



# Diary of a Suicide

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By Wallace E. Baker

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# Diary of a Suicide



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By

Wallace E. Baker



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1913

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## FOREWORD.

On Sept. 28th, 1913, Mr. B. Russell Herts, of "The International," received the following letter:

New York, Sept. 27, 1913.

Mr. B. Russell Herts,  
c/o International Magazine,  
New York City.

Dear Mr. Herts:—Under separate cover I am sending you a record of a young man who is about to commit suicide. My only object is that it may help, if published in part or whole, to ease the way for some who come after.

If you will kindly read it through, especially the latter part, you will be able to judge whether you care to make any use of it. If not, kindly mail same to Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, Toronto, Ont.

I have cut out references to places and people here and there for their sake, because naturally I cannot be worried about myself after death.

Thanking you for giving this matter your attention, I remain,

---

I do not sign this, but you may verify my death by communicating with Mr. \_\_\_\_\_, whom I am writing to-day, so that he may look after my effects in New York.

The body of a well-dressed young man was found off Manhattan Beach, Sept. 28th. In his pockets a torn photograph of Strindberg and receipts for three registered letters were found. These receipts were traced to Mr. Herts and to friends in Toronto, one of whom identified the body on Oct. 2d as that of Wallace E. Baker. He was buried on Oct. 3d in Evergreen Cemetery, Brooklyn.

A. K.

Note: In cutting out his references to places and people, Baker marred some of the text. These excisions are indicated by dots, dashes or stars.

THE GLEBE is indebted to Mr. Herts and "The International" for the permission to publish the diary.



## THE DIARY OF A SUICIDE

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—, January 26, 1912. It is with mingled feelings of hope, discouragement, joy and pain that I begin the second book of my diary.

My hope springs from the fact that my outlook seems to be clearer ahead, the old uncertainty is more in the background, but there is another side to it all. My discouragement comes from my constant feeling of tiredness, less evident in the evening and for awhile at night, but exceedingly strong during every afternoon with few exceptions. This has resulted in my weak yielding to weakness at night, and only last night after my confidence that I had gained a certain mastery I was overcome. This was partly from the fact that I worked at the office until nearly ten o'clock, charging a supper with wine to the firm. Although I drink very little, now and again I have gone out and taken a decent meal with wine to get away from the monotonous boarding-house fare. A small bottle which I nearly emptied (cheap wine) resulted in making me feel good—I have never been under the influence of liquor more than to feel good, never without full possession of my faculties, but on the rare occasions when I have taken a little I have sometimes noticed a weakening of the faculties, a sort of lack of moral restraint. I had enough last night to weaken for a time my new found resolutions, but the succeeding absolute disgust and worry lead me to believe

that I was not wrong in thinking that the struggle is now on a higher plane.

My salary was increased at the first of the year to \$22.50 a week. Although glad of this, my old-time pleasure at the receipt of more money each pay-day is lacking. Money I must have to live, further than that it seems a pitiful waste of time to spend one's life in a mad endeavor to obtain wealth at the price of all that counts.

Havana, Cuba, February 29, 1912. Leap-year and a good opportunity to enter on a bigger fight. I must date my beginning this time as February 18, being the day after my last fall from grace. The week and a half since, however, makes me feel confident once more, despite that for three or four days I have been without a night's rest, owing to stomach trouble and the nervousness thereby engendered, but this is nothing unusual, that is, the loss of sleep, for it is long since I have had a real good night's rest, and I know a crisis is approaching and I must get rested ere I collapse.

I have read during this time "Ibsen, the Man, His Art and His Significance," by Haldane Macfall, and it has given me great encouragement and aroused intense enthusiasm. I feel that I am getting back my old enthusiasm, that I am recovering my ideals on a higher basis, although I am undoubtedly weaker than ever physically. But with increased moral strength I hope soon to cut down the buts, however, althoughs, and to stand forth with more decision, more firmness, and knowing myself, and with my ideas and ideals clarified.

During the last two months the first step in this attempted regeneration has been becoming more and more a determination, emerging from a mere unsettled idea—must return home for various reasons. First, I am played out physically and need rest. More important should be the fact that my mother is getting old, has been constantly calling to me to return, worries about me, needs me to put my shoulder to the wheel more than I have done. True, I have systematically put apart for my mother a certain amount every month for a long time and have sent it without fail even when only earning \$10 a week back in the early part of 1910. This at least has kept me in constant touch with my dear old home, full of strife though it was.

While I have at frequently recurring periods thought of returning home during the past year and a half, my resolution did not crystallize until I began to feel the compelling necessity of a rest, bodily, mentally, and, I might say, morally. Hot and cold by turns, lonely, sleepless, tired and generally run down, I have not been able to look at things in their true proportion, and I must get away for awhile from the daily struggle, keeping up the mental and moral one, however. To this end I have practically cut out all amusement. Night after night I come home tired out, read a little, generally till lights are out at 10:30, and then to my disturbed sleep. Getting up early as to-day (7:00 to 7:30 being early for me) I either read, study, write as to-day, or work on my story which I started last August and of which I will write more later. This elimination of outside distractions is helping to

strengthen me, helping me to look forward to a life of service without the necessity of foolish excitement, and the money I am saving by this closeness in everything except necessities I hope to enable me to go home, rest, think, exercise, and study calmly and sanely for a year, paying my mother a regular weekly amount; and I hope at the end of the year to have sufficiently found myself to go ahead on my work with more collected ideas as to what I want and what I should want, and all to the better interests of my mother, myself and the good of others with whom I may come in contact. By the middle of this year I hope to take the first step by returning home.

**Havana, Sunday, March 17, 1912.** The 15th ushered in a new start, and the 16th was a very important day. On the 14th I had been thinking very intently about future plans and went very carefully over the ground of a possible college course. I picked up my Self Educators and looked into the various subjects for study, estimated the time I would have to spend on a college course; the financial difficulties, my mother's need of my help, my temperament and pronounced predilection for certain things and as pronounced aversion for others, my nervousness and constant mental struggle; the result of all this was to confirm what I wrote on January 8, that I had about given up the idea. The only hope, or rather possibility I have in view now, is that I may take a course in certain special subjects—literature, drama, philosophy, logic and sociology, but I hate mathematics. I pick

up a book of algebra with extreme distaste and, although my enthusiasm in New York caused me to study this subject fairly assiduously, I see it was a mistake.

I have a distinct tendency and deep enthusiasm for literature, gradually awakening from my first boyish effusions at the age of 10, and it was a waste of time to neglect what I can excel in for the sake of a mistaken idea that a college education means so much.

The reason that the 15th of this month was an important day is that, following my decision of the previous day re college and subsequent weakness, I made a big step towards finding myself on the 15th. While I had known for some time that I did not care for mathematics, Latin, Greek, and probably several other subjects, I still cherished the idea that I wanted to go deep into philosophy and possibly biology, and, of course, study sociology, logic and perhaps economics seriously. This was sufficient to cause me to put in considerable wasted time on the subjects I did not like, especially algebra.

On the day mentioned, but two days ago, I looked into this matter in the view of a special college course, eliminating mathematics. Then I realized that I liked the subjects as long as they did not become too abstruse or mathematical. I saw that biology as soon as one gets past the popular books on the subject and the "Origin of Species" becomes a subject of much mathematics and dry science, as evidenced by Huxley's Essays, which I unsuccessfully endeavored to digest with enthusi-

asm. Now I know that I merely want to study biology in a general way for the sake of culture and because of a thirst for knowledge, which, however, is not sufficient to make me go into the dry details. I am interested, however, very much in the question of heredity, but not to specialize in. The realization of this in regard to biology, coming suddenly and sharply, caused a sort of awakening. I began to search my other tendencies and realized that I did not like the dry, obtruse details of philosophy either, nor economics, but that by way of working out a philosophy of life or conduct and hope for future, I was very greatly, more, vitally, interested in the subject. I like to read and study philosophy as giving a basis for a plan of life, but when you get to the brain wearying works of Kant and the like it is different. For instance, in reading of Ibsen and Tolstoy and their philosophy of anarchism, or their mystic-realism as it has been described, I am intensely interested. I imagine Nietzsche would be of great interest to me, possibly Schopenhauer and others—I intend to look into Bergson's divine impulse, but to go deep into a mass of details, no! I am looking for light, for a philosophy of life, and I might mention James and his Pragmatism as another one to look into.

About the same applies to psychology. Sociology I am still doubtful of, but all social questions and matters of world-wide importance interest me.

But when I turn to literature and the drama, it is no longer a matter of doubt. On March 15, as I was in my room thinking over these questions and had come to the conclusions above, I realized

in a flash that my temperament was more artistic than scientific, the latter coming from my German heredity, and undoubtedly being strong, however. The little details of literary work do not bore me. Of course, I like the dreams best and lately find it great pleasure to sit down and write, write. I spend hours collecting scraps of books, authors, drama, and also philosophy and psychology, sociology, etc., but principally literature, drama and allied branches. Even the details of grammar do not seem tiresome any more, and, compared to my aversion for algebra, I can see that the worst in the pursuit of literature is a pleasure compared to the best in other things, especially business.

Of course, I have much to find out yet, but it was a great step to relieve myself of so many doubts and make literature my pursuit through thick and thin, as I have determined to do, knowing it is my one line. I am not sure whether I can write best short stories, novels or dramas. Short stories only appeal to me as means of expressing myself where I have not a big enough idea for something bigger and better, but I love to write them just the same. (I have only written one of 8,000 or more words, but I have taken numerous notes, written many articles of various kinds and recorded incidents and anecdotes, which I shall use fully later, and all this with an enthusiasm and pleasure not gauged by thought of profit or even publication in all cases.)

On the other hand, novels are an unknown quantity. I do not know whether I am a good descriptive writer, whether character drawing is my forte, or narration is a strong point with me, al-



though I find I can write along without hesitation in writing of occurrences, and I notice the peculiarities and little foibles of my fellow boarders and see what good material there is here for character drawing, but I do not find it so easy to put this down on paper with that human touch which makes one like to read some authors, notably Dickens.

Again, the drama has always made a powerful appeal to me. I always liked a strong drama, enjoyed Shakespeare both in reading and acting, eagerly devoured dramatic criticisms and I have thought lately very much about this, and I know I should like to write strong dramas of our modern life. However, I shall have to study Ibsen, Strindberg, Brieux, Shaw, and others before I can come to any conclusion as to this.

However, a sea of doubts are now behind and the vista before me is bright.

Yesterday, however, while a day of great interest, was also one of misery, which perhaps accounts for my optimism to-day,—action and reaction being very often equal and opposite with me.

**Havana, Sunday, March 24, 1912.** Another beginning to-day and I hope a good one. The unfinished story of the 16th, Saturday, which I failed to relate last Sunday, was the burial of the Maine. Deciding at the last moment to witness this, I boarded the Purisima Concepcion at about 1 o'clock. After a short time, while looking overboard at the struggling crowds, a lot of rope and tackle came down on me from overhead and took half of the day's pleasure away in the shape of my glasses.



Thereafter I witnessed all the events with my one remaining lense held over one eye and tied to a handkerchief covering the other and tied behind my ear. It was a miserable subterfuge, and to add to it all I had a beautiful headache; cold, and the fear of glass in my eye—for one lense was smashed right over my eye. However, a day's strain was all that happened, and when it was all over I voted that the day's pleasure was worth it.

