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CHILDREN AS SUICIDES.

The shocking frequency of youthful suicides has formed the subject for an extensive article in the November issue of the *Catholic World*, under the heading, "Children as Suicides." The picture presented is certainly frightful in every outline and scarcely credible did not the author support every statement by undeniable facts. We can with difficulty imagine that out of the sixty thousand Europeans who caused their own death in 1880, two thousand were under fifteen years of age. Yet such is the case. And since 1880 suicide

has increased in a far greater proportion among children than among adults. What can be the cause of this? Why should so many voluntarily quench the lamp of life ere it has really begun to burn or send forth rays of light? Such a course is entirely opposed to nature. Our first instincts are for self-preservation and to everyone death in any form is an object of terror. They must be mighty influences which can so override the laws of nature and invest the 'grim monster' with such a charm that death becomes preferable to life. Mighty indeed they must be to so turn the young mind that it cannot live down the slight inconveniences of early life. What are these influences? They are chiefly the following: indiscriminate newspaper reading, ungarded public libraries, and sensational literature. The press is often quoted as the 'great educator' though in reality the tendency of the modern newspaper is anything but truly educational. Murders, suicides, and other revolting crimes are set forth in the most alluring style and these columns of description are eagerly devoured by numberless young readers. The facts which make history are passed unnoticed by. Another evil influence is that questionable benefit—the public library, from whose shelves mental poison is freely handed out. But greatest evil of all is those tons of sensational literature annually issued from our leading publishing houses and scattered broadcast over the land, bringing moral and mental ruin to thousands. As the writer in the *Catholic World* says: "One-third of the juvenile crimes committed every year may be easily traced to the influence of coarse and vicious literature. The youthful thief and rowdy finds a congenial example in the flashy, dæmon devil hero of a cheap novel; the silly school-girl has her head hopelessly turned by the romantic adventures of the low-born maidens who figure in the weekly story-papers." There is a terrible respon-