

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers*, May 30, 1891 to February 6, 1892)

The Link between Soul and Body

His having done some horrible butchering, in a seemingly professional manner, led to an investigation. He was adjudged insane and placed in confinement.

I had known him well, in student days, as a brilliant, but erratic fellow whom his family had intended for the priesthood. Reaching the town the second day of his incarceration, I went at once to see him, There was no apparent change except physically, we talked over olden times, he remembered everything. Our walk along the corridor led us to a bench in an alcove –he asked me to be seated.

“You are surprised to find me here?” he queried.

I nodded.

“Every successful investigation meets with more or less interference from jealous rivals, but pray don't think that is the fad they accuse me of having. Let me tell it to you then judge it and how far I am insane.

Tis said, man is the only animal possessed of a soul, we are taught that, when we meet in the world to come, we will be able to recognize each one the other, because the mass of theological opinion inclines to the belief, that each soul is the counterpart of the body it inhabits. Now, if we accept this dogma some questions arise; should the body be maimed, is the sole deformed? If not, then the itching of the great toe of an amputated leg, indicates soul exposure, and the doctrine of reflex action is but another cloak for ignorance.

Is the soul an essence imponderable, impalpable and and invisible? Has it no definite abiding place? But why continue. I believe it has a habitation in some one of the vital organs of the body. If that can be proven how potential for weal or woe, that knowledge will prove to the coming generation and what a place in history for him who discovers it's dwelling.

Have I stunned you? He asked as he looked smilingly into my eyes.

No! I answered go on:

“Well I am on the verge of this discovery, but now I am in need of cool intelligent and sane aid, that can overlook the fact that a court and learned experts have pronounced me insane. I have even now demonstrated by exclusion, that the soul resides in one of two organs. Will you help me to finish my investigation?” I studied his face critically. There was no evidence of undue excitement – no apparent lack of mental balance none of the signs we look for in the insane. I even now wonder what impelled me to tell him I would

help him if possible. He then proceeded to explain, “My house is but a short drive from here, my most important experiment, they have not found. It is of vital necessity that I have an opportunity of completing it tomorrow. Procure me two hours alone in my own house – have it guarded as you will. You can do this, because the authority that is beyond my power, is still within your reach – do this, and all of the data shall be in your possession by tomorrow night, - I shall simply trust to your honor to do me justice.”

I secured the desired permission. Before leaving, the Superintendent asked me to be careful, as the patient had [valvular] lesions of the heart and had had two attacks of angina pectoris, within one week. I took him to his house; before descending to the basement, he handed me a package saying read while I work.

This is what I read: I married when only a year in practice, we were not congenial – a cousin paid my wife too much attention. I objected. She left. Their actions made a scandal. One evening as I passed upon the pathway to the house, I saw them seated closely together in earnest conversation, my blood boiled. I picked up a rusty ax as I rushed through the kitchen. Entering the parlor, I struck him before he could gain his feet, turning to strike my wife – I found the shock had killed her. (You see I am telling you the facts, am offering nothing extenuating).

I was unnaturally cool, and considered the outcome in all its details that the server was having her usual weekly holiday. I had heard whispers to the effect that my wife and her cousin might elope. I would make the public think so. I wrapped the Crushed head and dragged him to the basement stairs and without much difficulty succeeded in getting the body on a dissecting table which I had placed in an unused wine cellar – evidently built with a view to its concealment.

When it was quite dark, I’d buried my wife in the garden and, late as it was, I went to gloat over my fallen rival. (As you read you will say -: here is an infallible symptom of insanity. Bah! Why argue the when I am simply stating facts.)

I was astonished to find he was still alive. The accident taken off the left side of his head – glancing from the right to the [] of the jaw. As I wrote above, the ax was dull. The wound was ragged and matted with hair, there had been but little hemorrhage. The ax had also sank into the left shoulder – almost severing that limb which was held in place by the heads of two or three muscles. The axillary artery had not been wounded.

Here was a chance to pursue investigation to some definite end. I set to work at once, removed the left arm together with the clavicle and scapula – at the same time I removed large portions of wounded brain, together with the temporal bones and a broken frontal bone. I also performed tracheotomy, low down the, and made an opening into the stomach, brought out the edges, and stitch them into incisions in the abdominal wall.

I kept the patient well nourished through this opening into the stomach and there was slight shock. The wounds acted kindly and, at the end of two months every thing was well, with the exception of a slight discharge from the brain. I made an incision in the partially healed scalp, and found things in such condition, that I felt justified in a second

operation which I resolved to make thorough. I took away about two thirds of the remaining brain matter – remove the entire skull – with the exception of the occipital bone, saving enough of this to cover the denuded tissues. This operation disappointed me – sloughing of the scalp set in, so that within six weeks I made a fresh incision and found what remained of the cerebrum in a bad condition.

The cerebellum, however, was encysted in a semitransparent sac and that was reflected over the occipital bone and, separating it completely from the cerebrum, which I now removed entire – I made ample provision for drainage and was not troubled with hemorrhage.

At the end of six months, the patient was in the following condition. Nothing above the shoulders but the encysted cerebellum and occipital bone – breathing easily through a healthy opening at the top of the breast – left arm and supporting bone gone. Stomach in good condition and easily fed through the opening.

I now resolved to rid him of tissue that was not only useless to him, but was also a drain on his vitality. I amputated the right arm – in the same manner employed with the left, also both legs, removing in connection with them the ossa innominata, his recovery from these operations was rapid and without an untoward symptom. I now gave him complete rest for four months, and the adipose tissue began to form rapidly – I had always supplied him with the most nutritious diet. I now removed by successive operations – sternum – ribs, one lung, kidney, spleen and 4/5 of the liver. In spite of my great care and the passiveness of my patient, I did much damage, and nearly killed him. I made no further operation, in fact all I have left is the cerebellum, heart, one lung and stomach.

For many reasons we can exclude the two latter and say that, beyond question, the home of the soul is in the heart or cerebellum. The manuscript slipped from my hands and wave after wave of thought rushed through my excited brain. The facts stated were plausible and possible, the organs mentioned can and have been removed, all of them, except the heart, withstand a considerable loss of their substance.

I became dazed, when a tapping at the window startled me. The guard informed me that we had been in the house three hours. I roused myself with an effort and descended rapidly to the basement. The odor of burning oil directed me to the part of the cellar where I would be apt to find him. Even with this guide I had great difficulty in locating his den. Succeeding, I opened the low narrow door, and stepping into the little room, stood erect.

The room was about five feet wide and eight feet long, completely enclosed with solid stone walls, from the center of the ceiling a hanging lamp was suspended directly over a dissecting table. The doctor was lying by the side of this table, dead. On the table, was an object, eighteen inches long, about fifteen inches wide and about eight inches high. It was soft, white and innumerably scarred, shaped like a spindle with a small semi-transparent knob on one end. There was a fresh wound about ten inches in length on one side, from which the blood was still oozing.

The doctor, for all that may ever be known, had solved the problem in a double sense. He has removed the heart and found that the silver cord was loosed and the Golden bowl was broken and under the excitement, his own heart gave way – his soul also escaped and left him lying on the floor, with the home of the other soul in his hand.

L. C. Carr

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Theo Kemper Editor