The sea was very rough and many people were sea-sick, but I enjoyed it very much. About 5 o'clock we were all lined up, the United States naval vessels, North Carolina and Birmingham, the Maine in between, and beyond on the side opposite us the diminutive Cuban navy. The sea cocks were opened and we all looked with intense interest, I straining my one eye with everything forgotten. For twenty minutes the Maine did not seem to be filling very rapidly. At 5:20, however, the sinking was noticeable; then as we stared she settled deeper and deeper, the stern, where the bulkhead was, sinking first; then suddenly she turned, the stern went under, the forward was up in the air at an angle of 45 degrees or more; it was a thrilling sight. Then with gathering momentum she went down. At 5:27 the waters of the gulf covered the last vestiges of one of the great tragedies of history. It was a grand sight; Nature herself seemed in mourning; for the day, bright and clear in the forenoon and early afternoon, had gradually become darker, and she disappeared with the sky overcast and a solemn hush over everything. I know this was the way it impressed me, and all my petty

troubles were forgotten in the grand scene before me.

In an endeavor to discover my feelings of a day, from the 10th to the 15th, I kept a short record by way of finding out how much I could count on myself in my struggle, and the result showed me that I lack exercise, am too nervous and overstrung to put forth my best efforts, all of which confirms the wisdom of my decision to return home to find myself after a rest.

Sunday, March 10—Fair in morning; depressed later.

Monday, March 11—Fine until middle of afternoon, then tired and nervously depressed. Night, cheerful again; bedtime, terribly nervous, depressed, wakeful, worried and despairing.

Tuesday, March 12—Tired from previous night's depths of gloom; calm later, fair night.

Wednesday, March 13—Calm and enthusiastic; tired, but not depressed, later restless in bed.

Thursday, March 14—Quiet and calm, exhausted from previous flurries; later, storm again, very bad, and depths of morbid despair.

Friday, March 15—Ambitious and determined—fine all day—restless night.

The above pretty well represents my struggle for a long time, but through it all I have had a confidence in the final triumph and a constant return to my ideals and ambition, and I am noticing a gradual elimination of some weaknesses. The blue moods I am beginning to check before going

too far, and the ecstasy I am also holding in an endeavor to preserve a calm, ceaselessly persistent demeanor, neither too hot nor too cold.

To-day I hope to be a model one, one of steady work, writing, studying, arranging papers; no time for self-consciousness, worrying or anything else. So far, from 6:25 to 8:25, it has been ideal.

—, March 24, 1912, 9:53 P. M. After another despicable fall following on a good and bad day, I am almost desperate and realize that the fight for life must come to a head soon. I wrote the preceding from 7:35 to 8:25 this morning. Following that I started in on my scraps and about 11 o'clock my plan for a hard day's work came to naught, because of a disturbed mind due, as I know, to too much of one thing. I simply have not the capacity to stick to one thing very long, although the things I like are always fresh after diversion. Going out for a change, some of the boys asked me to cross the river for a good walk. I consented, and after dinner (almuerzo or breakfast here), we took bum boat to landing near Morro, walked to Cojimar, across country, along shore and on roads, and thence to Regla. The hot sun and dusty roads tired me, and to-night, tired and wearied, I fell. Too much is killing for me. I must hold off, and simply cannot stand any day too much of anything. There simply has got to be a readjustment or I shall go crazy or become desperate. Below all this I feel the fight welling up in me, however, and to-morrow must hold forth better promise.

Havana, Tuesday, April 9, 1912, 12:30 A. M.  
Somebody has said, "War is hell." I say, "Life is Hell," with a capital H. God! but I would not have believed it possible a few years ago that a man could go through such prolonged mental agony. Am I a degenerate? Is there some insidious form of insanity slowly creeping over me? Gautier has said that nothing is beyond words. I deny this—I could be as eloquent as ever man was, have as fine a command of language, be as fluent, brilliant as the best of the masters; but I could not describe the agony of the past few weeks.

It is not alone the nervousness, loneliness, and the old tired feeling; the sudden bursts of enthusiasm, followed by strange periods of peculiar calmness, now peaceful, now raging, now with an unholy joy in I know not what; then black despair seemingly without cause, it is more than this. Self-consciousness to an extreme, fight it as I will, and yet a deep absorption in anything which really interests me so that I lose my identity in it. Thus my deep love for the theatre, even moving picture dramas, for the strong stories of love, passion and mental states of the French writers, little as I have read of them. If I could always find something to interest me the solution might be at hand, but with the same dreary prospect of day after day of hell, hell, hell (the other word for business to an artistic temperament), how can I get a night's rest? I lie awake and go through all the hot passions, wild enthusiasms, ecstatic feelings, morbid thoughts, wrath at the existing order of things. I

damn everything, and yet I realize how futile my scheme of life would be for others.

Since I last wrote I had started afresh. I have three times lost control over myself, and but an hour ago, the last time. It is terrible. With such noble thoughts that come upon me sometimes, such beautiful ideas when I feel in tune with everything in the world, and then always the hellish reaction. Oh, God! what a sorry mess you have made of things. How could you do it? You have made a terrible mistake—to make me such a shattered wreck before I was out of my youth; to take from me everything, strip me naked so that I can say now that I am absolutely indifferent to everything except to express myself before I die. That idea has taken possession of me. If only I can write such a book as will express all these mad imaginings, hopeless longings, the void in my life, complete absence of feminine companionship, doubly trying to one of my hot passionate moods. Harlots disgust me increasingly. It is not morality, for I have come to the state where things are not moral and immoral—they are just so. I would not consider it immoral to-night, for instance, to have intercourse with a girl who pleased me, but I cannot sacrifice what I have in me on the couch of one who sells her passion. I want love, if I understand it aright. And yet this is not an ever-consuming passion. I had just as much, or nearly so much, longing for education up till lately, and have only dropped the idea of going to college because I feel the approach of dissolution unless I can get up north, rouse my physical self and mayhap feel for

once physically fit. Lately I have realized that there is something deeper than I before realized in all these things. My brain is over-tired, fagged out, wearied with too much thought, worry, reading, hate, fear—I know not what—but a change must come soon. It cannot go on. Perhaps there is something organically wrong with me—God, if you exist, you should have given me some manly vigor commensurate with the mental strength I imagine I have, and after all, is my mind weak or has my poor, weak body and abuse merely dragged it down, and is it capable of resurrection? It seems impossible that I should be born to get so near to some things which touch the deepest strings of human conduct, the deepest emotions of heart and brain, to have such a keen sense of humor, to see the tragedy underlying it all, to feel a sympathetic note with the foibles and weaknesses of others, even as I laugh at them or become cynical about them, to walk by the sea and drink in her varying moods, the misty ethereal early mornings, the calmness of gradually settling twilight on a day when the waves scarcely ripple, the blood-red sunsets with ever-changing cloud effects; the deep, mysterious shadows on a dark night, with the moon reflected from behind the clouds; the night when the moon is in her glory; the day when an overcast sky symbolizes my overcast soul. These and more have I thrilled with, and all for naught. Give me but strength for a few more years and I will vindicate myself; but I must break away from this agony soon, overpowering, overwhelming—Why, O God?

—, April 19, 1912, 9:10 P. M. It is just ten days since my terrible night of agony, and I now hope again. Following that night I had almost a week of peace, a nervous sort of calm which, however, was better than the other. Then another fall, and the last one to-night, I really hope the last. It certainly has been my salvation that I always come back strong in the fight again after a blow, but there are several things which have weakened me, and it is in spirit only that I recover; the physical weakness remains and increases. Nerves, as a strong man mentally I should hesitate to confess it, but I am worse than the average woman in my hysterical nervous state lately, and, moreover, I feel very often that there is something vitally wrong deeper, either that, or I am considerably run down, so much so, in fact, that a good night's sleep is a Godsend; a calm, quiet day—joy; and yet I would not want too many of the latter, for my adventurous spirit defies my body and says, "Be up and doing." Now, to-night I am feeling calm and hopeful and I must win out on one thing at least. This will help me with others.

True, I have by no means found myself yet. I still am pulled in many directions, but a hopeful sign is the abhorrence nearly always with me now of the low, common and vulgar. I could overlook in myself a little laxness in many things, but I never forgive myself the vulgar act and speech, despite my lack of moral code at present and my artistic indifference, to which is added lately, but only temporarily, I hope, a lethargic indifference, born of that ever-recurring tired feeling.



An idea which has gradually been forming in my mind I hope to begin to put into definite form just four weeks from to-night, and I then hope to have four clean weeks behind me as a start for my year's abstention from passion. During this time, while endeavoring to obtain a foothold in the magazine field with short stories, my big idea is to write a novel of the various struggles and emotions of an ambitious, erratic youth, with a premature weariness, and unless pre-empted by another, I shall very probably call this "A Youth Who Was Prematurely Tired," suggested by a criticism of *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, but this is to be altogether different, and is to touch the depths of agony and despair contrasted with the heights of ecstasy and the fierce, hungry longings, terrible disappointments, unrelieved passion, loneliness, ambition, morbidity, deep poetic feeling, and the other emotions of a sensitive, over-nervous youth of artistic temperament and large insight tempered by many paradoxes in character.

I have found myself enough to see the necessity of one course at least, that is, to preserve a dignified silence. The coarse, vulgar familiarity of the fellows I have met has jarred on me more and more, and I see that my only escape in the future is to maintain a reserve and a dignity beyond which no man may penetrate. Anything I reveal will be by writing, not by speech. I have made considerable progress, but still have to fight a foolish talkativeness on occasions.

Another policy I expect I will follow later, at least, will be the cultivation of courtesy and a more



gentlemanly treatment of others, friends and otherwise.

I only have to overcome one or two little weaknesses, and to recover what I have lost physically to be able to win out—and I will.

—, **Sunday, April 21, 1912.** After another relapse last night, I am beginning to think that much of my so-called idealism is merely a pitiable, boyish, conceited foolishness. This has often come to my mind, but I hesitated to express it; but if I am sincere I must record the other side of the question. To-day may or may not be the beginning of a more sensible outlook as far as my erratic, artistic temperament will permit. In any case this strain, self-imposed for the most part, must stop even if I have to throw over a few pet theories. I must be human even at the expense of virtue. I almost congratulate myself that I can at least laugh at my own foibles and enjoy the joke, just as I cannot help, cynically to a certain extent, pointing out others' foolish earnestness over nothing. My sense of humor is indeed my saving grace.

\* \* \* \*

**Havana, Friday, April 26, 1912.** Hope dispelled, but I am making progress. Since my awakening the last few months of last year and the first of this year, the reactions have been short and sharp for the most part. Probably the worst one began a little over a week ago and culminated yesterday. During this week, while I have not

had more than one very bad night, there was a perceptible diminution of my spirit of fight and I temporarily slipped back into the old mood of indifference. However, I have recovered, stronger I hope, from the temporary weakness.

