

Suicide is Not Death.

As a student of Theosophy and human nature I have been interested in the discussion of the subject of self-murder to which The World has given a place in its columns. The eloquent agnostic, Col. Ingersoll, planted his views in the ground with the roots of them in the grave, giving the poor fellow nothing beyond the cold earth to cheer him in his act, save perhaps the cowardly chance of escape, from responsibility or pain. Those who, as Nym Crinkle says, occupy themselves with replying to Col. Ingersoll fall back on the mere assertion that it is a sin to kill the body in which the Lord saw fit to confine a man. Neither of these views is either satisfactory or scientific.

If suicide is to be approved it can only be on the ground that the man is only a body, which, being a clod, may well be put out of its sufferings. From this it would be an easy step to justify the killing of other bodies that may be in the way, or old, or insane, or decrepit, or vicious. For if the mass of clay called body is all that we are, if man is not a spirit unborn and changeless in essence, then what wrong can there be in destroying it when you own it, or are it, and how easy to find good and sufficient reason for disposing similarly of others? The priest condemns suicide, but one may be a Christian and yet hold the opinion that a quick release from earth brings possible heaven several years nearer. The Christian is not deterred from suicide by any good reasons advanced in his religion, but rather from cowardice. Death, whenever natural or forced, has become a terror, is named "The King of Terrors." This is because, although a vague heaven is offered on the other side, life and death are so little understood that men had rather bear the ills they know than fly to others which are feared through ignorance of what those are.

Suicide, like any other murder, is a sin because it is a sudden disturbance of the harmony of the world. It is a sin because it defeats nature. Nature exists for the sake of the soul and for no other reason, it has the design, so to say, of giving the soul experience and self-consciousness. These can only be had by means of a body through which the soul comes in contact with nature, and to violently sever the connection before the natural time defeats the aim of na-

ture, for the present compelling her, by her own slow processes, to restore the task left unfinished. And as those processes must go on through the soul that permitted the murder, more pain and suffering must follow.

And the disturbance of the general harmony is a greater sin than most men think. They consider themselves alone, as separate, as not connected with others. But they are connected throughout the whole world with all other souls and minds. A subtle, actual, powerful band links them all together, and the instant one of all these millions disturbs the link the whole mass feels it by reaction through soul and mind, and can only return to a normal state through a painful adjustment. This adjustment is on the unseen, but all-important, planes of being in which the real man exists. Thus each murderer of self or of another imposes on entire humanity an unjustifiable burden. From this injustice he cannot escape, for his body's death does not cut him off from the rest; it only places him, deprived him of nature's instruments, in the clutch of laws that are powerful and implacable ceaseless in their operation and compulsory in their demands.

Suicide is a huge folly, because it places the committer of it in an infinitely worse position than he was in under the conditions from which he foolishly hoped to escape. It is not death. It is only a leaving of one well known house in familiar surroundings to go into a new place where terror and despair alone have place. It is but a preliminary death done to the clay which is put in the "cold embrace of the grave," leaving the man himself naked and alive, but out of mortal life and not in either heaven or hell.

The Theosophist sees that man is complex being full of forces and faculties, which he uses in a body on earth. The body is only a part of his clothing; he himself lives also in other places. In sleep he lives in one, awakes in another, in thought in another. He is a threefold being of body, soul and spirit. And this trinity can be divided again into its necessary seven constituents. And just as he is threefold, so also is nature—material, psychical, astral, and spiritual. The material part of nature governs the body, the psychical affects the soul and the spirit lives in the spiritual, all being bound together. Were we but bodies, we might well commit them to material nature and the