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independent of the present Federal Statistical Bureau. It should be assisted by an Advisory Committee, on which the above-mentioned Associations should be represented, which should not only be responsible for fixing, in conjunction with the Director of the Bureau, the general lines on which the statistical inquiries should be conducted, but should also have the power to initiate investigations of a non-statistical type ancillary to the inquiries made by the Bureau. G.U.Y.

20.—*Essais de statistique morale. I. Le suicide.* Par Camille Jacquart. 106 pp., 8vo. Bruxelles: A. Dewitt, 1908.

This is the first of a series of essays on moral statistics promised by M. Camille Jacquart, with no intention of trespassing on the problem of free-will, but simply of studying a certain number of acts which throw some light on the moral condition of the population, with especial reference to Belgium. It is unfortunately true, as the author says, that no official statistical bureau records our acts of virtue, and consequently when we speak of moral statistics we really mean statistics of immorality. Of these, the statistics of suicide form one important section, and, owing to the number of special studies that have been written on the subject, an essay thereon forms a not unnatural introduction to the series.

The present monograph falls into two distinct portions, the first dealing with Belgium alone and the second giving international comparisons. The annual rate of morality from suicide in Belgium has increased rapidly during the last thirty years, as in most other European countries. During the years 1876 to 1884 the rate averaged 98 per million of the population, during 1901-05 no less than 125 per million, an increase of 28 per cent. The progression has not, however, been at all uniform, but has fluctuated to a considerable extent with the course of trade. Little light can be thrown on the relation between suicide and civil condition in Belgium, as the returns are not classified by age and civil condition in combination. The same holds true, apparently, for occupation, but the few data available and the figures for suicide rates in different districts suggest that by far the higher rates are found amongst the lower and the industrial classes.

The information given in the international section is a little scrappy, and might, we think, have been made more complete and up to date. Of the figures given incidentally, those contrasting the rates in the Catholic and Protestant cantons of Switzerland, cited from the *Statistique de la Suisse*, are most interesting; both in industrial and in agricultural districts the suicide rate for Catholics is very much lower than that of Protestants.

Considered from the international standpoint, the rate of suicide in Belgium is moderate, but higher than in this country. M. Jacquart refuses to attach much weight to the rate in this country (p. 61 and p. 85), as he holds it to be in defect, seeing that "the authorities charged with making the inquest in cases of suicide are disposed to admit, in every case which leaves room for doubt, accident or mental alienation as the cause of death." A death is, however, classified as

a suicide in the Registrar-General's returns whether the coroner's jury finds a verdict of *felo de se* or of *suicide whilst of unsound mind*, and there is not the slightest reason for believing, so far as we can see, that the returns for England and Wales are more deficient than those of any other European country.

The subject of this essay is likely to attract some attention in this country in the near future, as the rate has increased with great rapidity during recent years, and some of the data collected by M. Jacquart are useful for reference. The work is, however, rather slight, and might have been rendered more useful without increase of size by replacing some tables giving absolute numbers of suicides by tables giving the corresponding rates, and older by more recent data.

G.U.Y.

21.—*Outlines of the Economic History of England: a Study in Social Development.* By H. O. Meredith, M.A., M.Comm. viii + 366 pp., 8vo. London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, 1908.

The appearance of this volume may with good reason, we think, afford encouragement to all who are interested in the accurate and fruitful study of the economic history of this country. The mere circumstance that there is a sufficient demand on the part of the general public for a fresh addition of the high quality of the book before us to the shorter accounts which have been written of the social development of England is in itself a matter for real satisfaction; and when we can proceed to state, as in this instance, that, despite of the modest language in which the Preface has been couched, the competent author of this new "study" has been able to shed fresh illumination on some points of great importance, in the course of his comprehensive treatment of the successive stages of our past commercial and industrial advance, we may feel confident that economic history has now made good its title here to the claim of having definitely become a recognised department of progressive learning.

Of Mr. Meredith's mastery of his subject in all its various branches no careful reader of this book can entertain a doubt; and it would not, we think, be possible to dispute its usefulness to teacher and to student. In its preparation he has availed himself of the very latest material which is accessible to assiduous research; and he has exercised on the authorities he has used the wise discrimination of a calm and matured but acute and independent judgment. In consequence he has been led, as we should expect, to modify or to redistribute some at any rate of the emphasis assigned to persons or events in preceding treatises; and to recast or rearrange in detail some of the accounts of different episodes or movements furnished by previous writers. He has been enabled in some portions of the narrative to introduce new salient facts or to suggest fresh valid inferences; and he has made, in our judgment, no unsubstantial contribution to existing stores of exact historical information. It is possible indeed that Mr. Meredith himself, and he would probably be the first to admit this doubt, may not have reached finality; but on the other hand we are certain that no