\* \* \* \*

Havana, Wednesday, May 1, 1912, 4:20 A. M.  
Slowly but surely the net is tightening. The past few months have been such a hell as I hope few young men in their bare majority have passed through. Day by day the work at the office becomes more of a burden, a yoke. Come 11:15 or time for lunch (almuerzo or breakfast here), and I feel as if I were leaving prison. Strive as I may to concentrate my mind on routine work I look forward to getting away soon after arrival. Breakfast and an hour's (more or less) reading revive me temporarily, and I generally manage to get in an hour or two hours in the afternoon before the utter weariness, brain fag and nervous fatigue, takes possession of me, and the previous day's ordeal is repeated. The strain of this and the necessity of showing a semblance of interest in the work (which, lately, however, I have not done to any great extent), repeated day after day in monotonous regularity is only part of the hell, but a part of such deadliness that I doubt if I am able to complete my allotted time of contract, which I had made up my mind to force myself to do for the sake of the money.

This has been another potent cause of general

decline. Having made up my mind to return home to work out my future, I began to retrench more and more, eliminating amusement for the most part—almost the sole one now is moving pictures, which takes my mind away from myself for two or three nights a week. I enjoy them here for one reason, *i. e.*, they present long pictures in a number of parts which present good dramas of life. These pictures are French for the most part, and now I hardly understand how I ever took any interest or received pleasure from the prevailing American pictures, as I always loved drama and continued story, vaudeville never appealing to me. But for this one little thing, present conditions would be unbearable, which is why I touch upon it at greater length than the story of these days would seem to warrant. One of the principal pleasures of my life has been the theatre. I always had an abiding and ever-present liking for dramatic action and situation, as well as good comedy—burlesque, vaudeville, moving pictures, farce, and the like, only had a limited appeal, although I must say that “Seven Days” was a farce which I greatly enjoyed. Coming to Havana I had to drop the theatre entirely,—not that I was such an inveterate theatre-goer before (owing to financial circumstances)—because of lack of understanding and lately lack of energy to exert myself to attempt to understand, my hearing not being any too good at best; a greater reason was the absence of good plays and the outrageous prices. I ignore entirely the numerous small theatres devoted to pandering to the lowest instincts of the ignorant black, mulatto and even white.

Under these circumstances I turned to the moving picture theatre, and by only attending when there is at least one longer picture which promises dramatic action, I managed to derive considerable pleasure from this class of entertainment, no doubt to a great extent due to the fact that that was the only thing which took me out of myself, so that I lived in the play—except my reading. These two have kept me going during these months—when I tire of reading or by reason of a peculiar nervousness do not feel like reading, if there is a good picture I go, otherwise I make myself read and am soon reconciled for the evening. Sometimes a walk by the sea during the evening helps me much.

Even with this, however, through it all lingers that sense of utter weariness, almost to the point of exhaustion. During the day I manage to escape the worst consequences by keeping my mind busy when absent from the office, and the early evening or night generally also is passed without too much worry. This leaves the periods of dull care at the office, hoping and waiting for the hour of getting away and bedtime and later night. A proof of how much I have retrogressed physically is, that from October to December, 1908, during my first few months in New York, I was able to work from eight in the morning until six at night, and three or four nights a week, with only an hour's break for lunch and . . . Now, working less than seven hours a day, the day every week is longer, more tiresome. The weakening of my powers has been gradual and to a certain extent unnoticeable, but it has been steady, inexorable, and now I am face

to face with a condition which means the end of everything if continued for too long. During these years in my heart I have protested against it all. Taken away from school when I was leading the class, without any great effort either, by circumstances, I began a business career of hope and with boundless ambition and half-formed boyish ideals. The fact that I left school of my own accord outwardly does not detract from the fact that circumstances were gradually making it more imperative and I only took the bull by the horns, as I have done many times since. I remember with great vividness an incident of my early business career, when with . . . store. I used to keep a credit book of returned goods, and had considerable dealings in this way with the girls of the various departments. I was then rather indifferent to feminine charms, although awakening sexual passion was entering into my emotional and mental states, and had been for a year or so. I was then fifteen or sixteen (I do not know whether this happened before or after my birthday). One of the girls, a rather flippant, but as I look back, a shrewd observer, came to my window in the office (which was on a similar plan to a bank, I having one window and the cashier another) with something or about something returned. I scowled for some reason or other, probably because I had a pressure of work. She then made an observation, the prophecy of which has been amply demonstrated—"you are a boy now, but you will never be a youth," and something about my jumping into manhood. She was only a department store girl,

but she hit the nail on the head exactly that time, as subsequent events have proven. In those days, after my little stories for . . . I liked reading and probably looked forward to college at some time in the future in an indefinite way. I was very earnest and ambitious about my work, which continued more or less until some time last year, when the increasing tired feeling, nervousness, changing ideas, ideals and different outlook combined to bring on rapidly my present state, when I positively loathe my daily work. The principal reason for this, no doubt, is that I have neglected exercise almost entirely and now have reached the state where exhausted nature will not be denied.

I have already at frequent intervals commented on the disturbances which haunted my bedside, and to-night, or rather to-day and last night (for it is now a quarter of six and the candle before me is rapidly losing its efficacy) is only an example of the recurring frequency of my nervousness at bedtime . . . off all temptation to indulge in sexual pleasures from the first of this year, and, although I have not succeeded entirely up to the present, having only five days of absolute abstention from excitement of any kind sexually and possibly several months from direct intercourse, behind me,—still I have radically changed from my excesses of the first few months in Havana, although even these were not excesses compared to the average of a vast number here and elsewhere.

This holding off naturally leaves out a vital source of relief for the all-compelling necessity of getting away from myself. Sometimes, from my

twentieth year on, when the prospect of a nervous, sleepless night presented itself, sexual intercourse brought the much-needed relief, and sleep followed. And yet, such was the strength of the conventional atmosphere that I had been reared in and lived in, despite my radical views and supposed freedom of mind, I thought it was somehow or other wrong and underhand to seek relief in this way. I cursed myself for a weakling, fought, staved it off for weeks, and then succumbed again. It is only lately that I have seen a different light on the subject.

My views now are that our present system of sexual relations is absolutely false. This conclusion is more due to my own reasoning than to any radical literature I have read. First, there should be freedom. Any man should be allowed to have intercourse with a woman who was willing, as long as they did it for love. There should be no such thing as an illegitimate child. If a mother was not in a position to or willing to bring up her child, the State should do it. Of course, when I say there should be freedom, I do not say that, if one man was living with a woman (legally, of course, as all such relations would be legal without any question), I should be at perfect liberty to fool around, but if at any time their relations became such that they could not harmoniously keep it up any longer, divorce should be automatic. Marriage might be for a minimum period, and as much longer as the parties concerned cared to keep it up. There should be no coercion on either side. The woman should have the care of her children if she so desired, but if unable to take care of them,



the State should do so. Even without a socialist state this could partly be put into effect.

The White Slave Trade should be abolished as a trade. If a woman was herself willing to become the tool of every man who came along, she could not perhaps be restrained, but those who profit from it other than herself should be vigorously prosecuted. All diseased should be prohibited from sexual intercourse.

Even under the present state of society, there is a solution to one problem. Many young men, like myself, have strong sexual passions, but we do not like to consort with those who, starting out with a debased idea of sexual relations, have debauched it. Now we meet girls who are also passionate and who, were it not for the knowledge that their life would be ruined, would be only too glad to have intercourse with us on the basis of mutual sexual attraction and passion. This would bring relief to both of us from much of the deadly monotony of sordid, every-day affairs, if the girl could go on just the same as the man, she being allowed to have a child legally, which she could either take care of herself or delegate to the State's care. This would take care of that large body of men who are not in a position to marry for various reasons, and that equally large body of women who are unable to find suitable husbands, but who feel the emptiness in their lives, and those women who want children and consider, or would consider if society would permit, that it is nobody's business who the father is. It should be a crime to have intercourse when one is diseased, and the knowl-



edge that one can with impunity have intercourse with a woman for love would deter a large number of men from having it with those who only give themselves for money and are liable to transmit disease. This would then leave those men who are morbidly fond of the baser forms of sexual perversion to the professional prostitutes and women (few comparatively), who naturally are attracted by, or are willing to put up with, the drunkenness and attendant beastliness of a certain kind of man, who we may hope, will be a smaller and smaller factor, as radicalism grows.

Thus, now, with radical views, I am endeavoring to attain my old state as before my twentieth year, for a year at least, so as to work this out with other problems, because in my present state of physical weakness I cannot afford to risk added weakness, and so fight this off every night, and hope soon my nature will have become resigned to this until my twenty-third birthday, when I hope to have a clearer plan of action.

Starting this with a nervous sleeplessness, I end at 6:30 A. M., over two hours later with a clear head, but, of course, the tired feeling lies there dormant.

Havana, Friday, May 10, 1912. Another birthday, my twenty-second, and I intend this year to be the best yet. The past one has been the worst and the best; the worst because of my acute nervousness and self-consciousness and my foolish actions during the early months in Havana; best because I woke up from a lethargy and blind groping

in the dark to a conscious effort to find myself and be myself; and to this end I have dedicated my twenty-second year. I do not expect to work out things to a fine point during this time, but hope to decide on a broad, general scheme of life policy of procedure and philosophy; of necessity the major part of the details will take years to work out.

Hope and ambition, tempered by my experience, are dominant, and my calm periods are becoming of longer duration and more frequent occurrence, in fact, predominate to a gratifying extent lately as compared with what has gone before.

I start afresh on a year's freedom from sexual excitement, or such is my plan, for not the least of the problems to work out is that of sex. It will be hell to hold myself in check entirely in every respect, but I feel I must, in order to collect my thoughts and feelings which were becoming rather confused on this, as on other subjects, owing to my changeable moods, passions and feelings.

I have the advantage of starting out on the broadest basis possible, the agnostic position as I understand it. I have not studied Spencer nor reduced my agnosticism to any dogmatic position of knowable or unknowable, but always it has been: I neither believe nor deny; my mind is open; I am willing to learn; to give all who have a serious message a hearing. True, up to the present I have not given much serious study to the problem, having read considerably more about philosophy than of it, but I have had that tendency, and, being young yet, it is perhaps best that I did not attempt

to go too deeply into the problem ere this, and even now I shall go slow.

The question has unconsciously, however, narrowed itself down. I have given enough thought to the matter to reject the Christian theory of Christ being the son of God, and, leaving out most of the minor religions or philisophies which are obviously full of error (except as there may be a grain of truth here and there among the chaff), there is left such religions or philosophies as Theosophy, Monism, Spiritualism, and those which may be classed under the general head of Materialism (Rationalism, Free Thought, Positivism, etc., etc.), but as I do not see that any have as their basis Absolute Truth (that much abused word) I suspect I shall end where I began, as a Pragmatic Agnostic, denying that we have any Absolute Truth in our world, whatever may be beyond which we do not know. I have not read James; but will do so; and I think that I shall not give much attention to spiritualism, as no satisfactory evidence seems to support it, and there is too much charlatanism to offer a fair field for a truth-seeker.

