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## DREAMS.

Dreams present so many wonderful features that they have long given scope to the feats of the marvel-monger, rather than to the investigations of science. There are, however, few subjects of more scientific interest; and the object of this paper is not merely to relate a number of amusing stories about our dream-life, but rather to explain its wonders as far as the present position of science enables us to give an explanation.

The peculiarities of dreaming, which require to be explained in any theory of the subject, may be brought under two heads. The first is the fantastic combinations of circumstances by which dreams are characterized, and the second, the irresistible appearance of their reality.

The former of these is so obtrusive a characteristic of dreaming that, in our waking life, any improbable fancy, any wild expectation, is very usually described as a *dream*. All the ordinary probabilities of the real world, whether founded on internal character or on external circumstances, are set at naught in dreams. In dreams the coward achieves the boldest deeds, while the brave man is mortified by the meanness of his cowardice. The guilty often dream of an innocence of which they know nothing in real life, while

the pure mind is shocked at times by dreaming of being seduced into the most improbable sins. The untravelled lover of domestic comforts often spends his nights in wandering over the face of the earth, while the restless wanderer settles down to the quiet routine of home. The man who in the world of reality was never known to be guilty of an *outré* act, rides in his sleep along the edge of precipices, seats himself on dizzy pinnacles, rushes into mad encounters with wild beasts, and exposes himself to all sorts of ridiculously needless dangers. In like manner there are no external limitations,—no obstacles of time or place,—in the world of dreams. A few seconds carry us round the globe; and the events of years may be packed into a single night, or even into a few minutes. Persons who are separated by a hemisphere in space, or even by centuries in time, enter into familiar intercourse in the dreamer's society, and those friends who have long ago passed beyond the veil, descend to him from the spirit-world as readily as they are supposed to come for the purpose of rapping upon tables at a spiritualistic séance. We pass from place to place in our dreams as if we were charmed by the cap of Fortunatus; and we spurn all ordinary modes of locomotion, for we