MARIJUANA: MEDICAL PAPERS 1839-1972 chronic neurologic diseases, convulsive disorders, migraine headache, anorexia, mental illness, and bacterial infections.

Recently declassified secret U.S. Defense Department studies reconfirm marijuana's congeners to have therapeutic utility.

Cannabis indica, Cannabis sativa, Cannabis americana, Indian hemp and marijuana (or marihuana) all refer to the same plant. Cannabis is used throughout the world for diverse purposes and has a long history characterized by usefulness, euphoria or evil—depending on one's point of view. To the agriculturist cannabis is a fiber crop; to the physician of a century ago it was a valuable medicine; to the physician of today it is an enigma; to the user, a euphoriant; to the police, a menace; to the traffickers, a source of profitable danger; to the convict or parolee and his family, a source of sorrow.

This book is concerned primarily with the medicinal aspects of cannabis.

The Chinese emperor Shen-nung is reported to have taught his people to grow hemp for fiber in the twenty-eighth century B.C. A text from the period 1500-1200 B.C. documents a knowledge of the plant in China—but not for use as fiber. In 200 A.D., the use of cannabis as an analgesic was described by the physician Hoa-tho.⁴⁴

In India the use of hemp preparations as a remedy was described before 1000 B.C. In Persia, cannabis was known several centuries before Christ. In Assyria, about 650 B.C., its intoxicating properties were noted.⁴⁴

Except for Herodotus' report that the Scythians used the smoke from burning hemp seeds for intoxication, the ancient Greeks seemed to be unaware of the psychoactive properties of cannabis. Dioscorides in the first century A.D. rendered an accurate morphologic description of the plant, but made no note of intoxicating properties.¹⁰

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Arabic writers described the social use of cannabis and resultant cruel but unsuccessful attempts to suppress its non-medical use.⁴⁴

Although Galen described the use of the seeds for creating warmth, he did not describe the intoxicating qualities of hemp. Of interest is the paucity of references to hemp's intoxicating properties in the lay and medical literature of Europe before the 1800s.⁴⁴