

the former Eastern provinces once lived.

The Far East may be represented in this brief glossary by the numerous remarks concerning the Chinese that are found in most languages. There is for instance the English *Chinese compliment*, which is a warning against the seeming deference of the Oriental. A Frenchman who disapproves of administrative chicanery will say that the service is using *chinoiseries* (Chinaman's ways). In Spanish, a person who is prolix in explaining an obvious matter will be challenged by a contemptuous *somos chinos?* (do you think we are Chinamen?).

In general, references to America, in these languages, are rare. In French, there is a term *un oeil américain* (an American eye) to describe a sharp, scrutinizing look from which there is no escape; and likewise, if you wish to state that you are not easy to dupe, you may express this by remarking that you have *un oeil américain*. In almost all Latin languages a term similar to *vol à l'américaine* (American theft) is employed to characterize a specific sort of larceny under false pretenses — the confidence game — while an Italian modernism dubs every publicity stunt *un'americanata*.



### *The Menace of Marihuana*

BY ALBERT PARRY

IT is not generally known that marihuana, the smoking of which in this country has been on the rapid increase, is the same drug as hashish. Both are derived from the same hemp plant of the *cannabis sativa* class. From the Orient comes our word "assassin," and out there it sprang from the word "hashish." In Malay, natives under the influence of hashish are said to run amuck; there, the words "hashish" and "amuck" are synonyms. Hence, the danger presented by the growing consumption of marihuana in America.

Dr. Walter Bromberg, Senior Psychiatrist of Bellevue Hospital, New York, who has made a comprehensive study of the addiction in this country, remarks: "British investigators in India tell us that hashish does not bring out the excitement or hysterical symptoms in Anglo-Saxons that occur in native users. But marihuana or hashish smoking as a mass phenomenon among the Anglo-Saxons is comparatively

new." So new, in fact, that few statistics have been gathered on the subject as yet. But in the South, where the practice is older, we already have many marihuana smokers who suffer from extreme inertness or violent irritability, both conditions leading to a disintegration of personality. In a few years we may have the same mass-condition in the Northern states.

The spread of marihuana smoking in the Southern belt is described by an elderly doctor who states that whereas thirty-five years ago the frequency of narcotic addiction in his medical practice was in the order of morphine, cocaine, chloral, bromide, now it is the barbituric acid group first, marihuana second. The role of the latter as a crime instigator is suggested by the report of the public prosecutor in New Orleans who in 1930 found that of 450 prisoners he dealt with, 125 were marihuana addicts. Slightly less than half of the murderers, about twenty per

cent of the larceny men and about eighteen per cent of the robbery prisoners smoked what they called Merry Wonder. A recent report from Denver stated: "Most crimes of violence in this section, especially in country districts, are laid to users of marihuana."

The loco weed of the Southwest is the same hemp that produces marihuana; the sinister meaning of the old expression, "gone loco," may now well apply to the new crop of addicts. The smoke and smell of the drug are not unlike those of burning hay, and many American users call it Indian hay, for it arrived here from Mexico by way of the Southwest where the Indians have been known to grow and smoke it. The present-day menace of the drug is enhanced by the fact that the economics of marihuana growth and sale is simple: the low price of the weed, as compared with the high costs of other drugs, is the main reason for its rapid spread. The hemp plant grows wild or can be cultivated almost anywhere in the United States. The illicit growers conceal patches of the plant amid the tall tassels of corn, or in fields of sugar beets, or alfalfa, or any other harmless weed. Vacant lots in big cities are handy; a marihuana field of this type was recently discovered in Brooklyn—the authorities had it burned, and peddlers in Harlem set the value of the crop lost at \$50,000. On at least one occasion a marihuana patch was discovered in the truck garden of an inland American penitentiary.

If the plant remains undiscovered until it blossoms, the crop is gathered, dried, and made into cigarettes. The average price per cigarette is fifteen cents, but in large cities it is sometimes as low as two cigarettes for a quarter, and even a dime or nickel each. The cigarettes are known as reefers, and their peddlers as reefer men. The surrep-

titious sale goes on in pool-rooms, beer gardens, tobacco stores, and cheap restaurants. In Chicago a school-supply store was discovered selling reefers to boys and girls, some of whom had become temporarily blinded by the weed. In Denver, reefer men peddled among the local high school pupils, skilfully appealing to their adolescent bravado. Some smokers are even younger than high school age. A report from a Detroit newspaper tells of local Mexicans who grow the weed in rural districts nearby, and of one of their peddlers, an American woman. She gives the reefers to her own children to sell to their school-mates.

Of the youthful smokers in New York a representative example was afforded by a boy of sixteen, a novice in the Hudson Dusters gang. He said that while smoking reefers he felt happy and light, as if he were running or walking on air; but his family, on bringing him to a hospital, revealed that for two months he had been apprehensive, scratching his hands nervously, praying constantly, complaining that somebody was reading his thoughts. Psychologists may well suggest that these youths take to marihuana because there is a certain vacuum in their lives which the present-day family and school cannot fill. The same paucity of aims made marihuana popular in the South.

Among the sickly aesthetes, the weed—as hashish—had been known long before the Mexicans and Indians introduced it. In the first Bohemian group in New York, in the 1850's and '60's, Fitzshugh Ludlow smoked the drug and published his confessions. The son of a clergyman and himself planning to take the orders, he changed his mind, writing: "The sublime avenues in spiritual life, at whose gates the soul in its ordinary state is forever blindly groping, are opened widely by hashish." However,

when he died it was at the early age of thirty-four, and of lungs and nerves ruined by this same drug.