Havana, Wednesday, May 22, 1912, 12: 12 A. M.  
It is no use—I have to acknowledge defeat. Born with such a Jekyll-and-Hyde disposition that I am never normal, either so filled with ideals that everything good and noble seems possible, or so black that I shrink from myself in horror—even though it has been in thought rather than deed that I have transgressed or been an idealist. It is not that I have contemplated deeds of violence, but

one thing, sex, is the cause of the perfect hell my life has been. During the past year I have foolishly thought I could make myself what I willed, could be consistent and normal; vain hope and it needed to-night to show me this. After all my noble aspirations, hopes, love of literature, and the beautiful things in life, I could not keep my resolve of my birthday. Torture is the only word for it. My sexual passions, from their first awakening, have given me no rest and never will. I have not had at any time a girl who loved me, have never even kissed. With almost uncontrollable passion, and yet the ability to be satisfied with embrace and touch rather than final consummation, yet have I not had that chance with any but the lowest who fill me with disgust, or else attract me in a mad passion which for the moment is insatiable. Much of this is due to my wretched physical health, wrecked nervous force and absolute lack of any kind of love for so long that I am too selfish and self-centred ever to amount to anything. Who is to blame? My father dead, how can I blame him for his share? My mother is the only hope left in the world. Without her, suicide would seem to be the only alternative, and I have . . . what is this after all but the imagined courage of a weakling, my egoism the conceit of a degenerate? A month ago I would not have dared to write this, but unless this summer serves to recuperate me, I must go down rapidly. Having started sinking all round, I dare not go in for anything without a sleepless night.

I only write this record now for what use it

may be as a human document. It may serve as a warning to those who ignorantly bring children into the world to suffer. I shall be repaid. In case I collapse suddenly it is my express wish that such of my letters, papers, including this and my other diary, as may bear on my struggles against an inevitable fate, may be sent to . . . so that, without using my name in such a way that the family may be involved, he may use such parts of this record and the papers as may help to show the life-story of a youth who was prematurely tired, if I do not succeed in writing this in fiction form or otherwise myself before the end. Slowly but surely I am coming to the point where nothing matters. Something always pulls me back before I go too far, but will it always? Once let me go beyond a certain point in my dark moods and shame will keep me from attempting to get up again. Deep down in my heart, however, I have had and still do have in my most despairing moment the conviction that I have in me the ability to do great things, my love of the finer things, keen appreciation of character so that I see right through many people I meet, wherefore much of my continued unpopularity, great care in small details, love of neatness, order, strong passions, enthusiasm, many other things in my good moods which I cannot quite grasp, but my physical weakness annuls everything and leaves me a hopeless weakling, vacillating and desperately unhappy.

Havana, Wednesday, June 5, 1912. Feeling very much chastened, following the deepest disgust

with myself and everyone, and everything else for that matter. I must state most emphatically that for the most part all that has gone before (during the past six months at least) is due to disease; not specific, but generally run-down, nervous, over-tired condition of body and mind. Therefore, although to-day again I start with hope to fight on, I do so with less wild enthusiasm, less tenseness. After all, the world does not revolve around me. I have sometimes thought it did, or at least acted as if I thought so.

Being calmer on my determination, the reactions I trust will be less violent. I have the feeling that I only have to get over this tired, nervous condition to be once and for all on the road to victory over myself.

One thing I will do—throw overboard as it were my preconceived half-formed ideas and start as a child. Too much have I stuck to convention and prejudice while congratulating myself on my radicalism.

Of course, everything is dependent on my recovery of health. Without this, life will indeed be not worth living, because the very things my heart and mind are set on accomplishing will be impossible, and a conventional, plodding life devoted to the accumulation of money is impossible for me. Death is much preferable. Art, philosophy, love of life in its nakedness, without false convention, must be my keyword, not for happiness, for that were impossible, but for sufficient interest to carry me through.

**Havana, Saturday, June 8, 1912.** I am gradually but inevitably coming to the conclusion that the only way to get along is to throw over all that I do believe in and pay the price. If I had done this before I might have been saved much of this petty personal struggle and put my divine energy into bigger things. I have let false conventions battle with the natural love of freedom and radicalism of an artistic nature, frittered away life forces in unholy passions where I might have put it into the big struggle. Now I will conquer or die, victory or death. Death even by my own hand is preferable to frittering the tremendous passion and nervous and mental energy I have away in a life of conventional ease, despising myself and hating others, and being hated. Oh! if I had only conserved instead of wasted, but even now at the eleventh hour it is not too late. Now, to-day, I will go forward to my fate.

**Havana, Wednesday, June 12, 1912.** In further thought over my decision of last Saturday, or rather that which has been growing on me for a long time, I must add that, as I am not any too sure as to what I don't believe in, time must be a large factor in the matter.

Then again, due to that tired feeling and nervousness, I have during the past six months put too much emphasis on the dark side.

I have never for more than the briefest space of time contemplated self-destruction as I have hinted at several times. The thought has crossed my mind in my darkest moods, but I am not a



coward and to-day must go a step further and say that I'll fight to the finish against all outside difficulties, as well as ill health and natural defects of temperament and heredity. From now on any departures from a certain standard until I have changed that standard by thought and experience, I will consider in their proper light of weaknesses to be overcome.

All of which may be what I have been reiterating over and over again, but my awakening of to-day is a little broader. I leave the standard fairly flexible, but strong enough to be a rock in a stormy sea until the waters are calmer, and then my mind should be clearer so that I can readjust the various uncertainties to a certain point at least.

Life and a full life rather than mere reason I think will be the outcome, but reason and philosophy presiding over all as a benignant judge I trust. Who knows?

**Havana, Saturday, June 15, 1912.** My contract is up to-day, and for several days earlier in the week I thought of leaving suddenly and getting away from it all for a rest despite any notice to take effect on the 29th. I thought it over, however, and from standpoint of unpreparedness, doubt and honor perhaps—did not—or rather will not—as boat leaves to-morrow.

In thinking over problem of society it has occurred to me, or the thought has come to my mind of what little use the benefactions of rich men are to really help anyone in need in a personal way. I remember how I used to have such a passion for



education—I did so want to know. I wrote Carnegie, Patten, Pearsons and E. H. R. Green, not begging for money, but telling of my great desire for an education and putting it in such a way that I asked the secretary to refer me to any board which they might have had for helping those desirous of obtaining an education. My physical weakness precluded the idea of working my way and studying at the same time. Of course, I received no replies, and I then realized that the most ambitious or deserving might be on their last legs and all this charity would count for naught.

The personal aspect of the question has long been forgotten; my ideas as to the value of a college education in its relation to the larger education of life have changed; whatever rancor I may have had against these men has gone; my outlook on life is different; the things that count now are few, are far between.

If my health permits, the necessity of making a living will cause me to write for money to a certain extent, but with a bare living income I think I should write from my heart, because of the great desire, because I look on it as an art, not a business. However, if my health continues as it is or gets worse, I will not sacrifice what little life I have left on the altar of the modern god—money. I shall write in blood the agony that has been eating into my heart and brain and give it to the world if it will take it for what it is worth. For myself I expect little, but it may help towards a better understanding of natures like mine, and in the future may help towards a little more forbear-

ance, attempt to understand on the part of good people. But whether or not I will write it.

Before doing so, however, I intend to see that I do not, out of self-pity, fall into the error outlined in the December, 1911 issue of *The International* "Upton Sinclair's Delusion."

Havana, Tuesday, June 25, 1912, 7:10 P. M.  
It is getting tiresome, these moral reformations and back-slidings. But even now I can lay down a preliminary philosophy which I must subscribe to whether I will or not . . . gives a general line of conduct which leads to progress in a wide sense and taking account of human nature, its strength and weakness.

Life, of course, comes first. Unless a man is going to deliberately plan suicide he must live. All account of death from outside sources must be left out of account because they are outside of his sphere to influence. By living I mean to touch the depths and the heights, each one according to the strength of his passions, his temperament. He should not be an ascetic except under certain conditions, and asceticism as a deliberate plan of life is absolutely wrong for a young man—whether for one who is older time will tell.

For instance, if a man is of a strongly passionate sex nature he should gratify it sufficiently to save him from tremendous nervous disturbances due to holding himself back. All conventional morality or standards to the contrary, gratification is not only justifiable, but not to gratify is a crime against human nature. If a man be of a cool phleg-

matic disposition, a limited asceticism in this as well as other things may be good rather than otherwise.

The above is limited by conditions and circumstances. Disease, of course, should be rigidly guarded against. This is a matter that calls for action by the combined societies of the world. Assuming that the man of artistic temperament takes these precautions and gratifies his passions, he must restrain himself as soon as his gratification becomes a source of weakness rather than of strength.

In other words, as long as gratification of the senses does not weaken one appreciably that gratification is good and moral and conduces to life, but when it becomes a weakness and threatens the physical and mental strength of a man he must restrain himself. **Life** comes first, but by life I mean life with Power. Thus anything that makes for power and for a full life and healthy gratification of the senses is good.

This is my first definite outlining of the philosophy I have been endeavoring to attain. I have come thus far without reading any philosophy except bare outlines and reviews. Now I shall read and study life and build from these grounds. My philosophy is rather more individualistic than socialistic, but, of course, it is open to a reconciliation between Socialism and Anarchism. Conventional views are left entirely out of consideration. It rests with the individual how far he will be guided by precedent and prevailing opinion in a given situation.

As far as I am personally concerned, I have

reached a state where any sexual gratification is a weakness and a strict asceticism for a time is a matter of self-preservation. Anything else is a deliberate throwing down of my philosophy and is a weakness of the worst type, and I write this after having constantly violated my decision to hold off, made on my birthday and even before then, and which has just culminated in this outlining of a general course to follow, holding in view the two objects, a full life and a healthy one, power and life. Without power life is death. With means of gratification lacking, one must hold off from baser forms at least until absolutely necessary, and then only on the most infrequent occasions.

Keeping these in view, life and power, I have something to anchor to while I am struggling towards the light, and I submit this in all seriousness as a good workable philosophy for a man who has not found himself and has hitherto been groping around blindly in the dark with very little prospect of light. Starting with this the years must bring more light, and the conservation of a love of life and at the same time of power will keep one in a state to take advantage of any new light on this terrible problem of existence, of how to get through life in the best way, for in the final analysis that is what all philosophy teaches.

Thus, in the future, gratification may be quite consistent with my philosophy; in my present weakened state I must hold off if I am to survive. Otherwise it is a case of deliberate suicide, and the only thing to do would be to go ahead and gratify until

disease and weakness made it evident that death would be the only relief. Thus I go ahead for the present.

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my manifest destiny, that of doing something worth while in the world, so that the world will be better for my having lived in it.

Since May 10th, my own birthday, although on several occasions down to the depths, I have strengthened my purpose and the lapses are becoming less and less, and the increasing disgust after each is cementing my determination. One only has occurred since Tuesday last, when I outlined my philosophy, and I

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. . . . Thus, the fight has resolved itself into this,—if I can control myself when tired, nervous and depressed, the victory is won. On all other occasions I have myself pretty well in hand, and in normal moods, with good health, the outcome seldom seems doubtful, but I must watch the abnormal moods.

