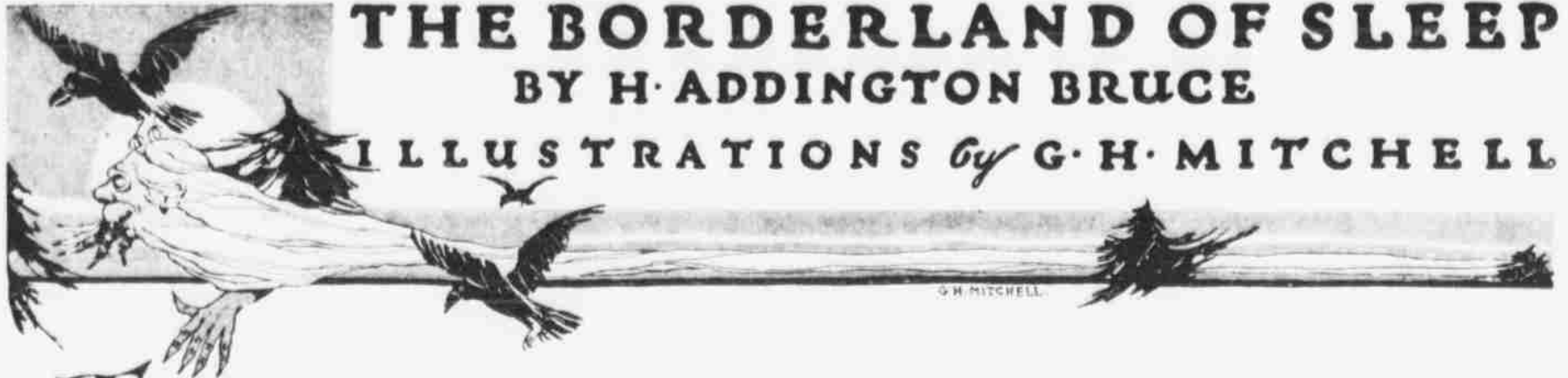


# THE BORDERLAND OF SLEEP

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ILLUSTRATIONS by G. H. MITCHELL



**T**HE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF sleep, particularly as showing the close relationship between dreams and disease, has resulted within the past few years in discoveries of great practical importance. No less important are the discoveries that have been made through the investigation—as yet only in its beginnings—of the peculiar semi-waking, semi-sleeping condition that immediately precedes and immediately follows actual sleep.

Most people have next to no knowledge of this "borderland state," for the reason that it is usually so fleeting as to be inappreciable. But careful experiment and observation have demonstrated its existence; and, moreover, it is now known that instead of being a merely passive condition, it often is characterized by a degree of mental activity that makes an understanding of it peculiarly interesting.

Through its investigation much new light has been thrown on the nature of those weird hallucinations frequently experienced by normal, healthy persons, and taking the form of phantasms of the living or the dead; such as, for example, the "ghost" seen by Lewis C. Bruce, while spending a night in a lonely Scotch farmhouse.

He had been sailing all day, had been caught in a calm, and did not arrive at the farmhouse until after midnight. Before turning in he ate a hearty supper, and then, having been shown to his room, undressed as quickly as he could, and soon was sound asleep. The bed he occupied was one of those old-fashioned, heavily-curtained affairs so common in the Highlands. About two o'clock in the morning he awoke with a start and with an uneasy feeling that he was not alone. Looking up, he beheld to his horror a face gazing at him from the opening in the curtains. This apparition lasted from ten to fifteen seconds.

"It was a face," Mr. Bruce afterwards said, "that I had never seen before. My hair stood up on my head, and I felt cold. But reason prevailed as I thought of my late and heavy supper, and soon again I was fast asleep."

Judge of his amazement when, dressing in the morning, he noticed on the wall a small portrait which he instantly recognized as that of the face he had seen gazing through the curtain. It was the portrait, he learned at breakfast, of a man who had formerly lived in the farmhouse, and had died in the room in which Mr. Bruce had slept.

**C**OMPARE with this the extraordinary experience of an Englishman, John E. Husbands, as a guest at a hotel in Madeira. He had gone to bed, one bright moonlight night, and had been sleeping for some time when, precisely like Mr. Bruce, he awoke with a feeling that somebody was in the room with him. Opening his eyes he saw, standing at the side of his bed and pointing at the spot where he was lying, a young fellow of about twenty-five, dressed in flannels. Mr. Husbands's first thought was that the intruder had entered by the window, which he knew he had left open, and he called out angrily, asking him what he wanted. Then, as the other made no reply, he sat up in bed and struck at him with his fist. As he did so, his unexpected visitor, still pointing toward the bed, slowly faded into nothingness.

