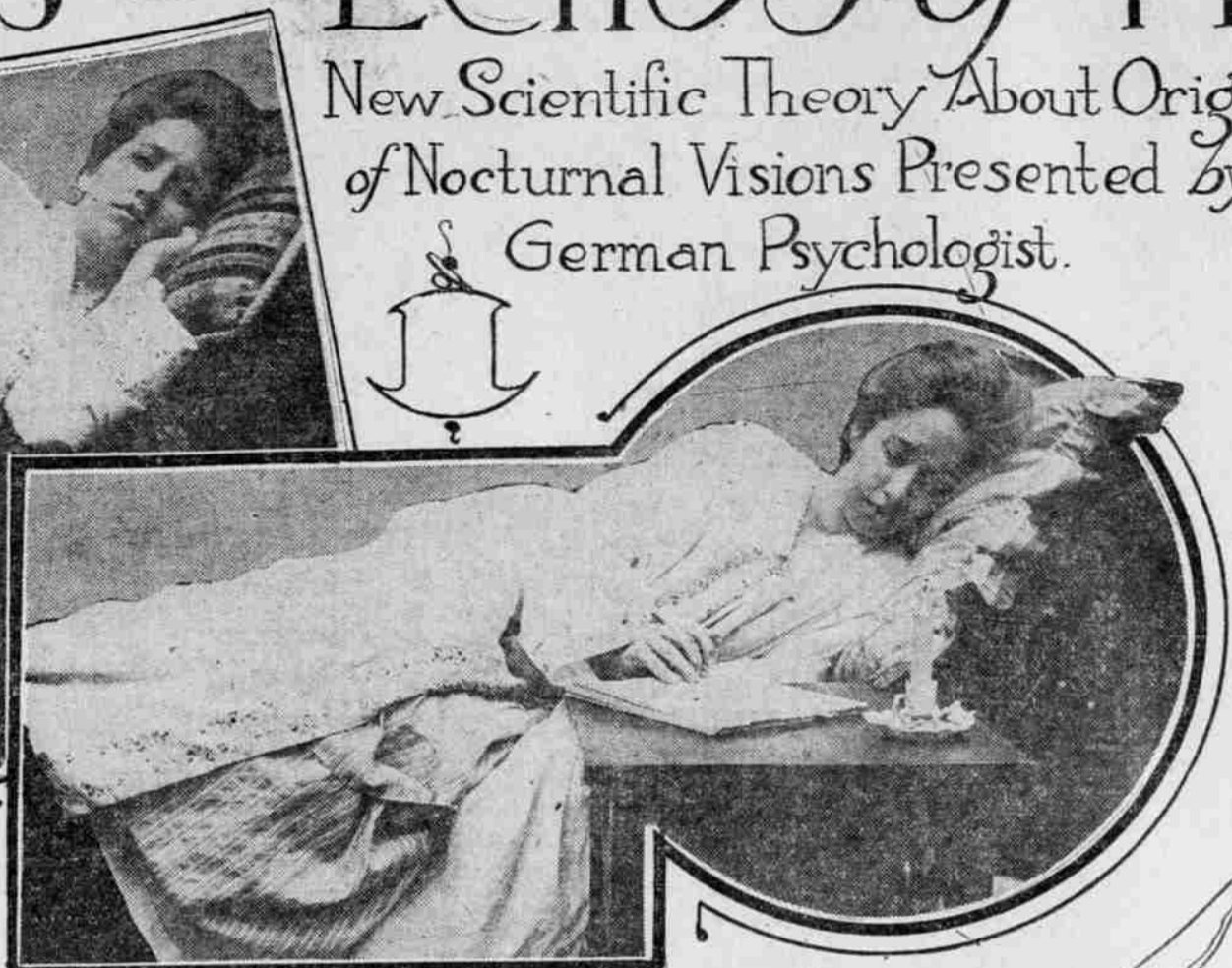


DREAMS — ECHOS of PREHISTORIC PAST.

New Scientific Theory About Origin of Nocturnal Visions Presented by German Psychologist.



The Most Vivid Dreams Come Between Sleeping and Waking.



It is Interesting to Make Notes of Dreams When One Happens to Wake



One of Our Early Ancestors.

BY RENE BACHE. "DREAMLAND is the world of the forgotten past of the human race."

Such is the remarkable and wholly novel theory advanced by an eminent German psychologist, Professor Moritz Pfister, who avers that our dreams, while sometimes relating to current events, are mainly memories of happenings in previous states of existence.

You see, it is like this. Each one of us (according to Professor Pfister's theory) has lived through a long series of lives, and in them has had a great variety of experiences, pleasant and otherwise. In our dreams we go back to them, and re-enact scenes which may have been actual occurrences thousands or even tens of thousands of years ago.