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Havana, Tuesday, July 2, 1912, 12:45 A. M.  
I don't know whether it was a premonition which caused me to put morning at the head of my previous entry, because now, the same night, or the next morning very early I am obliged to repudiate it all. It is no use—my philosophy as outlined

last week would be all right, but for two things, *i. e.*, my absolute lack of opportunity of touching life, and my absolute lack of strength, physical, mental, or moral to cultivate power. Determinism is forced on me against my will. As far as possible in my good moods I suppose I shall follow my first philosophy of Tuesday, June 25, but, nevertheless, I am fast being forced to a thorough determinism because I simply cannot control myself. What I might have done had I not been forced to become a victim of our commercial system (so that at twenty-two I am exhausted, my enthusiasm and hope almost killed by deadly routine and no prospect of relief), I do not know, but I think I would have accomplished much under careful training or even a fair opportunity to express my individuality. To-night everything seems hopeless—whether insanity is creeping on me I do not know. I simply must have sexual intercourse to relieve the strain, and it is the lack of it which brings on these moods. If for nothing else woman is a necessity for me to relieve the great strain when routine becomes so deadly as to tempt me to throw everything to the winds. If I could come home and have a woman, I am sure that I could be saved much if not all this—the worst of it at least, but our damnable conventions keep me from them and keep them from me even though many women are enduring tortures of unrelieved emotion for lack of what I could give them. Oh! life is indeed hell—why, or wherefore, I don't know, and I am fast reaching the point where I care less. In an evil moment I consented to stay on here for a few weeks longer for a con-

sideration of my return fare to New York. This means three more weeks before I can get away from this damnable place which has been getting on my nerves more and more so that I never hated anything as I hate this island and everything and everyone on it.

**Havana, July 3, 1912.** Well, despite my little outburst of early yesterday morning, I am still in the fight. After every defeat I arise, chastened, perhaps, but with a growing feeling that I will win.

I must confirm and add to my philosophy as outlined on June 25th. As I wrote yesterday, Determinism seems to be true as things are at present, but even accepting this does not make me any the less a fighter, for it is quite consistent with that philosophy that my determinism is to be something, and the weak periods are only to strengthen me.

As to the **Life** part of it, that is still a little doubtful. I have not touched it enough, my experiences have not been broad enough with the other sex for me to throw over all conventions, for I know from experience and the experiences of others, that when a woman plays fast and loose she loses so much that even conventionalism sometimes seems preferable to a loosening of the bonds. My idea was to idealize the relations, have all children legitimate. While I think my part would be done all right, I doubt other men and women. Besides, I have always had an unconscious and sometimes conscious feeling of superiority to women—this has been so indefinite, however, that I do not lay too much stress on it at present.



I must reiterate **Power** as the keynote. Every weak yielding . . . impossibility to me at least of what I will call "The Impulsive Philosophy," *i. e.*, philosophy of being guided by emotion and sentiment, to the exclusion of reason. Reason must coordinate, if not dominate, and at least impulse must not dominate. This is my second outline, but I am going to disregard the foolish system of dates,—time is to attain anything. I realize the folly of saying at a certain date I will stop this or that I will reform in this or that. All I can do is to attempt to live up to a certain standard as fast as I have decided it to be best and to endeavor to drop off everything that pulls me down as soon as possible.

Havana, July 20, 1912. Last day in Havana. At last my counting of each day as bringing nearer to my goal is about to end. Whether my return . . . is productive of results commensurate with my expectations or not, my relief at the suspension of the agony of the struggle down here is so deep and heartfelt that I could shout for joy.

I at least have several good weeks behind me, and every day in which I make the slightest progress in any direction whatever is bound to react favorably.

For the present I reiterate my outline of philosophy of June 25th and July 3d. I intend to . . . control pending a readjustment. At any rate for a year intend to have nothing to do with fast women—I do not say anything about intercourse without

monetary consideration, but am unlikely to have much chance as I will not be looking for it.

Until I am settled in — relaxation will be the rule. With the least worry and the line of least resistance for a month or so I should be in a much better frame of mind to accomplish anything than by keeping up this constant nervous strain. Hope and confidence mark the last day, and I count the year as a leaf in my book of experience and looking back, do not regret my year in the tropics.

—, August 1, 1912.

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has a cottage for the summer.

The month of July was the best one for some-time. I have at last realized the futility of expecting to make great changes in my habits of life in a day and, therefore, attach less importance to a certain date for this or that as I have done previously. Suffice [it that] after a month I can look back and notice a slight improvement, more self-control and a stronger determination. This I find is the case now and with the prospect of a month of healthy activity and absence of nervous and morbid thoughts the present month should be one of the best of the year, and if a quiet determination without the passion of heretofore will help me, this seems assured. System will be the keynote as far as it does not interfere with the rights of others, for here I cannot be too selfish in my attempt to reach a certain standard, and besides I

have no intention of becoming a slave to system, as I heartily dislike red tape. But I can start preparing myself for the big fight when I return home next month by making each day count.

—, August 12, 1912. Since the first I have been through an [intense] struggle, the worst yet. Being greatly disappointed at the unfriendly attitude of the family to my ideas, disgusted and tired, day by day I became more worried. Heated argument resulted in open charges of immorality on their part, that is, they considered my views immoral. Last night was the culmination of all this—for the first time I actually threw over all my plans and ambition and contemplated suicide. Many times the thought had crossed my mind before, but it was always as a possibility in the dim future, but yesterday the thought materialized.

I carried on a terrific mental struggle in bed and the will to live triumphed. I will fight on, but I will be more and more egotistical. I realize the vast gulf between me and the rest of my family. It is insurmountable, and my last hope now centers on my return to . . . . My mother is pliable and I may be able to sufficiently dominate my brother and my sister to fight it out there without too much interruption, which is the bone of my present situation.

—, Friday, August 23, 1912. Gradually throwing off that almost inborn habit we have of acting as a pose for others, I must sometimes act in a way which must appear immoral when such is far

from the actual truth. In the endeavor, weak it is true as yet, to rise above good and evil, the only criterion is sometimes whether such and such an act makes for weakness. If it does it transgresses against nature, and I make the definition that anything which does not go against nature is neither good nor evil. From this point of view, moral issues do not enter into the question to the same extent. I am going to put into writing the distinction I make between conceit and egoism. Conceit is exemplified by the young man who, shallow of heart and brain, dresses in fancy clothes and parades around so that the girls can admire him. This is one instance I take to contrast it with. . . . With the desire to express myself, to be an artist, to live the fullest life possible, or whatever my precise object may be, it is absolutely necessary to be damn independent.

I have found the family very impatient, and out of accord with my views and rejecting their ideals of a man—very conventional—I must of necessity make a break, because the petty bickering engendered is bound to dissipate my energy without anything being accomplished. Having attained more positive views later, I may see fit to resume the old status, being safeguarded by grim determination and absolute sincerity as far as possible, believing as I do, that truth is only relative.

The conflict is not only between reason and passion, but also between naturalism, and if I may put it, unnaturalism. That is, I want to act natural according to my nature rather than to set up an ideal opposed to my nature and endeavor to live

up to it. The only trouble is that I have various moods, and at the time I really believe that each one is the right one. However, by gradually dropping unnatural habits caused by trying to conform, I hope to reach an impregnable position insofar that I am willing to lose everything for freedom to live my own life, believing that this seeming selfishness makes for the best for myself, family and all others, because even though wrong in many things, if my nature is wrong, it is better to be wrong and be myself than to be what I honestly believe to be wrong and please others.

—, Sunday, September 1, 1912. Beginning a new month, although full of hope as usual at the beginning of anything, I also feel rather humble after my previous egoism. Thus I go from mood to mood, but the turning point is at hand. I cannot be tossed around like a bark without rudder or sail much longer and with my tendency to extremes, feeling that I have much power for good or evil in this world, one course I must enter on with the greatest determination.

Having willed to live at the moment of despair, I must needs live with sincerity and without conforming; a little more forbearance will do me good, and certainly the events of the past few weeks have been a sore trial. I have undoubtedly made a fool of myself, but still acknowledging my ideal, feel determined as ever, if chastened.

I candidly must say or write that . . . questions are still open, but I intend to get right down to action towards a literary career, meanwhile grad-

ually attaining the thing which I have been struggling for—not peace of mind exactly, but the feeling that I am doing my best in a sincere manner under the circumstances, namely, that I must go through life with health impaired to a greater or less extent; that I am inclined to extremes, pessimistic or very cheerful, even childish, by turns; that life appeals to me when I think as terribly inevitable that I have a tendency to degeneracy at times (which I feel I can overcome to a certain extent by heroic measures); that the happiness of a home and children of my own may be denied me. With these prospects before me, my fighting blood is up and I simply have got to go on and up or disintegrate altogether—there is no halfway measure for me, and I would have it so. I write with absolute sincerity now.

—, **October 2, 1912.** Another month rolls on,—despite my having written that I do not count by dates now, I find it convenient to note whether or not I have made any progress in this way.

I have. The same old struggle between passion and intellect was continued, at one time intellectual and philosophical calmness animating me and then low passion, but the net is surely but slowly (faster now) closing.

I came home, loafed around the house, read, dreamed, did nothing. Then in a burst of energy purchased a typewriter, an unabridged dictionary, supplies, taking some \$70 from my scanty savings. Later I repented of this, why all this preliminary to a conventional, routine existence? Why not go

away, gamble, attempt to gain all by a single throw? Why struggle to no end? But deep down something always says, "Go on, you have it in you."

Well, I recovered myself again, calling on Nietzsche as my guide, not that I had read his works, but I had read about him and his philosophy of the Superman—will to live because it is painful, and I will take a fierce joy in life. It is hard to drop those passionate dreams born of romance, but I know that happiness is not for me, not the happiness of convention or even sex unconventionally, but perhaps a certain amount of intellectual satisfaction and the thrill that comes from reading the master minds which respond in me, the thrill as I feel willing to make any sacrifice for my ideals, reaffirmed by a perusal of several of Ibsen's plays within the last few days, Schopenhauer's "Studies in Pessimism," and a part re-perusal of Haldane Macfall's book about Ibsen.

As I read Schopenhauer to-day I realized suddenly that there are more than one variety of Dolls' Houses, and it is indeed one that those who go on living in their dreams away from life live in, hoping some day to have happiness or pleasure from the realization of their dreams.

No, too long have I postponed facing the situation. No longer must I dream. I must act. I cannot fail; worldly honor is not success. If I be true to myself I succeed, the world notwithstanding.

I have a few more studies to make,—rather I mean I am just beginning—before I have a definite philosophy, subject, of course, always to change as new experience or observation serves to confirm or



reject. Schopenhauer, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Nietzsche and others must still give me their message in full before I can glean from them sufficient to test my own observations, but in the final analysis my own individuality, by own judgment must be supreme, I yield to none. Schopenhauer is right when he says we should not fill up on other men's learning before we have experience ourselves . . . . has been one of my great mistakes and the resulting confusion has paralyzed me, but now I read but to learn, not to adopt without searching criticism, and meanwhile I may begin working.

So long as I keep unsullied by any more very bad outbursts, forward I must go and if I am carried off at any time I have not failed, the ideal still being nursed with that tender passionate regret that Emerson speaks of. A new era is dawning for me. In spite of misunderstanding, seeming selfishness on my part, sacrifice of my best nature, the spark still lives. A few more months of renunciation and I have myself in hand and then, whatever the difficulties, ever onward and upward.

—, December 30, 1912, 6:30 P. M. A hurried writing previous to departure for Chicago. The past three months, ones of disillusionment and blasted hopes. Future uncertain, but atmosphere cleared for anything that turns up.

Suddenly deciding last night, Sunday, to leave for Chicago—slept on more or less irregularly, and had trunk packed early this morning (previously ready for quick departure), tickets, etc., by noon—

theatre this afternoon, and everything nearly ready now.

Turning point insofar as leaving future to chance instead of carefully planned out course . . . for my temperament to settle down to any such dull routine as seems necessary to get on as others have. Besides, I have lost a certain grip I had before the early part of this year brought on acute nervousness, and it needs quick action to put me into touch with life. Slow and sure is not my forte, but fast and intermittent, and I have to face it whether I will or not.

