

In our issue of April 26, 1900, we published a lengthy and instructive series of statistics, from the works of Mulhall and others, illustrative of this interesting and instructive phase of a grim subject. In this connection, a number of interesting tables and comparisons are to be found in Chatterton Hill's *Heredity and Selection in Sociology*. This non-Catholic writer asserts and defends the following general principle: that that particular form of society is most likely to survive which possesses in the highest degree the qualities of cohesion and 'integration.' The Catholic Church, he maintains, possesses these qualities in a higher degree than any of the Reformed denominations, and is (adds he) the form of religious belief best suited to the needs of Western civilisation. Referring to the statistical tables of suicide published in his work, the author says: 'An examination of these figures shows us that the suicide rate in Protestant communities is, in every case, very considerably higher than that in Catholic communities. Whatever country we take, and whatever period we take, the same fact is always illustrated. And as the very basis of scientific observation is that no phenomenon in this world of ours is unconditioned, but that every effect has its cause, we must take for granted that so persistent an effect as the one above noticed must have an equally persistent cause. We are therefore justified in declaring that the integration and cohesion of Catholicism, considered as a society of believers, is greater than the integration and cohesion of Protestantism, considered as such.'

Here is one of the tables published in *Heredity and Selection in Sociology*:

**SUICIDE RATE IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES PER 1,000,000 INHABITANTS OF EACH RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION.**

Country.	Protestants.	Catholics.	Jews.
Austria (1852-59) ...	79.50	51.3	20.7
Prussia (1849-55) ...	159.50	49.6	46.4
Prussia (1869-72) ...	187.69	69.0	96.0
Prussia (1890) ...	240.00	100.0	180.0
Baden (1852-62) ...	139.00	117.0	87.0
Baden (1870-74) ...	171.00	136.7	124.0
Baden (1878-88) ...	242.00	170.0	210.0
Bavaria (1844-56) ...	135.40	49.1	105.9
Bavaria (1884-91) ...	224.00	94.0	193.0
Wurtemberg (1881-90)	170.00	119.0	142.0

In regard to the fact that the figures of suicides among the Jews are in some cases less than those among Catholics, Chatterton Hill says: 'As the influence of environment is not sufficient to explain, in the case of the Catholic Church, a cohesion which, among the Jews, is undoubtedly due to environmental pressure, we must conclude that the internal organisation of the Catholic Church, and the principles on which that organisation is based, ensure a very high degree of integration.'

The author then quotes the following figures from Durkheim's *Le Suicide* (p. 151), which were compiled from official statistics:

**COMPARATIVE SUICIDE RATE IN DIFFERENT PROVINCES OF THE KINGDOM OF PRUSSIA.**

Provinces containing more than 90 per cent of Protestants	Suicides per 1,000,000 Inhabitants	Provinces containing from 89 to 68 per cent of Protestants	Suicides per 1,000,000 Inhabitants	Provinces containing from 50 to 40 per cent of Protestants	Suicides per 1,000,000 Inhabitants	Provinces containing from 32 to 28 per cent of Protestants	Suicides per 1,000,000 Inhabitants
Saxony	309.04	Hanover	212.03	W Prussia	123.09	Posen	96.4
Schleswig-Holstein	312.09	Hesse	200.30	Silesia	260.02	Rhine Provinces	100.3
Pomerania	171.05	Brandenburg w/h Berlin	296.30	Westphalia	107.05	Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen	90.1
—	—	Prussia	171.03	—	—	—	—
Average	264.60	Average	220.00	Average	163.06	Average	96.6

We will conclude with some further figures quoted by our author:

**BAVARIAN PROVINCES.**

Provinces with a Minority of Catholics (less than 50 per cent)	Suicides per 1,000,000 of Population.	Provinces with 50 to 90 per cent Catholics.	Suicides per 1,000,000 of Population.	Provinces with more than 90 per cent Catholics.	Suicides per 1,000,000 of Population.
Rhine Palatinate...	167	Lower Franconia...	157	Upper Palatinate...	64
Central Franconia...	207	Swabia...	118	Upper Bavaria...	114
Upper Franconia...	204			Lower Bavaria...	49
Average ...	192	Average ...	135	Average ...	75

**SWITZERLAND.**

French Cantons	German Cantons	All Cantons of All Nationalities
Catholic. 83 suicides pr 1,000,000 of total population	Catholic 87 suicides pr 1,000,000 of total population	Catholic 86.7 suicides pr 1,000,000 of total population
Protestant 453 suicides pr 1,000,000 of total population	Protestants 293 suicides pr 1,000,000 of total population	Mixed Cantons in which the confessions are more or less equally divided 212 suicides per 1,000,000
		Protestant 326.3 suicides per 1,000,000

This gruesome subject of suicide formed, early in the year 1900, the subject of discussion at a meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. A non-Catholic scientist, Dr. Clouston, accounted for the comparative low statistics of suicide among Catholics as compared with the adherents of the Reformed creeds, in Germany, by saying: 'There they had the moral and religious element coming in, which prevented men and women committing suicide, even when they were diseased and felt suicidal, when things were going wrong with them, and when from the reasoning point of view suicide was the proper thing.' Everything that tends to place in the background, or to undermine or destroy, belief in man's true origin, nature, duties, and destiny, is favorable to the operations of the demon of suicide. The Vicomte de Vogüé expressed this truth when, in *Harper's Magazine* for January, 1892, he spoke of the melancholy results of the philosophy of pessimism: 'Behold, we hear sounding on the peaks of intelligence a great cry of discouragement: "Beware of deceitful nature, fear life, emancipate yourself from life!"' It is the pagan conception of life and death, revived through a neo-pagan philosophy, and indirectly propagated through the medium of schools in which the rising generation are trained to pass a notable part of the most impressionable years of their lives without thought of God, or of duty or accountability towards Him, or of the judgment and the life to come. Here—as in the matter of education dealt with by us in our last issue—Catholic teaching and Catholic principles promote not alone the highest spiritual good, but even in the mere worldly order produce the best social and mental health.

## Notes

### Spiritism

'Spiritism in an acute form,' says a paragraph which is going the rounds of the press, 'has been prevalent in New Plymouth of late. It is said to have affected the mental balance of several of the townspeople. Over one family at least a pall of sadness has been cast by its influence. Two young men (brothers) have been examined in the past few days as to their mental condition. One has been committed to a mental hospital. The other, who is under remand, is said to be recovering.'

### He Made History

Chloroform and the telephone—they have so grown into the texture of the clinical work and of the social and commercial