

Betrayed Himself by Talking in His Sleep

Prof. Lough Discusses the Unfortunate Dream of Mr. John Hutchinson Which Landed Him in a Divorce Court and Explains What Science Knows About Our Sleep Talk

Testimony in the Divorce Suit of Mrs. John J. Hutchinson Against Her Husband

Lawyer—Were any facts brought to your attention in the early part of this year that caused you to question your husband in regard to his conduct?
 Mrs. Hutchinson—Yes, because one night I heard him calling a girl's name.
 Lawyer—Where was he; explain to the Judge just what took place, and where?
 Mrs. H.—In bed it was.
 The Judge—In his sleep?
 Mrs. H.—Yes, he was fast asleep.
 Lawyer—Tell the Judge just what he said.
 Mrs. H.—I got up one night to get a drink of water, and my husband was calling "Minnie, Minnie," in his sleep, fast asleep. I kept quiet and didn't wake him up at all.
 Lawyer—Did you speak to him about it?
 Mrs. H.—Yes, sir.
 Lawyer—What did he say?
 Mrs. H.—I said, "Who is this Minnie you are calling in your sleep?" and he got white, he hesitated for a while and he said; "I didn't say 'Minnie,'" I said, "How many," I thought we were having some drinks at the club."
 (Divorce was granted Mrs. Hutchinson).



"Mrs. Hutchinson heard her husband say 'Minnie, Minnie' in his dream, and on this slender clew she based a successful action for divorce."

What Science Has to Say About Dreams

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WHAT is a dream? Why do we dream? How do we dream? What do our dreams mean? That all men dream there can be no question.

Many psychologists are convinced that we do not have such a thing as dreamless sleep. Aristotle admitted that horses, oxen, sheep, goats and dogs and all viviparous quadrupeds dream. Darwin notes in his Descent of Man that dogs, cats, horses and probably all the higher animals have vivid dreams. Romanes gives the same opinion in his Mental Evolution in Animals.

Homer declared that dreams were sent by the gods. Socrates and Plato believed in dreams. Xerxes invaded Greece because of a dream. Cambyzes killed his brother because of a dream warning.

The Egyptians and Babylonians appointed men of the highest learning to interpret dreams.

Job complained, "When I say, my bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint, then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions."

The Greek Hippocrates in the fifth century B. C. attributes the mass of dreams to the influences of the mind upon the body. He was the first to approach a rational solution of dream problems. The higher animal kingdom probably spends a third of its life in the mysterious process of dreaming. What is the meaning and purpose of this world of illusion?

The little domestic tragedy printed above on this page from the court records of a New Jersey court, contributes an interesting case to the psychologist. How far should a jury go in considering sleep talk, which at best is made of the stuff of dreams? In this particular instance abundant corroborative evidence made it plain that the sleeper was repeating in his dream a real incident of his waking life. How far can we go generally in accepting sleep talk as evidence of facts? We do not know.

There is a plausible and interesting theory that the senses go to sleep separately. Our sense of smell may be asleep when our sense of hearing is alert, or the other way round. So our sense of touch may be awake when our taste is asleep. Professor Sargent Hoffman in his book, Psychology and the Common Life (page 199), points out that Cabanis has attempted to show that there is a natural and regular order in which our senses fall asleep. First, the sight becomes quiescent, and then the sense of taste. After that the sense of smell and that of hearing. Last of all the sense of touch. Hoffman doubts this theory, and believes that probably no two times of going to sleep or of awaking are precisely alike in any individual. Hoffman accepts, however, the theory that one sense may fall asleep while all the others are active, or that one

alone may remain awake. Soldiers often sleep at sentinel duty—all their powers are asleep except the muscles of the legs. Sailors sleep clinging to the mast.