**Chicago, January 29, 1913.** If I wrote that the past month was the worst I had ever experienced, I would probably repeat myself, as I have had some very bad and frequent worsts, during the past year and a half, but nevertheless I never hope to feel so utterly despairing this side of eternity.

I arrived in Chicago on December 31, an hour before the new year. I was met by my uncle and proceeded to his house with him. He is a vegetarian, a raw food one, an ardent and unmerciful propagandist; his wife a chronic invalid, cold and lifeless.

There was really no room for me, and I slept in an unheated room, where they kept fruit and vegetables. It was cold, too cold to dress in without great discomfort, but uncle said the air was good for me, and the fruit had to be taken care of anyway.

Now I am generally open to reason and persuasion, even if I do act on my own impulses and

ideas eventually. But I will not be forced. I have fled from one refuge to another in the hope of being free, of being able to be myself, and uncle's insistence on my not doing this and that, resulted in argument, but no open break.

The result was that everything seemed to fall from under my feet, and on January 10th, I made up my mind to commit suicide on my twenty-third birthday, May 10th, next.

Of course, this was not the result entirely, or even principally, of my trouble with uncle. That was only important insofar as it added the last straw to my . . . misunderstood and, if not persecuted, at least worried beyond endurance, by my relatives.

My reasons, in a few words, for deciding on suicide were:

(1) Disillusionment. What had sustained me through the mental and nervous shocks, sleepless nights, ecstasies, and despair of the years, since my sixteenth (although it began before that) was the thought, which I dare not acknowledge to myself, much less express to others, that I was, if not a genius, at least a talented man, with the ability to do big things. Sometimes business success appealed to me; at other times, science or philosophy—mental and intellectual pre-eminence; then artistic effort, vaguely the idea of being an author, dramatist or literary and social reform leader.

Up to the day I left Cuba, despite reactions and pitiful weakness, I kept my faith in myself, in my mission. Reading Ibsen only served to confirm it. In . . . I still had it. I lost it in . . . to a great

extent. After I had purchased a typewriter and sat down to work, my courage failed; I could do nothing.

Reading Bernard Shaw showed me that much that I had thought to be artistic temperament, ideals, sentiment, was plain romantic illusion, and I did not feel that I was called upon then to sacrifice myself for humanity, without the esthetic pleasure my illusions had given me. Before this I had unwittingly cloaked my own desires and passions under the guise of doing something worth while, of uplifting and what not.

Curiously enough, all my ambition, ideas, etc., returned on further reading of Shaw in Chicago, after I had started going on the assumption of suicide on May 10th. I took them back, with the idea that now I was through with romantic illusion and prepared to face reality.

Before recurring to this, I shall go on to the other suicide reasons.

(2) The continual moving about trying to find a resting place, and consequent disgust and quarrels with relatives, and the feeling that I was indeed alone and without a home.

Leaving Cuba in hope I left —, swearing they would never hear from me again. I left — with very much the same idea, but before leaving, wrote a very short letter to Nellie, informing her that I had nothing against her and thought as much of her as ever. Uncle was the last straw, although I could not have the least doubt of his sincere desire to benefit me, and when I realized this I tried to take advantage of his advice and follow it to a

great extent, but his wife chilled me, and she really didn't want me. Of course, she wasn't well, and uncle told me that but for that he would have had me stay with them, and take a good room in which they had a roomer. Aunt had advised against my coming—she did not want to be bothered.

However, all this only added to my feeling of loneliness, of homelessness, and I took a small room, after sundry hints from my aunt.

(3) Related to the above, was the deeper feeling that I had no place in the world. Forced to work myself into a nervous wreck, when I wanted to shine in intellect; laughed at by my acquaintances, for I had no friends, because of my theories, impracticality, temperament; inability to get on with people socially, due to a peculiar inherent shyness, not lost by contact with people in business, where I had a reputation even for nerve or perhaps sometimes impertinence, although I meant no harm. I was rather sharp in repartee, and suppose I showed a feeling of superiority, whereas said acquaintances, openly at least, made me feel inferior, unsocial, a crank—always in the wrong. What was the use, I said time and again, of my brilliance, of my love of study, of esthetics, of my careful life, if it was turned on me and made into a fault, a crime.

(4) Fearful of gradual approach of insanity, brought on by above causes, and degenerate stock on my father's side. I have no proof of this, except fact that my father was small, nervous, and vacillating, and I am sure it is only my mother's blood that has saved me thus far.

(5) The thought that my ideas, etc., instead of being due to higher qualities, due to this degenerate tendency or strain, in short, that I was a degenerate weakling, doomed to drift on until insanity or death ended it all.

The above caused my resolution to commit suicide, taken on January 10th. My hand is tired now, but I have much to write of subsequent days.

I leave to-morrow morning for San Francisco, and shall fill in details to date either on train or there.

**Denver, Colo., February 2, 1913.** To continue where I left off, the sixth reason, the last but not the least, to use a hackneyed term, is:

(6) Sex. I have previously gone into this at some length, so little remains to be written. To use a medical term, I presume my affliction may be called erotomania.

My passion, ungratified, except with mercenary women, has been a terrible thing. If I could have had a little satisfaction, even without actual intercourse, in my youth, as other fellows have, I might have been spared the suffering, mental and physical, caused by my random attempts to feed my insatiable hunger.

Not having anything pleasant to look back upon in an emotional way, has probably contributed more than any one thing, to my despair of the future.

When in desperation, just after my twentieth birthday, I first had intercourse with a prostitute, I made little distinction between moral and immoral

women, that is, some women I felt naturally attracted to; others repulsed me, and this attraction, physical or mental, I was generally unable to follow up more in practically every case.

With one or two exceptions, every prostitute I had intercourse with was a source of bitter disappointment, and constant recriminations by my bitter outraged nature. I worried and worried over these downfalls, as I invariably considered them after.

The one or two exceptions, however, left me with no feelings of disgust or disappointment. I enjoyed them thoroughly. They were with women who had a strong attraction to me, and I would not have changed them for many a virtuous woman, except for the experience of being the first.

Altogether, I have not had intercourse with more than twenty women, and most of them, of the shortest, being generally driven by strong passion without a worthy object.

Many a time have I cursed myself, however, for ever beginning. At about the same time as my first fall, I first touched liquor.

I often feel that if I had been told by my parents, I might not have taken the first downward step and waited until I could give my emotion a healthy outlet on honorable terms.

As it is, I have lost something which is the cause of my condition of despair, and it will take a long, slow process of upbuilding to give me back my enthusiasm and grip on life, but events of today and yesterday give me hope and encouragement.



Denver, Colo., February 5, 1913. To go back to my story, after deciding on January 10th to commit suicide on May 10th, my troubles became worse instead of better. The will to live rebelled against this decision, and I endeavored to drown the still small voice, and succeeded in doing so, only to have it come up again.

Only one reaction in Chicago, however, amounted to anything. In my usual impulsive, emotional manner, after reading Shaw's "Quintessence of Ibsenism," my old feelings about art and literature returned with force augmented by the depth of the preceding condition of pessimism and hopelessness. For a week I felt like a genius, went about full of esthetic feelings, courage. I exercised twice a day, thus conquering an habitual physical laziness, walked with a springy step, inhaling the cold air enthusiastically. In short, it was the same old story.

I fed my esthetic feelings at the art gallery, library, and theatre. I attended several performances at the Fine Arts Theatre of the Irish Players, and enjoyed their simple, honest humor.

By Friday it began to peter out. Depression, unaccountable as usual, began to come over me. I shook it off, but it could not be gainsaid, and on Saturday night, January 25th, I attended a performance of Strindberg's "Creditors" and "The Stronger" at the Chicago Little Theatre, with ill-suppressed feelings of impending disaster, which, however, I realized, as of old, were temporary and unfounded, perhaps, but nevertheless enough to give me hours of hell, hell, hell.

The circumstance agreed with my mood, and in a way awakened my ambition to have my own work performed and read, but the realization after of the work, utter lack of appreciation of such work of genius by the general English and American reading public, and moreover, the ever present dislike and fear of going back to office work and working on from year to year to no purpose, until insanity or death ended it all,—brought on all past forebodings, and I went down to the closed district, found a woman, more, two, and disgusted myself with life to the limit; went home and cursed, raved, and what not, until exhaustion brought on fitful, wild slumber, and I awoke with a headache, weak, repentant, defiant, and I know not what.

I might right here give the immediate supplementary cause of my suicide decision, over and above those enumerated.

As long as I was at work I still had hope. In Havana I was weaker, felt more poisoned physically and mentally than before or since, but the thought of artistic success sustained me. I looked forward to dropping the intolerable burden on finishing my work there, and going ahead and becoming a writer.

This kept me on through it all, when I worked on sheer nerve and every day was an agony. In — I still cherished the delusion—I was a genius, a superman, and would show them all.

When I settled down in — and bought a typewriter I started typewriting my shorthand notes, put down in Havana, describing my moods, passions and various mental conditions, having in

mind writing a book, "The Youth Who Was Prematurely Tired" . . . . mental struggles and states.

On getting down to it, however, the thought that if I was to do anything it must be done while the money I had saved by scrimping, scraping, sacrificing social life, amusement, almost everything,—lasted, which would not be any too long, and then, the old agony of uncongenial hellish work,—this thought took away everything.

The bottom fell out, and from that time on, last September and October, I have steadily lost all confidence and hope in myself, and my grip on life. The thought of going back to work . . . . the mental state of which it had been the product, haunted me unceasingly.

I dared not face the situation. I quarrelled at home, with reason, however, fled to Arthur's house in —. The wild idea I had conceived in . . . . of disappearing, going away secretly and suddenly returned. No matter where I turned there seemed no refuge from my own diseased mind. Wild anarchical schemes entered my head. Now I understood why men killed, went insane. Before I had experienced passion, good and bad, honest and dishonest, clean and sane, and unclean and insane, poetic frenzy, glowing emotional enthusiasm, and now new ranges of wildness came to me.

I cursed myself, my parents, heaven and earth; then the reaction brought sorrow and spasmodic attempts at reparation.

I destroyed my books and objects of fond remembrance, the next day repented and endeavored

to undo the damage. This began in Havana, continued in — and became worse in —.

Then in a sudden impulse I decided to go away from it all, using the excuse of going to California with my aunt, then to Chicago, which I really intended to do.

In Chicago I at first felt like making a new start, but after accepting a position, I had a foreboding I should fall down on it, and I cursed the social system and employing class for not offering me a living salary for just as much work as I could stand, and have leisure for writing, study, etc.

Death seemed preferable to working, and, dreading to go back to what it had represented in Havana and New York previous to that, I made the suicide decision. The reasons enumerated all came to me night after night as I lay awake, and I called for death . . . it was this dread of work that finally took the ground away from under my feet. I felt in my heart that, with a weekly income of \$20 to \$25 I would persist and fight my mental disabilities, finding consolation in reading, studying, especially philosophy and writing. My idea would be not to write with the idea of making money, but of making literature.

I got cold feet whenever I thought of the sordid commercialism of present American authorship. My ideas and ideals, delusions, illusions, call them what you will, were too strong to face the facts.

