

Preface

The orientation of this book is primarily medical. The described uses of marijuana were for healing or scientific purposes. Save for historical aspects of the prohibitory Marihuana Tax Act of 1937, social use is described in a minority of the papers and only in passing.

This diverse collection of papers represents some of the better professional journal articles concerning the medicinal applications and scientific properties of marijuana products.

The scope of topics included in this collection of papers culled from medical and scientific sources is necessarily wide. The study of a drug with complex pharmacological effects in concert with the diversity of human circumstance produces a wide spectrum of data.

Some of the papers suffer from lack of documentation and difficult, archaic, or colloquial language. In order to understand some of the chemical and pharmacological papers, understanding of biochemistry is needed.

As a psychiatrist, I was tempted to include material from influential and colorful literary origins. Descriptive experiential use started with Dr. Francois Rabelais's "The Herb Pantagruelion" in about 1530; it was re-introduced into European literature through the studies of J. J. Moreau de Tours in the early 1840s; it was popularized by Bayard Taylor, Theophile Gautier, Charles Baudelaire, and Fitz Hugh Ludlow in the 1850s and '60s. Dr. Victor Robinson carried this romantic intellectual tradition into the mid-1940s.

To attempt to include the lesser known but important literary works not published elsewhere would swell this anthology to an unwieldy size and detract from its usefulness as a medical reference.

The introspective accounts of practitioners' and scientists' personal use were influenced by contemporary literary figures who appear in a large proportion, especially in the earlier papers. Personal experimentation and description were once held to be an integral part of drug research.

The accounts of the adventures of the researcher, colleague, and patient serve to remind the reader of the constancy of the human psyche over the years. In the research lab, at the bedside, or at the controls of a locomotive, thoughtful scientists and clinicians describe their experiences and observations.

Despite the advent of technology, these intelligent observations articulately described in the past must not be forgotten. Failure to heed previous insights results in superfluous repetition, stupidity through ignorance and resultant failure.

Browsing through the book one cannot help but be struck by the fact that, although scientific tools have become more sophisticated, human nature has not. Ingenuity and clarity of thinking shine beyond the years, making us more humble in the realization that what is contemporary is not necessarily the best or uniquely innovative.

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