

Meanwhile, the fight as a rule with these sentinels is not so hard as it may appear to be from a distance; in consequence, it is true, of the antagonism between mental and physical suffering. For instance, if we suffer very great bodily pain, or if the pain lasts a long time, we become indifferent to all other troubles: our recovery is what we desire most dearly. In the same way, great mental suffering makes us insensible to bodily suffering: we despise it. Nay, if it outweighs the other, we find it a beneficial distraction, a pause in our mental suffering. And so it is that suicide becomes easy; for the bodily pain that is bound up with it loses all importance in the eyes of one who is tormented by excessive mental suffering. This is particularly obvious in the case of those who are driven to commit suicide through some purely morbid and discordant feeling. They have no feelings to overcome; they do not need to rush at it, but as soon as the keeper who looks after them leaves them for two minutes they quickly put an end to their life.

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When in some horrid and frightful dream we reach the highest pitch of terror, it awakens us, scattering all the monsters of the night. The same thing happens in the dream of life, when the greatest degree of terror compels us to break it off.