter-action—on the part of Christianity, this is one such. The circumstances not only justify, but *demand*, some such remedy. It would, indeed, have the character of "prevention," rather than cure. There is, generally speaking, a lamentable looseness in the connection between prophets and hearers, due to the prevalence of schism. Preachers must treat their hearers almost as if they were heathens, rather than Christians. It is not so much reform from within as *assault from without* that is needed. Nearly all the offenders are men, not women. It is a curious comment on the element of *cowardice* that is in suicide. It is "fool-hardy," if you like; still, it is essentially a cowardly act not to face one's destiny and "fight it out" with circumstances. We fear that the male element in humanity has been deteriorating. It has become effeminate. The sexes are exchanging qualities.

#### MEN ARE NOT SEEN IN CHURCH.

There lies the practical difficulty. As a rule, men have got into the habit of finding greater attractions in their pipes, novels, and, now, their bicycles. They have lost their instinct in regard to public worship—not that they are too manly; but the reverse. They have become so effeminate as to "out-woman the women." It needs "too much exertion" to go to church, and their energies are so severely taxed—poor things! Yes; "poor things," truly; scarcely preserving the name of *man*—scarcely even the form. *Punch* is quite right in depicting such unmanly-looking specimens of masculinity, alongside of women whose fine figures, chests, and shoulders put men to shame. No wonder that English newspapers have editorials on what they very expressively call

#### "TOPSEY-TURVEYDOM."

It is one of the problems of modern times, how to deal with the reversals of our usual ideas about proper distinctions heretofore in vogue? Not simply in religious matters; but in all departments of social life it is a puzzle, nowadays, to know how to vary the accepted codes of proprieties to suit changed circumstances. It is difficult to know just what is "proper form" for men and women severally, or whether there need any longer be *any* distinction. Blame? We are inclined to blame the men unreservedly, and