

SLEEP AND DREAMS. *By H. M. Jewett. New York and Toronto: Funk & Wagnalls. Pp. 147.*

This monograph, which deals in a most plain and practical manner with a subject so familiar as that of sleep, makes very evident the fact that we find ourselves in the region of the mysterious and inexplicable long before we reach the realm of spirits. This is something which we do well to ponder carefully in these days, when mystery is the stumbling-block over which many fall, and, in consequence, fail to reach the cross.

With the fact of sleep we are all most familiar, but when we seek for the cause it eludes our most diligent search. Test this for yourself by asking, How is sleep brought about? Read the history of this question and the attempts that have been made to answer it from the days of Aristotle and Galen down to the present day, and you will be surprised, not that you are unable to give an immediate and satisfactory answer, but that the question never before presented itself to you as one so difficult to answer.

After stating various theories which are widely divergent, and in some cases directly contradictory, the author advances the one which commends itself to him, to the effect that during the hours of sleep oxygen is stored up in the several tissues of the body. In the waking hours this oxygen is gradually exhausted, until the paucity of it, more particularly in the brain, produces sleep. He claims that this theory of the body's hunger for oxygen, and its satisfaction through sleep, is supported by several facts, among which he mentions yawning, which is an unusually large inspiration of oxygen; also the fact that young children need more sleep than adults, because they need a larger supply of oxygen to carry on the relatively greater operations of building up their bodily and mental systems, whilst, on the other hand, aged people need less.

The second chapter has to do with dreams, which he classifies, giving the conditions which incite them.

The third chapter, on sleeplessness and its prevention, will be carefully read, line by line, by those who have courted sweet unconsciousness, only to be jilted by it. This, however, is an experience of which so many can speak, a subject on which so much has been written, and a malady for which so many remedies have been prescribed, that it is difficult to propose anything new.

The last chapter is on the analogy of insanity to sleep and dreams. Whilst he traces between them many interesting analogies, all will feel that, from a physiological point of view, there is between them a wide gulf.

The book is, on the whole, a most interesting one, and sets flowing many currents of thought on themes so familiar that we, in our ignorance, imagined we knew all about them.