In dreams we often visit places which certainly in this life we have never seen. We meet people whom in this life we have never met, and yet they do not seem to us strangers. This is because both persons and places, in such instances, belong to a past that is not of this life, but of a period—perhaps a long period—previous thereto.

For the very reason that it is not of this life, we have no conscious recollections in our waking moments of places and people belonging to that period. While awake we are living in the present, even in respect to our memories; but in sleep our dream-thoughts go back—often so far back that the dreams themselves are mysterious, puzzling, and obscure. It is hardly to be expected that happenings of 100,000 years ago, say, should be in our dreams as vivid and comprehensible as those of only a century ago.

As above remarked, some of our dreams relate to current or recent events; but most of them (as anybody will testify from his own experience) do nothing of the kind—as is quite natural (says Professor Pfister), if one considers that the happenings of nobody knows how many thousands of years are concerned in our nocturnal visions. A curious feature of the problem is that there is no such thing as time to the dreamer; and by the latter the phenomenon we call death is not recognized. In dreams we often meet and talk with persons who have long been dead, yet we are not in the least

surprised. "There are no dead" in Dreamland.

Some people are greatly troubled with horrifying or otherwise unpleasant dreams. "Indigestion," the doctor says, satisfied that he is giving an adequate explanation. But Professor Pfister believes that such "bad dreams" are memories of actual experiences of the more or less remote past, which, by reason of their disagreeable or terrifying character, have impressed themselves upon the mind with exceptional vividness.

What we call "nightmares" are the most distressing of such memories. Ordinarily they involve sensations of extreme dread. The sufferer (for such he is in the re-staging of a scene in the past) actually groans, or, it may be, cries out in agony. His face is flushed, his forehead wet with cold perspiration, his breathing stertorous. When awakened, he is overcome by feelings of relief and gladness. His emotions are those of one who has escaped from a perilous and dreadful situation.

Such a situation, it is likely, never confronted him in this life. It is a vivid memory of something horrible that happened in a previous state of existence—perhaps many centuries ago. We, in these peaceful and comfortable days, safe as we are in the possession of life and liberty, do not at all realize conditions as they were a few hundred years back—that is to say, in the so-called middle ages. There was no liberty then, except for those who could procure it for themselves by superior night. Necessarily they were the few; the many were defenseless and at the mercy of the strong.

Those were days when every feudal baron, possessing a castle perched on a rock and a few score of armed retainers, had the right to punish by death anybody who was so unfortunate as to displease him. Nay, more, he could inflict torture if he chose, by the rack, the thumbscrew and other means of diabolic ingenuity. Today in Germany the traveler will find many an ancient stronghold of which a conspicuous feature, still recognizable, though the structure be more or less in ruins, is the so-called Roth Thurm, or Red Tower, wherein helpless prisoners were tortured for the amusement, or to satisfy the desire for revenge, of the noble lord.

Suppose the case to be that of a

prisoner suffering on the rack. Would he not display emotions much the same as those exhibited by a person in thrall of a bad nightmare? He would be unable to control the movements of his limbs (the latter being bound), just as is the case with the victim of nightmare. And whereas the latter wishes to cry out but cannot, so likewise it would be with a man gagged by the official torturer.

This, of course, is merely by way of illustration—to show how a nightmare of a certain kind might be nothing more nor less than a memory reproduction of an actual happening to the individual concerned. The distinguishable feature of this kind of dream is inability to use the limbs. But, only a few centuries ago, the practice of tying people up, whether to secure their captivity or for purposes of torture, was the commonest thing in the world. It was a matter of every-day occurrence.

It is hard for us to realize what a dreadful place the world was to live in a few centuries ago. Death by violence was so common that nothing was thought of it. Life in those days was filled with what we would now regard as horrors. To walk out in the morning and come across two or three men—or women, for that matter—lying dead in the street was a commonplace incident. Even religion taught that the thing to do with anybody who did not happen to agree with you in faith was to catch him if possible, torture him by every devilish device that ingenuity could suggest, and finally to burn him. No wonder that we have had dreams sometimes, if, as Professor Pfister believes, our sleeping recollections carry us back into the far past.

Most curious are those recurrent dreams which, involving no incidents that have to do with this life, come back to us again and again at intervals. They recite the same story over and over, always with the same series of happenings. Thus, for example, the case is cited of a man who was made almost a nervous wreck by an oft-repeated dream of a ruffian who pursued him with a drawn knife with intent to kill him. This dream (if the theory set forth be accepted) may be supposed to have been a vivid recollection of an actual happening, which possibly terminated in the death of the individual concerned. If so, he carried the memory of it on with him into a subsequent life—to be tortured by it in his sleep.

