

ARGUMENT.

This poem was written in connection with the suicide of one Alexander Reder, who, filling his pockets with stones, drowned himself in Toronto Bay, in the summer of 1899.

An inquest held, resulted in the following verdict :—

“ That Alexander Reder, who died on the 14th of July, deliberately committed suicide, by jumping into the Bay. The cause of the act was despondency, the result of being brought to Toronto under false pretences by Sigmand Lebeliski, acting for the T. Eaton Company.”

In the action of the poem one of the employees of a large firm is supposed to recount to another the hallucinations of a female operative, who is dying of brain-fever, brought on by worry and overwork, and aggravated by the illusion that she had met Reder's ghost in a tunnel under the street supposed to separate two branches of a great establishment. In her delirium the poor girl broods at first over the mental agony of Reder before his rash act, and then suddenly supposes that his ghost appears and upbraids her for yielding her honor for gold, when he yielded his life rather than break his union pledges. Her pleadings with the ghost for a merciful judgment on her offence, bring out her story, and its climax in the death of those she sinned to save ; the final apostrophe being on the iniquity of the bargain system.