

WHY MURDERS ARE MANY.

The murder record of the United States is nothing to be proud of and is doubtless due in large degree to inefficient enforcement of the law, but there are other causes which, if they existed in Canada, would much increase Canada's murder ratio. We have a Southern negro problem; Canada has not. We have a yearly flood of immigrants from all countries of the earth; Canada's immigrants come almost entirely from the mother country and the United States. We have, therefore, a greatly mixed population, coming from countries where the immigrants have had little or no training in the enjoyment of liberty; Canada has a homogeneous population which has had such training. If Canada had these conditions to contend with she would not be compelled to annex a large proportion of our murder ratio, to which Rudyard Kipling tauntingly alluded.

Although there was both an absolute and a proportionate increase in our record of homicides for 1910 over that of 1909, the total being 8975, or nearly 100 for every million of population—an increase of 900—this is a material decrease from the totals of the middle '90s, for these were 9800 in 1894 and 10,500 in 1895. The ratio was 118 per million in 1896, compared with 100 per million in 1910.

The extent to which the total number of homicides is swelled by the negroes of the South is apparent from the figures furnished by two states. In the last few years of the nineteenth century the average number in the United States was 9944, about 1000 more than the total for 1910, and of these 5489 were committed in fifteen Southern States. In Mississippi from January 1 to November 15, 1904, there were 297 homicides, of which 227 were committed by negroes against negroes and three by negroes against whites. In Alabama for two years ending November 30, 1910, the courts disposed of 630 homicide cases and imposed only 27 death sentences. The explanation is that the majority of negro murderers were young men who yielded to sudden impulse in gambling games and were therefore convicted of second-degree murder or manslaughter.

A nation which develops its country rapidly and opens its arms to the energetic and enterprising of all nations cannot escape having an abnormal proportion of the turbulent, passionate and bloodthirsty among them. Canada has no negro problem because she never needed negro labor; otherwise she would have had it and with it her fair share of negro homicides. That Canada has no such problem is merely a fortunate circumstance not of her own making.