In the Greenwich Village of the 1920's hashish parties were not infrequent. That reefers are known in the Village of the 1930's can be seen from the roll call of marihuana patients in a New York hospital. Here is a man who mumbles that thoughts slip away from him "centrifugally as they do on the ferris wheel at Coney Island." Here is an artist's model in her late twenties who was found rolling in a courtyard with two dogs. She told the police that she had arrived from England, that the liner was wrecked in mid-ocean, that the passengers were eaten by sharks, one of the victims recovering without his skin. Her conversation blends hallucination with literary slang: "I saw Phoenix running down the road. . . . I came down to earth with the Sun God. . . . I heard voices telling me that I was the lowest thing in creation. They said I was a rat, that I smelled bad, that I was syphilitic and a sick cat." She had nightmares about people who "had been very wicked and lost their sense of naturalness and they wanted to make machines and forgot all about beauty and they only made machines to see who could cut the most people. . . ." She sought beauty in reefers but found only pain and misery.

When a Bohemian intellectual boasts that reefers give him that thousand-and-one-nights feeling, he means this mostly in the erotic sense. Some Harlemites, too, smoke the weed as an aphrodisiac. A Negro was brought to a New York hospital because he had run after and threatened two women in the street while under the influence of reefers; he said he had seen in his reefer-dream "a bunch of naked wimmin, some of 'em in bed, black an' white together, like dey was expectin' men."

Harlem cabaret and radio performers smoke reefers for stimulation. They crack under the strain of unhealthy competition, and take to the hay to patch up the crack somehow, to keep going. It is said that a number of radio showfolk, white as well as black, take a puff or two before broadcasting. Similar reports emanate from Times Square theater dressing rooms.

There is already a number of the so-called reefer songs, made popular by the cabaret and the radio: *Smokin' Reefers* from the "Flying Colors" show, with words and music; also *Marawanna*, a rumba without words; and, most celebrated of all, *That Funny Reefer Man*, a Cab Calloway song, but with many variations because almost every Harlem singer makes up his own ditties to it, all praising the stimulating qualities of the drug.

The non-professionals of Harlem, as well as of certain white sections of New York, smoke reefers in an unsuccessful attempt to forget their troubles, economic and otherwise. One of the reefer songs declares about a smoker that "every time he gets a notion, he can walk across the ocean." For the brief moment, a reefer dissipates brooding and gives a feeling of power and grandeur. In another Harlem song the Negro chants that when he says he owns a portion of the Rockefeller fortune you will know that he just met *That Funny Reefer Man*.

One patient in New York is a white man of twenty-six, vain, boyish, who likes to dress fashionably, likes girls, and they in turn call him cute. He is married and has children, but whines that he is not the type to be married. He is miserable, he says, "To puff away the misery," chants one of the reefer songs, "to get beyond the worryin'." Still another patient is a Negress, an undernourished married woman in her early twenties, who, while smoking reefers,

dreamed that she was "a committee to meet the Elks right away." She said she had many robes and rings, saw beautiful colors and heard marvelous sounds, and that every nation was there "to reorganize things". The song tells you to smoke reefers because "you can't change this world you were born in." But in her case, too, there is the doctor's notation: "Irritable, sluggish. Acted in a manic manner. Indefinite ideas of persecution."

Is there a remedy? Marihuana was until lately considered a rather harmless weed, of which little was known. Thus, the Harrison Act—the federal law against traffic

in narcotics, passed in 1914 and amended in 1922—does not mention the drug. Many states, however, have already taken the initiative in the prohibition of its use. The federal authorities co-operate by the preparation of a uniform law of prohibition which they submit to state legislatures. But perhaps a better answer to the problem is within the power of Congress. It could hardly be said that the rights of individual states would be endangered if Congress recognized marihuana as a drug no less vicious than opium, cocaine, morphine or heroin, and passed an act prohibiting its growth and sale.



### *The Truth About Vitamins*

BY JEROME W. EPHRAIM

UPON entering medical school, our future Hippocrates must start again with the rudiments of the alphabet. Willing to compromise with a passing grade in dietetics, he sets to work discovering his A, B, C's and D, E, G's—of vitamins. He quickly realizes that they are food for thought as well as for the body.

Vitamins are substances known to be essential to health and growth, and in some instances they assure protection against disease, but their actual nature remains a mystery. Little has been ascertained of their chemical composition or of how they act in the body. Although the chemistry and function of the other nutritional needs—proteins, carbohydrates, fats, inorganic salts, and water—are known, vitamins thus far have proved too elusive. In fact, so little is known about them that they have never been named, but merely designated as A, B, C, D, E, and G.

Carotene, which has been termed "pri-

mary vitamin A", is the potent pigment responsible for the yellow hue of carrots, sweet potatoes, etc. It is probably the plant source of vitamin A in animal tissues, as apparently it is converted into the vitamin in the liver. The earliest sign of deficiency of vitamin A is a cessation of the body's growth. Eye diseases such as hemeralopia and xerophthalmia follow. The healthy epithelial membranes in the respiratory, alimentary, and genito-urinary tracts break down, rendering the weakened tissues subject to infection. Vitamin A has been called "anti-infective" and claims have been made that it protects the body from infection; but these conclusions are based upon experiments with rats, and however much certain individuals may seem to possess traits of the rodent species, it is only by clinical studies that the accurate application of these findings can be determined in man.

Originally vitamin B was regarded as a