Another case, not so easy of explanation, is that of a young lady who, at the beginning of her dream, is engaged at her toilet. Having put on her finest gown, she leaves the house, steps into her carriage, and, after a short drive, ascends a steep hill, where she dismounts and enters a cottage. Going into the parlor, she sits down at a piano and begins to play.

When she strikes a certain chord, a

trapdoor in the top of the piano rises and out of it comes the severed head of a man. A curious point is that she knows in advance just what chord is the "open sesame" of the horrible trap and tries to avoid it; but the harmony always leads up to this chord, and she must behold the vision.

Such a thing, of course, has never happened in the present lifetime of this young lady. Whence comes the dream, then, and why does it recur again and again, always with exactly the same series of incidents? It is impossible to say. But there is something back of it—some memory of tragedy in the

past—an assumption which gains a sort of likelihood from the fact that the piano in the dream is not a modern instrument at all, but more like the old-fashioned harpsichord of a century and more ago.

One might imagine that the dreamer of a recurrent dream would after a while become aware, at least in some degree, of its unreality. But this is not so. It seems just as real the twentieth time as the first—even though its incidents have become so familiar that the dreamer knows in advance exactly what is going to happen. Indeed, this very knowledge, where a bad dream is

concerned, renders the vision more dreadful.

Such a case (mentioned by Professor Pfister) is that of a man who finds himself in a forest of leafless trees. He has been there before, in his dreams, and he has an impression that something terrible is going to happen. There is a deathlike aspect about the surroundings. No song of birds is heard, nor chirp of insects. The dry, dead grass crackles under the dreamer's feet. Presently he sees a man approaching and is seized with a sensation of horror. The man confronts him and his face is that of a dead person, with eyes glassy and expressionless. It is the dreamer's own face. Then he wakes up.

Does this vision signify that the dreamer, in a past state of existence, actually met death under such circumstances and in such surroundings? The question is at least interesting. Yet another instance of the kind is that of a man who dreams that he is attending his own funeral. The services are always exactly the same; he notes certain peculiarities of the casket containing his body; and the route pursued in going to the cemetery is always through the same street. Invariably he awakes just as the customary handful of earth is thrown upon the coffin—seemingly startled into consciousness by the hollow sound it makes.

People often dream complacently and cheerfully of things which fill them with horror on awakening. The best of men do in dreams cruel and immoral deeds. Professor Pfister attributes this to a "harking back" of the mind to a period in the distant past, perhaps thousands of years ago. We do not realize how much better, morally speaking, we are today than our fore-

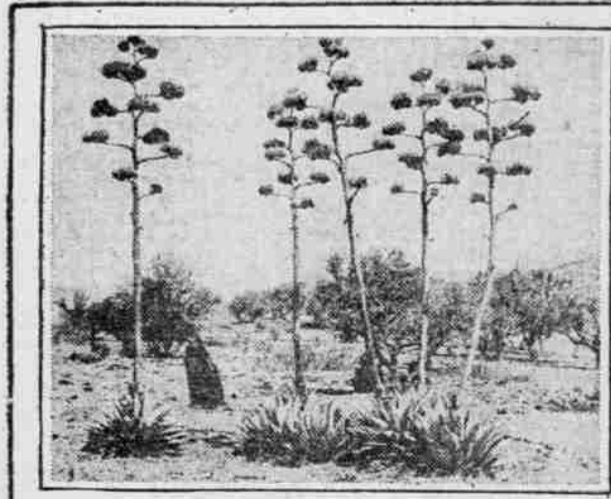
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In Dreams One May Witness a Fight Between Two Extinct Animals.

