

Observations on Cannabis Indica and Syphilis as Causes of Mental Alienation in Turkey, Asia Minor, and Morocco.
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A recent holiday sojourn in Morocco having enabled me to complete certain information which I obtained some years ago while on a tour through Turkey and Asia Minor with respect to how far *cannabis indica* and syphilis are factors in the production of mental disease in the East, I proceed to record the following information which I have gathered on the subject:—

Cannabis indica or *cannabis sativa*, as medical men are aware, furnishes the product known as hashish, a product which has been the subject of much serious study, and which is known all over the East for its extremely intoxicating quality. The name hashish is adopted only in Egypt and Syria; in Turkey it is known by the name of *esrar*, where the term hashish is only applied to the poppy—*papaver somniferum*, from which opium is extracted. The Turkish word *esrar* simply means secret production or secret preparation, a term first applied by the simple-minded inhabitants of Anatolia, where the plant is extensively grown. In Morocco it is universally known by the name of *kif*, an Arabic word, signifying quietude or rest. It is in much use throughout the whole of that magnificent country, and it may be said that all those Moors, Berbers, and Arabs whom one meets in the streets of the cities dragging themselves about, and looking with a dull, stupified expression of countenance, like men who have just had a blow on the head, are victims to this deleterious drug. The greater part of them smoke it, mixed with a little tobacco, in small clay pipes, by which means prompt action is produced, while others eat it in the form of a sweetmeat called *madjun*, made of butter, honey, nutmeg, and cloves. This *madjun* is a soft paste of a violet colour, with a smell like pomatum. The *esrar* powder is not unfrequently taken in water, when its effect is very rapid and injurious. In Turkey the *esrar*, eaten as a sweetmeat, has both the colour and odour of coffee, for in its preparation much care is taken to water the *esrar* powder with a strong infusion of coffee.

On arriving in the locality where *cannabis* is cultivated the *esrar* merchant divides into squads the large number of

people that accompany him. They then enter the extensive fields of *cannabis*, and commence cutting off all the flowering tops of the plant in order that the leaves, from which the product is drawn, may become more developed and more vigorous. A fortnight after this operation the harvesting begins, the merchant being first assured that the leaves have considerably enlarged, and that they present much viscosity to the touch. The plants being all collected and placed under a shed, the leaves are detached from the stalks and laid out to dry upon a large linen carpet called a *kilim*. As soon as the leaves have reached the desired dryness they are picked up and placed together upon one half of the *kilim*, the other half being reserved for rubbing them rudely until they are reduced to a powder. This first product is at once sifted, and put aside with care, for it constitutes the choicest quality of *esrar*, and is called *sighirma*. The residue, containing the fibrous tissue of the leaves, is reduced to a powder in the same manner. This second product, called *hourda*, is not by any means esteemed, for while the first quality is usually sold at about sixteen shillings the pound, the other, on the contrary, scarcely fetches the half of that sum.

The *esrar*, which reaches the capital of the Ottoman Empire, is enclosed in double sacks, the exterior bag being of horsehair, and that of the interior of skin. All powder of *esrar* is not entirely consumed in the country, for more than the half passes into Egypt, Algeria, Tunis, Morocco, and other benighted lands where Islamism holds sway. Prior to being delivered for consumption it is subjected to various processes of manufacture according to the different tastes of the inhabitants of the countries to which it has to be transmitted. In Egypt and Syria, as is well known to all inquiring and observant travellers, the confection extract is held in the highest esteem, while at Constantinople this preparation is disliked because of its rancid odour and taste, which render it most unpalatable. The *esrar* most patronised in Turkey, is chiefly to be had in the form of a syrup, with which sherbet is prepared, or as lozenges, which the lovers of this baneful intoxicant smoke with *tombeki*. As the simple syrup of *esrar* always has a disagreeable odour and rancid taste, it is never forgotten to add to it such aromatic substances as *bahart*, without neglecting at the same time to enhance it with something of an aphrodisiac character. This latter corrective always plays a very important rôle, for by the