Sir William Hamilton tells of a postman at the University of Halle who carried the mail to a village eight miles distant. This postman used to go to sleep after leaving Halle, keep the right road, wake at the little bridge he had to cross just before reaching the end of his journey. Hoffman quotes Erasmus in a story of his friend Professor Oporinus, of Basel. He once took a long journey with a distinguished bookseller, and just before they reached the inn where they were to spend the night an old manuscript in Sanskrit was found that he greatly interested the bookseller that he persuaded Oporinus to sit up and read it to him. The result was that the professor fell asleep as to all other powers but kept on reading for a long time, not knowing when he awoke anything about what he had been doing.

He had to all intents and purposes been talking in his sleep. Dogs bark and growl in their sleep. A coon dog, with one bark for the chase and one for the stand, can sometimes be followed through an exciting dream chase by the nature of his sleep talk. Parrots often chatter in their sleep. Canary birds have been known to twitter their songs in sleep.

The human animal is a notorious sleep talker. It is all part of the dream process. As in sleep walking, the emotions and nerves and motor centres are stimulated in the dream state just as they are in a state of consciousness. The physiological processes seem to be similar. If, then, in our sleep talk we make no exception to the rule that our dreams are always made up of those things that we have had something to do with in our past experience, are we to accept sleep talk as vital to truth? By all means, no!

In dream talk we may chatter on in an idiotic manner, following pretty closely the chaotic state of our mental vision. We are no more liable to be telling the truth in dreams than we are to be acting the truth when we walk up the aisle of a church to play chief mourner at our own funeral. A man might know a woman by name and go through the most compromising situations in a dream state, with his tongue creating all sorts of material for divorce court evidence, and yet be entirely innocent of wrong doing. Most men and



The End of the Dream—By Damp

by states of feeling that we are often perplexed to account for."

In these pathological states of mind Maudsley thinks we rightly discover the occasions of many dreams. He further says:

"When the breathing is not free in sleep and the heart's action is oppressed, as it eventually is in such case, the sleeper is apt to wake up suddenly in the greatest apprehension of something terrible being about to be done to him in his dream. The natural and involuntary motor expression of an oppressed heart is such action of the muscles of the face and of respiration as betokens fear and apprehension—but

the passage of food through the alimentary canal may indeed affect the impression made upon the brain," Maudsley explains.

Under the head of Muscular Sensibility the text-books give some interesting dream demonstrations. For instance, who has not dreamed of flying? We arise from our bed on wings of air and float and dip about the room with ease. Out of the window we go and into the streets, where we attempt to demonstrate to our astonished friends how very easy it is to imitate the birds. Maudsley relates that it is reported of several holy persons that in their spiritual raptures, or ecstasies, they rose bodily from the earth and floated in the air. And there can be no doubt but what some of them felt and believed that they did. St. Philip Neri, St. Dunstan, St. Christina could hardly be held down by their friends.

It is told of Agnes of Bohemia that when walking in her garden one day she was suddenly raised from the ground and disappeared from sight of her companions, making no answer to their anxious inquiries but a sweet and amiable smile on her return to earth after her flight.

"The explanation," says Maudsley, "is

the influence of impressions made upon him when he was asleep. He detailed a person to make various experiments upon his senses without informing him in advance what he was about to do, and to wake him after each test. His nose and his lips were first tickled with a feather. He dreamed that a pitch plaster had been applied to his face and later torn away so violently as to bring with it the skin from his face. A pinch at the back of the neck made him dream of a blister and brought to his memory a doctor who had attended him when a child.

Psychologists often have to consider the very common dream of a person going about the streets and other public places without clothing. Most people have had this dream experience. It probably arises from a sensation of cold following an insufficiency of clothing or following the loss of bed clothing. A feverish condition followed by chill might also produce this dream effect. When the skin is particularly sensitive through illness the smallest impressions may be perverted into hammer blows, attacks from wild animals, etc.