I had wild ideas of laying my case before some rich man, or at least some institution endowed by one, seeing if they, out of pity, sympathy, or some

other feeling, could be induced to allow me an income of \$20 to \$25 per week, and not require of me definite results.

I thought of going to sociologists, insanity experts, those whom we read so much about in the papers, who are always talking of reform, eugenics, social service; but the realization that these glittering generalities meant nothing to one poor, weak, degenerate individual like me, deterred me.

Two other reasons kept me back, the first self-respect; for despite my weaknesses and downfalls, I still had an inordinate pride, and repulsed pity, sympathy, and felt how humiliating it would be to depend on some one else like that even were such a wild idea possible.

Wild idea, indeed. I remember the letters I wrote in the heyday of my ambition and enthusiasm, to Carnegie, Patten, E. H. R. Green, and several others, asking for a hearing before some board to further education—and the fact of hearing nothing.

Time and again I had bitterly reflected what good is all this charity, social work. It is all general, where does my personal case come in, who is there to give me a little human consideration, a helping hand, encouragement, sociability, love?

Reformers, women reformers and social workers spend their efforts in closing up districts, scattering prostitutes, making it difficult to gamble and generally taking away the means for such as me to forget our troubles now and again, but not a hand is lifted to save me from insanity or death by my own hand.

Outside of this feeling of death being preferable

to the humiliation and shuddering at the shocks to my sensitive nature which would be engendered by making public this record, there was the additional feeling that instead of freedom from the bondage of poverty resulting from such an appeal, confinement would be the result.

I dread this about as much as going back to work, because the sanctity, jealous regard and fear about my personality, my individuality is such that if I thought that the result of an appeal would be confinement, I would welcome death as a gift from heaven.

I am an agnostic, and, philosophically at least, an anarchist. I want to be free, to glory in liberty; to have no boss, to be able to develop my intellect. To do this I am willing to pay the price of keeping within the law, to refrain from indulging sexually more than seems absolutely necessary, but I cannot look forward to being fed and given a place to rest in, and otherwise allowed to develop in my own way, but not being allowed freedom of action and residence.

I am not insane now, but any attempt at coercion or confinement would drive me violently insane. I should beat at the doors of my cell, curse everything and die raving, and it is the fear of confinement that keeps me from submitting this to those who could probably save me if they would.

Before the day when my last dollar is gone comes I may in desperation [decide] to risk this, in the hope of being allowed to live in my own way rather than commit suicide, but I don't know.

Denver, Colo., February 6, 1913. After that fall in Chicago, after Strindberg, Saturday, January 25th, hope left me until the 30th. Leaving that day for 'Frisco a certain old time grim resolution to make another big effort took possession of me, but to no purpose as usual.

At noon of the 31st, I changed trains at La Junta for a side trip to Denver. While on the way to Denver I became acquainted with the man who put me back in fighting mood for several days. Our conversation started when he asked permission to sit beside me, which was unnecessary, but polite. He casually asked if I was going to stay in Denver. I said no, that I was merely on a visit. I asked to be referred to a hotel. He told me of the — kept by his brother.

We talked along, and he painted Colorado in glowing colors—said he had left New York twenty-two years ago, and with the exception of one year in Texas, had lived in Denver ever since. To his mind there was no place like it. He told me business was quiet, but that I could undoubtedly get something within a short time. He invited me to call at his house on Sunday.

We arrived Friday night, the 31st, and he pointed out the hotel from the station, and hurried off. Saturday, I took sight-seeing car through city, and Sunday foothills trip. The air was fine, as he had enthusiastically said, and the bright appearance of things, despite a snowstorm on Saturday, argued well for this as a healthy, bright, beautiful city and all he said it was.

I called on him Sunday, and found he had a



beautiful house, a pleasant wife and two fine children. The little girl of three took to me right away, which surprised them but not me, as children do take to me. The boy of thirteen was also very enthusiastic, bright and friendly, and after supper we three grown-ups had a pleasant talk on various subjects. I left with a delightful feeling of having had a glimpse of a nice home, which brought back all my thoughts of times past of a home, with a lovely wife and children on my knee, dreams which in my bad periods I had rejected as hopeless for me, thus taking away a great spur to work and ambition.

Impulsively the next day I put in my ticket for refund, being willing in my enthusiasm to lose \$11 or so for baggage, which had gone on to Frisco, to say nothing of freight charges of over \$7, including boxing, for return to Denver. Thus I expect to pull out \$10 of my \$49.75 for ticket from Chicago, fare to Denver being \$22.60, tourist. I give these figures to show how great was my ecstasy on Monday morning, February 3d, perhaps the last time I shall feel so optimistic and in love with everything, great enough to make me, without work and less than \$100 in cash, drop \$18 carelessly and without worry—me, who had skimped and scraped ever since started working, although only to lose recklessly on impulses.

Then I went after work in the same spirit; called on the Chamber of Commerce, was referred to two reliable employment agencies, went to the typewriter companies, and visited one prospective employer. On Tuesday I visited three, and could

probably have landed one, but my old bugaboo, the reaction, had begun to set in, and at 5 o'clock Tuesday, after lying down in my room at the hotel I got up, hurriedly dressed, rushed to the railroad ticket office, and asked to have my baggage stopped. My ticket had gone in for refund, and the freight agent promised to telegraph immediately to hold baggage if not already sent. Yesterday I found it had been sent, and now await returns on that and my ticket.

When I got these I thought of going on to Frisco and ending it all there. Last night I wrote a despairing letter home, offering to return if they would send me \$50, but did not mail it, and this morning tore it up, merely writing saying I would be here until the latter part of this month in case the family had any proposition to make to me or money to send.

If they ask me to return and send some money, I probably will. Otherwise I shall probably go to Frisco with a week or two week's expenses in my pocket after paying fare, and finishing this story. I say probably in both cases because I now realize my hopeless lack of will-power, my whole life practically being impulse with a delusive current of purpose running through it.

—, February 6, 1913, 10:37 P. M. This morning I cast out hope. To-night I feel that beneath all my degeneracy and weakness, I am a genius and I feel that I cannot die without leaving something behind. No, I will fight. It is harder for my yielding, but I cannot give up without a struggle. Some-

where and at some time I must prove that I am something besides a weakling. Good and evil predominate by turns, love and hate, weakness and strength. Reconciliation is the solution. I have just read an article in *The International* for November, 1911—"J. William Lloyd, Philosopher of the Paradox," and it gives me new faith in myself.

Denver, Colo., February 8, 1913. Yesterday was a good day. I went to bed feeling the same way as when I wrote the above, and even felt I had made a discovery, or rather discovered or realized an old truth in its application to my case, namely, moderation.

Instead of going to the extreme in one direction as I have done, I said go as far as the conditions permit, but cease before the pleasure does.

Applying this to intellect it would mean study philosophy, but don't overwork it—dream with the poets, but not too much. In this plan, Strindberg, Shaw, Ibsen, and others all have their place.

Women, well the same here—quit before becoming weary, and a mental reservation to endeavor to hold off more and more, but not to take it to heart if not able to. This is a natural weakness, and is good if not too much. Can I do it? That is the question. If I can tide over that terrible reaction that comes several times a week, and sometimes night after night, I think I can endure life, or hell, as I am coming to regard it.

Reversing the conventional view I might say, "Life is hell, and we have nothing to look forward to which is worse, therefore if there is any future

life, it must be better." Whether this is logical or not, I don't know, but it looks good to me, even if not altogether original.

I have been reading Strindberg at the Denver Library the last few days. I have read "Countess Julia, the Dream Play, the Link and the Dance of Death."

I enjoyed them, which is a matter of course, as I always understand and enjoy deeply the work of genius, especially so-called degenerate genius.

Last night some time or other I dropped hope, only to pick her up again, for she must be a woman—she tantalizes me so much.

**Denver, Colo., Monday, February 10, 1913.** Yesterday as the day wore on, gloom prevailed, increasing until last night, but I clenched my fists and grit my teeth this morning, and will go on.

Three months to a day to my birthday, I notice, who am always looking for auspicious dates for a new start.

The principal issue is clear, I must crucify my perverted hereditary sexual appetites. Absolute continence except under favorable conditions. As these conditions are unlikely to occur, as I am not going looking for them, namely, that a woman yield from pure love or passion, and the only other alternative is marriage, I have a big fight on, but as the issue is life with honor, or death, with or without honor, I feel that I shall make this stand at last, after which the fight will be easier, if without the prospect of happiness, for, after all, I must not expect happiness; I must learn to live without it,

to make my life represented by my work, and finally I may attain a degree of peace and rest, if not of happiness. Yes, crucify, the devil.

**New York, Sunday, February 23, 1913.** Arrived here last Tuesday night, the 18th. Thursday on bad attack of grippe. Misery, of course, induced exceeding pessimism, but . . . although physically miserable, my mental condition is hopeful.

Shall endeavor to remain in New York. Depends on whether I get well quick and get work quick, as I have just \$24 in cash left from the \$400 I saved in Havana, with \$10 from railway refund coming sometime. If health and work come out, then it is only a matter of being able to keep it up.

If not pride humbled, back to . . . . Apropos of this, I am not so sure but that I made a bigger fool of myself than others whom I consigned to that class.

Have been with old friend —, first time in five years, with exception of one brief day. He has changed considerably. Now is all for experience and practicality—theories merely a sideline, and, of course, for both of us to live it must be so.

**New York, February 28, 1913.** I leave tomorrow for —, my last trip. On the eve of a new month I feel indifferent. Hopelessness took possession of me several days ago, and I pretty well decided to end it all as planned.

However, as my money is gone I must work if I am to live even until May 10th, and, of course, if I work again for ever so short a time in view,

I cannot say how long I may keep it up, so I say nothing.

I make no grand resolutions for beginning [of month], but the usual sexual one, having fallen again. Even if I must die because of my weakness physically I would like a

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—, Sunday, March 23, 1913. I had not intended writing in my diary to-day, but at the end of the month. This evening, alone in the house, everything quiet, the fire gently singing, even the cat asleep. I was reading in the kitchen Dickens' "Great Expectations." I just heard a sound and find my brother Percy asleep on the sofa in the next room. A feeling of peace came over me as I laid down my book that I was prompted to write in my diary, for moments of peace have been so infrequent of late that it was a remarkable contrast to my wild vagaries and desperately suppressed emotions.

For I am working again. I arrived here night of Saturday, March 1st, and on Tuesday the 4th, commenced work with — at the fine salary of \$55 a month, with prospects. They offered \$50; I suggested it — and we compromised on \$55. Of course, there have been openings in my line at higher salaries, but I took the first thing and will not change, as it seems good as business goes, unless the prospects do not materialize.

Though I hated to acknowledge it to myself, I needed to get back to work more than anything else

to save me. I had my opportunity, or rather I saved up \$400 by sacrifices in Havana, and then sat down and did nothing until half was gone, afterwards wasting the rest in a wild goose chase after my destiny.

However, I entered into my work with a spirit of hopeful resignation. Being inevitable, and for the first time in my work, acknowledging it, I will not say I attend to it more conscientiously, but I grip myself when a wave of the old dissatisfaction passes over me and work, work.

At night I sleep, but at intervals during day and evening, and in the morning I find it a great effort not to fly off the handle in protest of it all, but keep on just the same.

I have had several passionate weak outbursts during the month, several times I have made a fool of myself by venting my temper on those around me, but generally I hold myself in better and am more conscious of having command of myself.

