

## **An Historical Note on Lucid Dreaming**

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By way of introduction, I am Director of the Parapsychology Sources of Information Center. One of our activities is to collect and index articles or chapters on or relevant to para-psychology and altered states. (The data base now numbers some 34,000 items.) In reading an article from the last century preparatory to assigning index terms for it, I found I had in my hands an interesting account of self—training in lucid dreaming dated 1886. Because of its possible historic interest, I would like to bring it to the attention of readers of *Lucidity Letter*. The article was primarily about suspended anima-tion and was written by one Francis Gerry Fairfield and published in *Scribner's Monthly*, 1886, 21, 240—257. In a discussion of conscious control of so—called unconscious processes, Fairfield notes:

“It is possible...to carry an imperfect consciousness into the processes of sleep. I once tried a series of experiments on this point, by vigilantly and determinedly persisting in consciousness until the last moment, while in other respects submitting myself passively to all the conditions necessary to the process. The consequence was, after a lengthened struggle with nor-mal function, that my nights were trans-formed into a series of rational and coher-ent trances, wrapped about in a thin vapor of dreamland, and though connected and logical, yet strangely transcendent and introspective. Nor did this prevent my dreaming. On the contrary, dreams came and went, and I was conscious of them as beau-tiful or haggard illusions, and tried to prolong the former, and to elude the lat-ter. But by far the most singular of all the psychological experiences associated with these experiments was the conscious-ness of being asleep and of being conscious of it. I discontinued the habit, as a per-version of function, after verifying the possibility; but for many months my dreams were accompanied with a perfect conscious-ness that they were dreams, and, to what-ever pinnacle of ghastrliness they mounted, I had the consolation of knowing that they were illusory experiences (p.256).”

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