A Dream.

I DREAMED a dream. I was but a lad of twelve years. One gray November afternoon I fell asleep and dreamed the dream, the cursed thing that has blighted my life and my hopes. From the time I threw myself on the bed that afternoon in November, I knew no more till three weeks had passed. My mother told me afterward that I awoke at twilight with a piercing scream. She hurried to where I was lying, but I did not know her. A physician was called at once, but my delirium had obtained full sway. For three weeks I raved and tossed in a torturing pain. They called it brain fever caused by intense mental strain. Friends of the family pointed to me as another victim of the overpressure of modern schools. But they were all wrong. It was the dream, the frightful vision that shook my being to its centre and unseated reason from her throne.

How shall I tell it? With death staring into my eyes, and longing for the last embrace, is it strange that my pen trembles, and the words fail to come. I can see it now. The whole scene stands out before me, sharp and clear as stand the trees against an autumn landscape. I felt that strange loss of personality which comes at times to every one. I was outside of everything, including myself. Suddenly, in my dream, a mist seemed to form before my eyes. Yet, more quickly it cleared away. I could see objects as clearly as I see the paper upon which I write these words. It was a winter scene. The alder bushes in the foreground were stark and bare. Just beyond them was a sheet of ice upon which several youths were skating. I saw them wheel in graceful curves over the frozen surface. I saw myself among them. The features, the bearing, I recognized as my own—a trifle more mature, but yet the same. As I gazed at this second me, this stranger self, I heard a cry from one of the other youths. A crash that startled all the gay company was heard. I saw them stand for a moment paralyzed with terror. A scene of wild confusion followed. In the midst of it all I saw my counterpart tear the rails from the fence and creep slowly out toward his drowning friend. I saw him grasp the hands of the struggling lad and hold him above the water. The shouts of those on shore greeted the brave achievement. All at once to my horror, I saw the rescuer—myself—grow pale. He loosed his hold on the drowning boy, and fell back on the board a helpless, inert mass. The poor fellow in the water sank into the icy depths. I felt my head reel. All was dim.

But the dream had not reached its height of horror and agony. Still with the same uncanny feeling that I was a spectator of the world rather than a participant in it, I found myself gazing at another scene. There was a room, a room strangely darkened and hushed. The very tension of the air seemed to indicate what kind of event was about to befall some poor mortal. I remember the touch of pity with which I bent forward to look at the face of the unfortunate, lying in the bed, propped up with pillows. Merciful Heaven! It was myself! Dear, pitying faces were grouped around the bedside. The kind old family doctor leaned over me and shook his head sadly. I saw myself try to speak, but the sound came not. I saw the pained and tearful expression of the loved ones. I had infinite compassion for myself. Every act burned itself into my soul like a white iron. All at once I saw myself gasp convulsively and clutch at the air in front as if striving to keep my hold on the material. I heard the grim death-rattle in my throat. I saw myself dying. I was dead. . . . Is it strange that I woke in a maniacal frenzy from a dream such as this?

I was young, however. So soon as I recovered from the raging fever into which I had fallen, the terrible nightmare haunted me no more. My boyhood was happy. Trouble and care were given the go-by; mirth and jollity stepped to the front. I spent the years in that happy-go-lucky spirit, granted only to youth.

I entered college at the age of eighteen, and my first two years flew by swiftly and pleasantly. In the Christmas vacation of my Junior year I