excitation of the genetic organs, which it provokes and maintains, there is imprinted on the extatic delirium a special direction of ideas, with a series of the most sensual and voluptuous visions, thus procuring to all those who make use of the drug a foretaste of the delights and pleasures of paradise, which the Moslems in general believe are reserved in the future life to all true believers in Islamism and its founder, Mohammed. On visiting a coffee-house in one of the Moroccan cities much celebrated for the excellence of its coffee and *kif* as well as other *agrément*s, I had the opportunity of witnessing the drug both smoked and eaten. Shortly after being indulged in—say about half an hour—a feeling of great hilarity is created, some laughing most unmeaningly, and fancying they are being lifted from the ground and carried through the air in the arms of angels; but the wind-up to this pleasurable feeling is a sudden, deep, and painful melancholy, while a poignant aspect of remorse and regret is depicted in every countenance. The joys of *kif* and the *dolce far niente* have now completely vanished, and the indulgers in the drug have been rendered the most miserable of men.

That hashish taken to excess in any form or by whatever name it may be called is a most prolific cause of insanity is a fact beyond all question or doubt, for the large numbers of *santos*, or saints, constantly met with in Morocco everywhere one turns, who have been long the slaves of this vice, doubtless afford the most conclusive evidence of its pernicious effects on the brain and nervous system. Many of these *santos*, who receive the greatest homage, and are regarded with the profoundest respect and veneration by the Moors, are very frequently most dangerously homicidal, while not a few of them have been reduced to a most deplorable state, the condition of drivelling imbeciles.

Syphilis is another most potent and fruitful source of insanity throughout the entire length and breadth of Morocco, scarcely a family being free from the syphilitic taint, which, it is alleged, was first introduced into the country by the Jews who took refuge there on being driven out of Spain, before which time, however, it was not known in Morocco even by name. It was first called "the Spanish sickness," but is not known now by that appellation. The Moors call it "the great disease," *mrd-el-kebir*, or "the woman's sickness," *nord-el-nssauin*. So common is this disease in this portion of Africa, I have been informed,

that there is scarcely a Moor in Barbary who has not more or less of the virus in his blood; indeed, in many families it has become hereditary.

The peasantry in the interior of Turkey and Asia Minor are most abstemious, both as regards eating and drinking, being greatly dominated by the religious sentiment, which forbids to them the use of all fermented liquors. Less scrupulous upon this point than their co-religionists of the interior, the Mussulmans of the capital of the Osmanlis, in order to procure pleasant and agreeable sensations, often have recourse to other substances not less hurtful to the health than *esrar*, namely, mastic, raki, and other fermented drinks, while throughout the whole of Morocco till beyond the Atlas mountains, from the highest grades in society to the lowest, wine, gin, and brandy distilled from dates are indulged in to a very large extent indeed, notwithstanding the interdiction by the Koran of the use of all fermented beverages.

Having given as full and accurate an account of hashish and its various preparations as a brief paper like this will permit, I will only add that it is my intention to describe in a future paper the police measures adopted by the Government of Turkey against the use of the esreric substance by the people; to set forth more fully the ordinary phenomena that its use provokes in men in the enjoyment of their reasoning faculties; to describe the experiments made with the drug which I have witnessed on the insane in the East; and also to point out the various disorders which the use of *esrar*, hashish, or *kif* occasions in the intellectual, physical, and moral conditions of those who abuse it, and also the hereditary consequences of its abuse.

The Data of Alienism. By CHARLES MERCIER, M.B., Lond., F.R.C.S.

II.

THE ORGANISM—THE INHERITED ORGANIZATION.—*Continued.*

The second law of heredity is equal in importance to the first, and since it is of special importance in the study of insanity, and since both the law and its consequences have been hitherto almost overlooked by alienists, it is necessary to insist upon it with additional emphasis, and to discuss it at some length. This is the more necessary since there has been no formal enunciation of this law, although the