Maudsley, in his most interesting chapters on sleep and dreaming in The Pathology of the Mind, attributes many dream causes to cerebral circulation (page 39). When the brain is thinking, he explains, there is a more active flow of blood through it than when it is at rest, but this flow must not be too active, or sound thinking is impossible. An excessive or a deficient flow of blood through the brain is adverse to successful thought. When these conditions are applied to the brain at sleep we obtain interesting dream results. Nightmares which awaken one and then return again with sleep are of this nature. Local fluctuations of the circulation also may be the cause of disturbed dreams. It is easy to conceive, says Maudsley, that some trivial disorder of an organ may affect temporarily, through vaso-motor nerves the circulation in the cerebral area in which it is represented; the particular vascular area will blush or become pale, as it were, in sympathy with the state of the organ.

The quality of the blood is also an important factor in dreams. Lack of iron in the blood or a deficiently carbonized blood will have the same effect upon the sleeping brain as upon the waking mind.

Overwork is a well-known cause of bad dreams. Physical and nervous exhaustion affect the brain centres and react in sleep as they do when you are awake. Moral shocks disturb the brain cells and produce disordered sleep consciousness.

As scientists experiment more and more with dreams, the more we work away from the old superstitions and attain a correct pathological reason for consciousness in sleep. The ancients tried to draw prophecy and portent and guidance from their dreams. We are beginning to analyze and run to the doctor. It is a normal thing to dream—the mind goes on with its curious working when judgment drops its hand in sleep and is no longer at the rudder. Most dreams seem to be nothing more nor less than harmless reassociation of impressions flitting before us like a moving picture film gone mad. Those dreams which tell us of physical disorder, we are just beginning to note. They usually are due to derangements following lack of physical exercise and ordinary watchfulness of the functions of elimination.



Some of the Popular Superstitions of the Meaning of Dreams Which Have No Scientific Basis

Dream of Sheep and Fortune Will Be Yours.

most women will admit such instances out of their own experiences.

Most people are convinced that their dreams are influenced by their state of health. The Welsh rabbit, lobsters, all indigestible food is accused of dream meddling. Henry Maudsley in his book, The Pathology of the Mind (page 29), comments upon this phase of dreaming:

"There are particular dreams which I have from time to time, and which I feel sure originate in certain states of the abdominal viscera. I take it for granted here that each internal organ of the body has, independently of its indirect action upon the nervous system through changes in the composition of the blood, a specific action upon the brain through its intercommunicating nerve fibres, the conscious result whereof is a certain modification of the mood or tone of mind. We are not directly conscious of this physiological action as a definite sensation, but none the less its effects are attested

Dream of the Moon and You Will Fall in Love.

this action cannot take place in sleep, and an equally involuntary expression of the physical state is shown in the terrifying dream and in the frantic but bootless desire which is felt to escape from the threatened danger."

As several psychologists point out, a heavy and indigestible meal eaten shortly before retiring often results in dreams in which we find mountains or huge monsters sitting on our chests. Maudsley questions whether these dreams are the direct result of the action of the overloaded stomach upon the brain or an indirect effect of the oppression of the functions of the lungs and the heart.

The troubles of indigestion seldom fail to cause troubled sleep. It is not known whether the spleen ever gives color to a dream. There is little doubt, however, that disorders of the liver and of the intestines both occasion dreams and affect their character. "Every stage of

Dream of Ruins and You Will Be Honored.

not far to seek. A person may have a motor hallucination and imagine that he makes the movement which he does not, just as he may have a sensory hallucination and imagine he sees or hears the thing he does not. We are the victims of motor hallucination when we suffer from vertigo and the room seems to turn round. . . . These sensory disturbances play a vital part in the phenomena of dreaming."

It has been suggested that the rhythm of breathing may suggest the rhythm of trying. Dr. Gregory dreamed of walking up Mount Etna, suffering intensely from the heat, when he had a bottle of hot water applied to his feet. Aristotle mentions that people can be made to dream of thunderstorms by making a slight noise in the ears when they are asleep.

Alfred Maury once conducted a number of tests upon himself to determine