The next day, Mr. Husbands told what he had seen to several other guests at the hotel, including a Miss Falkner and her brother. Both fancied that they recognized in his description of the flannel-clad apparition a young friend of theirs who had died in that room some months be-

fore. But they said nothing of this to Mr. Husbands until nearly a week later, when Miss Falkner abruptly showed him a photograph of the dead man. Instantly he exclaimed:

"Why, that is the very chap I saw in my room. Only he was dressed differently. He had on a cricket or tennis suit, fastened at the neck with a sailor knot."

"And," added Miss Falkner, in relating the incident, "it so happens that this was the kind of dress our friend often wore. But I can not understand how he came to appear to Mr. Husbands, who is most practical, and the last man one would expect a 'spirit' to visit."

Still more striking was an uncanny visitation vouchsafed to a commercial traveler from Boston

in my orders, which were unusually large ones, so that I was in a very happy frame of mind indeed. The hour was high noon, and the sun was shining cheerfully into my room. While busily smoking a cigar and writing out my orders, I suddenly became conscious that some one was sitting on my left, with one arm resting on the table. Quick as a flash I turned and distinctly saw the form of my dead sister, and for a brief second or so looked her squarely in the face; and so sure was I that it was she that I sprang forward in delight, calling her by name; and, as I did so, the apparition instantly vanished. Naturally I was startled and dumfounded, almost doubting my senses; but from the cigar in my mouth, and the pen in my hand, with the ink still moist on my letter, I satisfied myself I had not been dreaming and was wide awake.

"Now comes the most remarkable confirmation of my statement. This visitation, or whatever you may call it, so impressed me that I took the next train home; and in the presence of my parents and others I related what had occurred. My father was inclined to ridicule me, as he saw how earnestly I believed what I stated; but he, too, was amazed when I told them of a bright red line or scratch on the right-hand side of my sister's face, which I had distinctly seen.

"**W**HEN I mentioned this, my mother rose trembling and nearly fainted away; and as soon as she sufficiently recovered her self-possession, with tears streaming down her face, she exclaimed that I had indeed seen my sister, as no living mortal but herself was aware of that scratch, which she had accidentally made while doing some little act of kindness after my sister's death. She said she well remembered how pained she was to think she should have, unintentionally, marred the features of her dead daughter, and that, unknown to all, how she had carefully obliterated all traces of the slight scratch with the aid of powder, etc., and that she had never mentioned it to a human being from that day to this. In proof, neither my father nor any of our family had detected it, and positively were unaware of the incident; yet I saw the scratch as bright as if just made."

There was, further, a curious sequel to this singular adventure, for within a few days after her son's return, the mother herself passed away, "happy in the belief that she would rejoin her favorite daughter in another world." To the entire family it seemed certain that the dead daughter had been aware of her mother's approaching end, and had contrived to appear to her brother as a means of sending him home in time to take a last farewell.

"Ghosts," of course, are often seen at the moment when, or not long after, the person whose phantasmal form appears is dying, or passing through some serious crisis, at a distance from the place of apparition. I am able to cite an astonishing instance of this sort, on the authority of a clergyman, the Rev. Arthur Bellamy. His wife, it seems, as a young girl had made a compact with a friend that whichever of them died first should endeavor to manifest herself in spirit form to the survivor. Many years later Mrs. Bellamy, who in the meantime had lost all track of her friend, casually heard of the latter's death. The news reminded her of their compact, and, becoming nervous, she told her husband of it. Mr. Bellamy declares he had never known the friend in life, nor had



during a trip in the Middle West. In fact, his narrative of his experience, as reported by him to the American Society for Psychical Research, with corroborative documents, constitutes one of the most remarkable "true ghost stories" I have ever heard, and can properly be told only in his own words.

"In 1867," he says, "my only sister, a young lady of eighteen years, died suddenly of cholera in St. Louis. My attachment for her was very strong, and the blow a severe one to me. A year or so after her death I became a commercial traveler, and it was in 1876, while on one of my Western trips, that the event occurred.

"I had 'drummed' the city of St. Joseph, Mo., and had gone to my room at the Pacific House to send

