

13, Norham Gardens,

Oxford.

May 16, 10.

Dear White,

I was under the impression that I had written to you from the Athenaeum Club after seeing Henry James. It may have been only one of my many good intentions.

He has been in a very bad way, profoundly depressed about himself, with no positive delusion, but awfully blue and unhappy. His nephew, Henry James junior, came over and stayed with him for a time, and now William James has been here, and has temporarily left Mrs. James in Charge. W.J. does not write very hopefully.

Here is an extract from a letter received about 10 days ago: -- "The case as it develops becomes more and more plainly one of melancholia, 'simple' in that there are no fixed or false ideas, - apart from the remains of his belief that the 'cause' of the whole thing is diet - and no functional bodily complications. The type tends to agitation rather than to taciturnity, and he fluctuates a good deal from day to day, but until yesterday had had no complete remission of anguish for ten or 12 days. Suddenly the night before last he grew bright, woke without the usual trepidation etc. and had a first rate day yesterday, and is all right this morning again. . .

Skinner is a first rate intelligent fellow (though with no special genius for this sort of case) and thinks that any change of scene for him now is the desirable thing, and we shall work him in that direction. Of course we are prepared for a long illness, but the remissions ( which to

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my mind seem independent of assignable outward influences) show that the disease is relatively superficial, and that the final improvement may begin at any time. I am taking short views at present! Henry has a peculiarly good realation with my wife, so I leave them with a good conscience."

It is a very sad business, more so as he has greatly improved greatly physically. He wrote to me about 18 months ago describing certain unpleasant anginoid symptoms; these have disappeared entirely. I do hope you are coming over; the influence of your personality on him might be very salutary. For two or three days after my visit to him in town he seemed a different man, was able to get about, and he promised to come down and stay with us, then he suddenly lapsed, and decided to go home. [to Rye].

Do let me know when you arrive.

My boy is at Winchester working hard at cricket and entomology, but I am afraid like his Father he is going to be a frivolous loiterer through life.

Love to Mrs. White.

Sincerely yours,

<sup>m</sup>  
W Osler