As for my ideas and ambition. It is still alive. The will to live is stronger than any misery as a force for life as against death. Taking this as a mere basis, I must of necessity have some larger view than the mere cramping effect of a clerkship.

I work, because I must and under protest, but I try to do my best, and I work honestly and I earn my salary and more, as much as I can under the circumstances.

I am just getting settled and am getting my books together. I am now going in for drama and I still have a soft spot in my heart for philosophy,



although I am still at the beginning of Kant's Critique. I read a little of it to-day.

I still feel the call of a larger mission, but I feel more like going about it in a practical, business-like way, because I realize I must. I acknowledge that. Experience has had to push facts down my throat before I would face them with the aid of Bernard Shaw.

I feel more sincere now. A tendency I have noted to theatricalism I will sternly suppress. I sometimes act cruelly after a mental struggle and I just hold myself by calling on Nietzsche and the philosophy of the superman, and then woe betide the one who crosses me.

While I will not force it, and avoid self-pity, I cannot help feeling at bottom the tragedy of life to me. It is such an effort to live, there is so little to look back on, no youth, no sweetheart, no love except that of the children, and the mistaken love of a weak mother. The short peace to-night stands out but as soon as I became conscious of it I said to myself that I must cultivate that frame of mind to do the best work and find out the truth quickest.

—, **Sunday, June 1, 1913.** This morning, the beginning of week and month, and the first real spring Sunday of the season, I once more start on a process of rehabilitation. For three years I have been fighting my sexual passions. Previous to May 21, 1910, as I note from that date in my diary, I was clean absolutely, as I have said before. Three years of the fiercest action and reaction. Despair

to the verge of suicide, exultation to such heights of ecstasy that Heaven opened its gates almost. And in between indifference, or simply dull care, daily monotonous, hopeless toil, restless, tired nights.

I lived over the date set for my suicide, May 10th, this year. Every month I determined to start in anew, practically every month for these three years. At the first of the years 1911, 1912 and 1913; at birthdays May 10, 1911, 1912 and 1913, Leap-year, February 29, 1912, and after every despair I started in anew with the determination to not only conquer that weakness, but to restrain myself in speech and act sufficiently . . . . ahead and accomplish something.

Failure has been the result every time. I ask myself why, and the answers are many and various, according to the last disappointment.

In a large measure it has been due to that emptiness of my life, to the lack of affection and a definite ambition, and to my not being more positive instead of attempting to be merely negatively virtuous or self-controlled (as I don't like the word virtuous), combined with nervousness, strong passions and emotional qualities with no proper outlet for them when they became so put up as to threaten to overflow.

To-day I begin on a new ground, that of being positive and rigidly self-controlled until I feel I can relax with impunity. I have tried relaxing before after a week, two weeks, but one relaxation in word or act has been followed by others until the circle has been completed by a blind unreason-

ing yield to the sexual impulse under conditions of mental chaos and physical exhaustion, and then new resolutions and reaction set in.

I would go far to state that it is different now, but so repeatedly and in such a series of shocks has the lesson been driven home, that I have simply in desperation put suicide on one side and restraint on the other, and, realizing that it is impossible to go on as I have been doing, I have, with all the remaining strength, passion, love, honor, or whatever is left in me, ambition and enthusiasm, and the like, determined once and for all and for one year at least to be absolutely ascetic as the first step. To restrain myself all around is, of course, the next, and I will succeed fairly well.

The big questions of sex I leave open. I must get an impersonal view away from the conflict first.

Philosophy I also leave open, tentatively adopting the simple formula from that of the superman, the will to live because life is painful and the will to power, endeavoring to thrust out everything that makes for weakness.

**Friday, June 13, 1913.** Just writing to-day because it happens to be Friday the 13th—13th more because I have nothing but contempt for the silly superstition.

Have maintained my resolution as far as sex is concerned easily enough to date, but otherwise I am not satisfied with self-control attained, that is, in speech and temper, but time will tell. I'll pull through a full year on the one thing in any case, and I am still fighting for all around control,

and a settled scheme of work towards becoming a successful playwright.

Saturday, July 26, 1913. Nearly two months passed since June 1st, and I have failed to keep my good resolutions and also to commit suicide after several failures. It seems a silly business all around, these writings included, but I must keep on for awhile in this strain.

The only thing is to try again. I only realize the more keenly the utter hopelessness of the easiest way. Self-control, and the thought as I look ahead of giving up things is harder, but the other is impossible. I hesitate to express myself so confidently as to my ability to be a superman and a genius, but I can still fight on for a time at least. The end is not yet. What it will be I don't know. The depths have been deep and the heights might have been higher, but there is a fair middle course possible and I'll try to do my best.

At twenty-three I have to go back to the self-consciousness of youth before I can cast it all off and face life as it is. I often realize the apparent priggishness and silliness of this diary, but I at least try to be sincere sometimes, and after the shocks of the realization of life I may write as a man. Things cannot go on as they have been doing. Circumstances will force me to sink or swim, either to rise from this slough and weakness or collapse utterly, and this knowledge will help me. I may be silent for a long time now, because I am about to cast off my romantic youth and be a man, and the break will appear more sudden than

it is. Up to now this diary does not show the vast progress towards disillusioned manhood I have taken. In reality they are so big that I have at times bridged the gulf and said, "All is illusion." I have felt the utter pettiness of this struggle and seen things from the impersonal and even transcendental viewpoint. The difficulty is, after making the jump, to come back to where I left off and take up the daily struggle. It is hard after realizing that finally one will say, "All is illusion, whether it be worldly success—money and honor, or artistic success and the personal satisfaction of work well done." However, I must come back in order to live at all, and if I find it too much and after repeated attempts some day give it up as hopeless, then it will be necessary to take the jump at once from youth to death and leave out what comes in between.

**New York, September 27, 1913.** Suicide again presenting itself as the only way out, I was prompted to read over my diaries. As a result my sense of humor caused me to destroy the first one, dating from 1905, my fifteenth year. Full of childish struggles and events, at least until my eighteenth year, I could not let it live after my death. After my eighteenth year in New York, I began to face reality, but yet I could not allow even that part of the record to survive.

True, from my fifteenth year I have been in a bad way, but until several years ago a solution seemed bound to come. Suicide never entered my thoughts in those days.

Sex worried me, however, from fourteenth or fifteenth year. Mentally, only until my twentieth, but thinking without acting didn't strengthen me.

However as this is a sort of last testament I must not waste time on those days. I hardly know how to begin and what to say, but something seems necessary.

I could not write the greater part of this even now, because I have realized since that it is altogether foreign to the spirit prevailing among the Anglo-Saxon, so-called, at least, and I myself am sufficiently contaminated with their spirit to feel cynical about it.

If these writings do come to print I can imagine cynical and damn foolish newspapermen writing about weaklings and degenerates in line with silly editorial in *New York Times* recently about suicide and another in the *World* on occasion of suicide of a girl who was tired of 20 cent dinners, to say nothing about those arch idiots and hypocrites, the Hearst hirelings with their talks about the idle rich and the good thing it is most of us have to work for little.

Of course, I do not compare myself to the average man. If I had no sense of humor I would have persisted and made myself a genius in spite of the hell life has been. Nietzsche could never have been if he was born in England or the States.

But I only feel at home when I read men of genius. Always without a friend, the average man is a stranger to me. Women have killed me, because with all my temperament and passion I have

been too shy to ever have any love or outlet to my passion.

It is hard to say that if things had been different that such and such would be the case. Sometimes I have thought absolutely sincerely that if I had had enough money to be able to dispense with the daily grind, which, with its necessity of strong excitement as a reaction, has so impaired my will-power as to bring me from supreme egoism of imagining and believing myself to be a genius to a miserable death alone and away from home by my own hand.

At other times I have said that if I question myself honestly that with money I would have simply degenerated into a good for nothing vicious idler of the Thaw class.

Now, when about to die, I will be honest and say that the latter would have probably been the outcome, but it is by no means certain. After all I have been outraged and disgusted in the past after every fall from a certain standard and my love of books does die while I live. Who knows but that I might have got down to study and work and done something? Undoubtedly, I would have had affairs with women (had time and money permitted) under any circumstances, but drink and drug has never appealed to me, even in imagination.

I have been honest and sincere, particularly to the fine point on matters of honor, at least until I began to lose my grip on life. While I never got down and faced things, it was because I was incurably romantic, and when I finally began to realize life it came to me in such a series of shocks



that independence would have probably made me a Baudelaire, without his creative work to balance the scale. With such an impractical, childish mother and failure of a father, uncongenial brothers and sisters, almost hating each other, with bad heredity on both sides and a hellish environment, a shy nervous, suspicious disposition, extremes of ecstasy and despair, ungratified passions, alone and friendless, how could I end otherwise than a suicide?

I claim that any man who commits suicide of necessity suffers more than any who continues to live. I don't want to die. I cannot make any outsider realize by anything I can write how I have tried to avoid this step. I have tried every subterfuge to fool myself, to kid myself along that life wasn't so bad after all. This record does not show up my humorous side, but I laugh as much as I feel like crying. I enjoy a comedy as well as a tragedy, am tickled by the very things that amuse the average American, and at a baseball game I actually feel like one of the boys, but where I differ is in my tragic and morbid side, and my keen sensitiveness.

Things which pass over most men afflict me with terrible force. My pride has stood in the way of my hope of success under conditions which exist in this country at present. I cannot indefinitely pretend as I apply for work that I am just like the rest. I cannot always conceal the resentment and scorn I feel as I interview business men and stand or sit before them as a mere stenographer. I, a fellow in spirit with men of genius, must show my

references, call and beg and implore, for a miserable salary which I despise, must haggle for a few dollars more, the price of a meal.

The indignity of it all. I, an aristocrat at heart, of the aristocracy of brains and sentiment, must elbow with the ignorant vulgar bourgeois who could not for an instant understand if they would.

What is the use? Death only holds forth relief. I cannot look back on a really happy day. Light-hearted and merry have I been on occasions, but seldom a day without morbid thoughts sometime or other, generally at night. If I could have had a mistress things might have been different. When I have gone out and had sexual intercourse with a woman who pleased my imagination I have slept well—seldom otherwise.

Sex has been my Nemesis, and to-day if I had money I would continue to live. Without it, the whole dreary past and prospective future is too much for me. With it I could dispense with the grind and do work after my own heart.

Of course, others have the grind, also; but the fact that they continue to live shows that they can stand it much better, and were born to it. I wasn't. My whole nature is outraged by the life I have had to lead. Empty, cold, dismal, hellish.

Let the cynical hirelings of the newspaper whom Bernard Shaw well shows his contempt for, laugh and write editorials. The day will come when men will be allowed to live, not rot, the *New York Times* notwithstanding.

If a thousand men could be persuaded to commit suicide in protest, the powers that be would sit up and take notice.

Arise you Americans who have some blood in you and get rid of your Comstocks, Bryans, religious hypocrites and grafters, and let the so-called degenerates and insane men have a say, and if you do not live bigger and better, then you deserve what you get.

The majority is always wrong, and the minority of supermen and degenerates—Zolas, Ibsens, etc.—must band together and overthrow the whole damn system which drives the best, the most sincere and honest to suicide or starvation.



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The December issue of **THE GLEBE** will present "The Azure Adder," a one-act comedy by Charles Demuth.

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