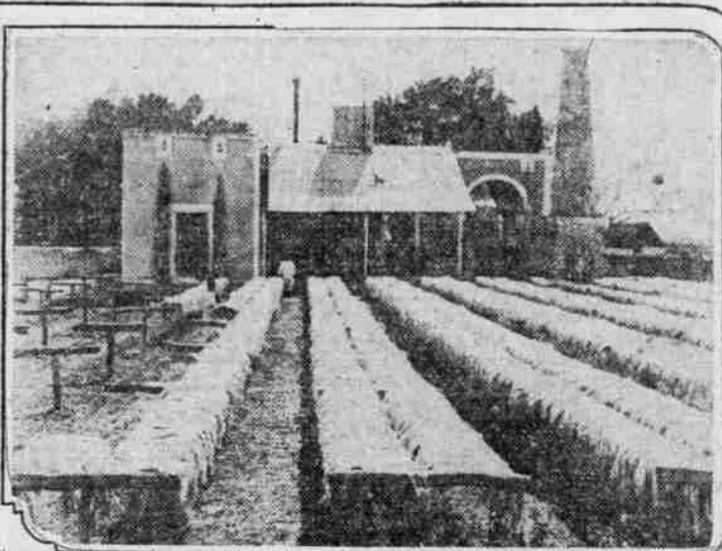


THE CENTURY PLANT—A BREEDER OF WAR

Mexico's Frightful State in Large Measure Due to the Lowly Agave



The Agave or Century Plant in Bloom



Drying Sisal Fiber at Stripping Mill Near Merida, Yucatan, Mexico



Mule Team Carrying Baskets of the Agave to Distilleries for Pulque Manufacture



Cutting Leaves of Sisal Agave in Yucatan, Mexico, for Fiber Manufacture

BY RICHARD HAMILTON BYRD. HERE would probably be peace in Mexico today, said an American traveler who recently returned from the land of the Aztecs, if the Mexicans had raised fewer plants of a species peculiar to the country, while this peace would today be marked by greater prosperity and wealth if more of the same plants had been cultivated.

This is, of course, a paradox; nevertheless, nature has given Mexico a plant which has been at once a blessing and a curse to the inhabitants of this trouble-ridden land. The agave or century plant furnishes both Mexican peon and landlord with a host of the necessities and comforts of existence as well as profitable investment, but it is likewise responsible for pulque and mescal, national alcoholic drinks, the latter of which is often characterized as liquid-hellfire.

With more attention given to the

production of the agave for food, paper, cloth and rope, and less to the distillation of strong drink, it is probable that there would be less turbulence and bloodshed in Mexico.

The agave loves an arid or semi-arid climate and it is suggested by Government specialists of the United States that there are some tens of thousands of square miles in Western Texas and other Southwestern states, of little value for anything else, where this plant would thrive and produce an immense revenue. It is proposed to introduce, however, not the drinkable variety, but that producing the textile fiber which is quite similar to a wild agave which is growing today over a large area in Texas.

The hemp from this, or even that from the native Texas agave, it is believed, would yield an enormous supply of binder twine and other cord and rope. The tremendous increase during recent years in the value of the agave fiber, with its main market in the United States largely among the farmers, gives good promise of success for such an industry. The peninsula of Yucatan alone, in Southern Mexico, now exports annually some \$15,000,000 worth of hemp from the "Agave sisalana." The sisal plantations are said to be exceedingly profitable.

Of all the many strange and remarkable plants found in the Mexican wonderland of Cortes and his followers, none excited more interest than the agaves. Humboldt considered this plant, next to Indian corn and potatoes, the most useful of the natural products of tropical America. There are about 150 different species, of all sizes, and their habitat ranges from the low coastal plains to 10,000 feet above sea level. The agave requires years for its development and flowering, and this has given rise to the popular name "century plant," but it is doubtful if any species spends more than 15 or 20 years in maturing.

The most remarkable looking of the agaves is the huge Pulque Maguay, the giant of the entire group, its great, fleshy leaves being sometimes nine feet long and weighing over 100 pounds

each. Every plant bears from 25 to 50 leaves around a massive, fleshy base, and the largest plants weigh as much as two tons. The leaves of this giant plant spend all the years of their immaturity storing up quantities of sweet sap.

At the expiration of this period the supreme moment of flowering and fruiting arrives, and with marvelous rapidity the gigantic central flower stalk shoots up 30 to 50 feet. This stalk is sometimes a foot in diameter at the base, the upper portion branching like a wonderful candelabrum, bearing white flower clusters, while bright-colored birds and insects sip the nectar. After the seeds form, the huge

leaves and the base, having exhausted themselves in this final effort, wither and die. On the pulque plantations the plant is not allowed to flower, but the leaves are tapped regularly for their juice.

The uses of the different species and parts of the agave are almost legion. The fleshy bases of many kinds are roasted and eaten, somewhat resembling sweet potatoes; the hearts of other kinds are boiled and eaten like artichokes; the flower stalks were formerly used by the Indians for lances and the larger ones are still used as house rafters and for fences, while the broader leaves are employed to thatch the houses. One species furnishes a remarkable soap. The Mexican women

price it for washing their hair, which it makes soft and glossy. It removes stains from delicate fabrics and does not shrink flannels.

The ancient Aztecs utilized the agave leaves for making a remarkably tough paper, upon which they painted in brilliant colors their pictured historical records. Some of these manuscripts still exist in collections and both the colors and the paper appear to be little affected by the lapse of centuries. Commercially manufactured paper from this useful plant, ranging from the coarsest cardboard to the finest white letter paper, is all characterized by unusual toughness and durability, some grades almost equalling parchment. The agave is the ready-made thread and needle of the Mexican Indian. He will break loose a thorny point of an agave leaf and stripping it away with some of the attached fibers will have a sharp and stout needle already threaded for use. The fibers of the Pulque Maguay are very long, soft and silky.