

5 Camont Terrace, Grey St,
 East Melbourne 7 May 1880

My dear Friend,

This afternoon I had a long Consultation with a leading physician (the sixth I have consulted during the last 6 months) & commenced to address him by stating that I was the unlucky possessor of so many ailments that I felt some difficulty in deciding which should be first mentioned - He smiled; took out his note Book & I proceeded - After my statement & his comments came tests & copious examinations - Instruments were inserted into my eyes, ears, nose, throat, &c & other instruments were applied to other ~~parts~~ parts of my body - Then quotha my medico, - "H'm, well, yes, yours is an interesting case - One does not often see a patient so variously afflicted - You are, I must tell you, in a very critical state & unless you take the greatest care of yourself & immediately & absolutely abstain from mental and physical exertion, you had better at once put your affairs in order" ("order

"my ascension robe", thought I - "After a course
of treatment you must go to a warmer
climate for a few months" - I smiled at this -
Then came advice, admonitions, prescriptions &c - I
paid his fee; ordered the medicines, &c & hobbled
slowly home -

And now, to night, I think upon my position
& the "affairs to be put in order" - Amongst other
or virtuous resolutions I determine to write
to you, - principally because I feel pretty
confident of your sympathy - & partly because I can
speak more freely to you than to any other living
human being.

This by way of prelude - And, upon reflection,
I think this introduction a good method of
disposing of such unpleasant topics as broken
promises; vows of friendship; "good undone resolutions
vain" & this method is, too, a cunning appeal, in
the first instance, to sympathy -

Some one says, that when a fool, pen, ink & paper
come together the result should be suppressed - I
quite agree with that remark & warn you that a
torrent of long suppressed twaddle is about to
seep upon you - However, I deprecate ^{harsh} criticism by
saying I rely upon my utter & complete prostration to
plead with you for Compassion or interest.

For a long time past (two years, at least,) I have been overworked & a struggle has been going on between mental exhaustions & physical debility - I have, indeed, worked very hard; by night & day, incessantly, in all weathers & often times under great depression - You know enough of me, too, to know ^{the significance of} what I mean by saying that all this time I have been "burning" the candle at both ends" - Now, the inevitable result has come - Maladies, long neglected or despised, arise in fresh strength & fiercely struggle for ^{the} mastery of my shattered Constitution - Fresh complaints, too, appear upon the scene & add fuel to the fire & I am sometimes amused as another & yet another make their debut. I give them all the same welcome, - indifference - If any haply depart I haven't sufficient interest or courtesy left to say "Well, good bye; when are you coming to see me again": because I notice they don't wait to be invited - The following are some of my complaints: Congestion of the lungs - ulcerated throat (not, however caused by ~~the~~ syphilis, - which I have hitherto escaped); partial (and perhaps chronic) deafness; diseased liver; haemorrhoids (never mind the spelling); lameness (produced by the "last aforesaid"); G. --- a, and nervous debility - There are others but the above are nearly all the "constant subscribers".

Now, old man, I want you to mention the purpose

of the foregoing to my Brother; - not because he'll
take any particular interest in the matter, but
because he can communicate the ^{intelligence} "subject" at home"
("home"!) & thus save me the trouble of writing to
him & the others - I can't find out whether I
am desperately, that is, hopelessly ill; but a few
weeks will tell - and, frankly, I must say I don't
care what ensues - I have managed to ^{catch} make
arrangements for one of my many mining speculations
to pay for a few months existence & perhaps to defray
the expense of a "bevy" (no pun intended). I shall
at once resign my situation & devote my sole attention
to philosophy & physics - so much for "yourself."

But how have you fared all this time?

Has Providence been kindest to you? Had made money,
same, or "other ties"? Tell me fully of all these things
I implore - Is your health good; your heart unaddened;
your faith in some "far off divine event" unshaken - Is the
deak still your master; does night work still oppress you -
Ah me, I sigh to think of the happier, purer, calmer
atmosphere you breathe & I often wish, - but never mind that -

How are the friends ^{or} of the Companions of our youth -
How the father; the brethren; the festive Frods, the respectable
Dods, the despicable C.E.T.s, the fraudulent Wick? - Wick
would make a pretty good Victorian, but "things" like my
precious brother in law a "downright sight" better - I should
like to live if it were only to inflict some lasting injury,
some fixed disgrace upon that beast - Ugh! (Critical for imprecations
& to get code)

(Later) - With trembling awe & trepidation of mind (& body) I approach, through you, the "Father". He won't look so leniently upon my transgressions, for I've sinned greatly before him & certainly "am not" worthy to be called his son - I'm afraid Andrew will say, in effect, that the "humble & contrite heart" business is about ~~spo~~ played out & the "reformation" dodge is all "my eye" - However, through you, I crawl to his knees & plead for "one more chance". As for Jey, he'd be harder still & most likely treat any remarks I might make with silent contempt.

Give Tell, Andrew, please, a few items of news - Whiting was married last Nov. to an uninteresting little Jewess - I visit them occasionally; they seem happy & comfortable - Edwards lives with me & is unaltered. Collins is at "Brummozen Creek", near Dubbo, on a surveying party - There, too, he met Kerridge (notice, - punders prosecuted) - O'Carra is in some humble way at Sydney. Finlay is married, as of course you know. McKenzie still sojourneth at # Kieldra & courteth a fat and affluent damsel - As to my own matrimonial intentions, - Oh Heavens!

Heigh ho! I don't think there is anything

more to be said, ~~except~~ unless it is to
ask you to write a few lines when you have time.
I am very grateful for the newspapers you send
me & I find them very interesting - I'm afraid
you must be getting lazy for I haven't seen
anything in them from your pen for a long time - Do
you get mine (I mean the newspapers) ~~at~~. I haven't
been sending them very regularly lately - Is your
visit here still as far off as ever? Surely you are now
entitled to a long holiday.

How is my brother? Does he work as hard as
ever & has marriage agreed with him, or is there any
alteration - Tell me, too, about the office & who manages
it & what your duties are, who are your fellow
laborers, is "Shandy" still "about", - Henry; Dobbie &c -

But before & above all, intelligence, kindly find
out for me (if you can do so without trouble) ~~what is the~~
real position & the prospects of the Stanhope Tin
Mining Company - I write for myself & several others -
I would be glad of a line on the subject as soon
as convenient - Tom Frod (to whom kind regards)
ought to know something of the matter -

Make what use you please of this letter & write
when so disposed - I am still as I have always really
been ~~your~~ your affectionate friend W.S.H.

W. S. H. Weston

P.S. overlook misquotations &c