

his pipe up to the last moment, came out upon the drop more dead than alive, and in a few moments was a swinging whirling corpse.

Thus ended this dreadful vindication of the majesty of the law, and the sacredness of human life. Landlords, agents, and bailiffs breathed freer. Neal's aged mother went about the streets of Crossmaglen that day, wringing her hands, and crying out wildly like a mad-woman. His father had been already dead. His wife, who parted from him at nine o'clock with a dry eye, went home with her relations, and in a short time married again. But—the strangest fact of all—one of the clergymen who attended Neal at the drop had the audacity to affirm some years afterwards that the three men had been murdered by British law. There can be no doubt whatever that the scaffold taught an effective lesson to the Ribbon conspirators, for, from that hour, Crossmaglen has been one of the most peaceful and prosperous of neighbourhoods.

### DREAMS.\*

DREAMS and their interpretation have been favourite themes for speculation from time immemorial. Many curious books have been published containing the wisdom of fools and the follies of wise men; interpretations and counter interpretations: laws by which you may understand their secret meaning of dreams, and others by which you may breathe a secret meaning into dreams which you create yourself. Mr. Frank Seafield has recently published an addition to the *Literature of Dreams*; a "common-place book" he terms it, in which all the curious incidents that have ever occurred in the sleep of any sleeping being are chronicled as well as what everybody has written on a subject that interests everybody.

One of the chief difficulties in the interpretation of dreams is the play of fancy. Of this, there are many instances in Mr. Seafield's volumes. There is a curious story of a man sleeping at a chessmonger's, in a room infested by rats, and dreaming that he was shut up in a large cheese, and attacked like Bishop Hatto, by an army of rats. There is another of a man kicking the bedclothes off his feet and dreaming that he went barefooted to the butcher's to return a joint that had been sent by mistake. In another case, a lady dreams that an epidemic has attacked noses, and finds that her hand was resting on her own nose so as to stop the circulation. In another, a lady asleep during the sermon, dreams that she plays with a stranger for all her money and jewels, that losing these, she stakes her three lovely children; and the stranger bears these off at last, discovering himself by a cloven foot and a strong smell of brimstone—the latter proving "only a bottle of spirits, which a good old lady applied to her nose to put her in a condition of hearing the preacher's third head, concerning time." The best instances of these self-created dreams are given in the experiments of M. Maury:—

1. His lips and nose were tickled by his coadjutor with a feather. He dreamed that he was subjected to horrible tortures; that a pitchplaster was applied to his face, which was then roughly withdrawn, denuding the lips and cheeks.

2. A pair of tweezers were struck close to his ears by scissors. He dreamed that he heard the ringing of bells, which speedily passed into the tocsin, and suggested June, 1848.

3. He was made to smell Eau de Cologne. He dreamed that he was in the shop of a perfumer, which led the fancy to the East, and to the shop of Jean Farina, in Cairo!

4. He was made to feel the heat and smell of a burning match, and the wind at the time whistled through the shutters. He dreamed that he was at sea, and that the powder-room of the vessel blew up.

5. His neck was slightly pinched. He dreamed that a blister was applied; and then there arose the recollection of a physician who had treated him in youth.

6. A piece of red-hot iron was held close to his

face for such a length of time as to communicate a slight heat. He dreamed of bandits who got into houses and applied hot irons to the feet of the inhabitants, in order to extract money from them. This idea suggested that of the Duchess d'Abantes, who he conceived had chosen him as secretary, in whose memoirs he had read of chauffeurs, or bandits, who burned people.

7. The word "parafarnarus" was pronounced close to his ear. He heard nothing; but on a repetition of the attempt while in bed, the word "maman" was followed only by a dream of the hum of bees. When the experiment was repeated some days subsequently, and when he was falling asleep, he dreamed of two or three words, "Azor, Castor, Leonore," which were attributed to the interlocutors in his dream. The sound of "chanelle, haridelle," awoke him while pronouncing the words "c'est elle," but without any recollection of the idea attached to the expression.

8. A drop of water falling on the brow suggested a dream of Italy, great thirst, and a draught of orvietto.

9. A light, surrounded by a red paper, was repeatedly passed before his eyes. He dreamed of a storm of lightning, which reproduced a violent tempest which he had encountered between Morlaix and Harve.

But even when there are no such illusions, the difficulty of interpreting dreams remains. Mr. Seafield gives us several solutions from Greek, and Persian, and Mussulman sources. We give one extract from this curious chapter:—

"Resurrection-men should be careful to whom they relate their dreams. 'What answer,' said a stranger to the son of Sirin, 'shall I convey to a man who has dreamed that he broke some eggs, and took out the white, and left the yolk in the shells?'—'Tell him to come and consult me in person,' replied the oneirocritic. It was in vain that the same message was often repeated; the son of Sirin refused all answer, till the messenger avowed that himself was the dreamer, and confirmed the statement by an oath. 'Seize that man and bear him before the Cadi, for he disinters and robs the dead,' was the declaration which immediately overwhelmed him with terror and astonishment."

One of the most remarkable phenomena connected with dreams is the shortness of time needed for their consummation. Lord Brougham says that in dictating a man may frequently fall asleep after uttering a few words, and be awakened by the amanuensis repeating the last word to show he has written the whole; but, though five or six seconds only have elapsed between the delivery of the sentence and its transfer to paper, the sleeper may have passed through a dream extending through half a lifetime. Lord Holland and Mr. Babbage both confirm this theory. The one was listening to a friend reading aloud, and slept from the beginning of one sentence to the latter part of the sentence immediately succeeding; yet during this time he had a dream, the particulars of which would have taken more than a quarter of an hour to write. Mr. Babbage dreamt a succession of events, and woke in time to hear the concluding words of a friend's answer to a question he had just put him. One man was liable to feelings of suffocation, accompanied by a dream of a skeleton grasping his throat, whenever he slept in a lying posture, and had an attendant to wake him the moment he sank down. But though awakened, the moment he began to sink, that time sufficed for a long struggle with the skeleton. Another man dreamt that he crossed the Atlantic, spent a fortnight in America, and fell overboard when embarking to return; yet his sleep had not lasted more than ten minutes.

### STORIES ABOUT STRANGE FISHES.

STORIES about strange fishes of eccentric habits, and fishes of preternatural size, odd forms, and ugliness, in the common sense of the term, are very amusing. It is true that now and then a wonderful story is served like the fish itself—knocked on the head by the mallet of truth; while some public prosecutor of popular

error strips a marvellous story of its Munchausen quality. How often has the sea serpent wonder been demolished; yet every now and then some fresh specimen "lifts the head and lies," the belief takes fresh root, and the credence is safe for another term.

The Bohemians have a proverb—"every fish has another for prey:" that named the wels has them all. This is the largest fresh-water fish found in the rivers of Europe, except the sturgeon; it often reaches five or six feet in length. It destroys many aquatic birds, and we are assured that it does not spare the human species. On the 3rd of July, 1706, a peasant took one near Thorn, that had an infant entire in its stomach! They tell in Hungary of children and young girls being devoured on going to draw water; and they even relate that, on the frontiers of Turkey, a poor fisherman took one that had in its stomach the body of a woman, her purse, full of gold, and a ring! The fish is even reported to have been taken sixteen feet long.

However, there are several fish and ring stories. Some 2,300 years ago, Polycrates, the despot of Samos, throw into the sea a favourite ring of matchless price and beauty. In a few days the ring reappeared in the belly of a fine fish, which a fisherman had sent to the despot as a present.

Peter Damian relates that Arnulphus, king of Lotharinga, in a fit of repentance for his depravity, threw a costly ring into a stream, saying, "If you are brought back to me, then, but not till then, shall I be assured that all my sins have been pardoned and cancelled." Thereupon the king led a very penitent life, when a fish, served at dinner on a meagre day, was found by the cook to possess a fine gold ring—of course, that which Arnulphus had thrown into the stream—when the king became assured of the Divine acceptance of his contrition. St. Augustine relates that a needy cobbler of Hippo prayed to the shrine of the Thirty Martyrs for a certain article of clothing, when, in passing along the sea-shore, he took a large fish which had been thrown upon the beach, which he sold to a rich man's cook, and with the money purchased wool enough for his wife to spin into the necessary garment. Next the cook discovered inside the fish a gold ring; and knowing at whose shrine the cobbler had prayed, he gave him back the trinket, saying, "Thus do the Thirty Martyrs find thee clothing, according to thy suit."

There are other versions of this story in Eastern narratives. It is also the great event of the old popular ballad of "The Cruel Knight, or, the Fortunate Farmer's Daughter," in which the ring which had been thrown into the sea is restored by means of a cod-fish. The traditional heroine of this ballad is Dame Rebecca Berry, buried at Stepney, Middlesex, where, in her arms, sculptured upon her tomb, a fish and amulet are regarded as proofs of the veracity of the tale.

Still, the pike stories are most wonderful. In the "History of Staffordshire" it is stated that "at Lord Gower's estate at Trentham a pike seized the head of a swan as she was feeding under water, and gorged so much of it as killed them both. The servants, perceiving the swan remain in the same position for a considerable time, went in a boat, and found both swan and pike dead." Gesner says that a furnished pike, in the Rhone, fixed on the lips of a mule that was drinking, and was drawn out by the beast before it could disengage itself.

A singular encounter, which took place at Waldstein between a pike and a fox, is commemorated in a German print. Some country people had taken a huge pike, but in conveying it home during the night it escaped. As it was a large fish, they returned with torches in search of their prize, and after some time found it on the grass, having fast hold of a fox by the nose. The fox, caught in this novel trap, endeavoured in vain to escape, and it was not until the pike was killed that it was possible to separate them.

In December, 1765, a pike was caught in the river Ouse, weighing upwards of twenty-eight pounds; when opened, the cook found a watch, with two seals attached to it by a black ribbon, in the body of the fish. These, it was afterwards ascertained, had belonged to a servant, who had been drowned about six weeks before.

\* *The Literature and Curiosities of Dreams.* By Frank Seafield, M.A.