



LE CLUB DES HASCHISCHINS

CANNABIS HISTORY SERIES

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HASHISH CLUB

Paris in the early 19th century was a breeding ground for creativity, insight, and responsible for some of the greatest minds of literature and science. This period is now recognized as the birthplace of modern psychology, an age of scientific exploration, and harmonized with the arrival of hashish via Napoleon's campaign of Egypt in 1798, exposing French soldiers to an infused beverage loved by the native Egyptians. Upon their return to France, the soldiers brought with them their newfound custom. Cannabis would become popularly enjoyed by the bohemian side of France over the next few decades.

HÔTEL DE LAUZUN, THE MEETING PLACE OF THE CLUB DES HASHISCHINS 1844-1849

GREAT MINDS

More than a few of these great minds gathered after receiving an invitation in December of 1845. One of these to be guests was writer Théophile Gautier, who illustrates his evening in 'Le Club des Haschischins,' published in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* in 1846.

Gautier describes ringing the bell of an old home located on the first floor of the Hôtel Pimodan, enthusiastically greeted by acquaintances. The room glowed from gilded trim walls and the ornate style of 17th-century design.

Among guests were Charles Baudelaire, Alexandre Dumas, Honoré de Balzac, Victor Hugo, Gérard de Nerval, Eugène Delacroix, and Arthur Rimbaud.

As he progresses through the assemblage, Gautier notices a man on the edge of the filled room standing carefully, spooning out morsels of a green jam, exclaiming "this will be deducted from your share in paradise." This man was Dr. Jacques-Joseph Moreau, who was by this time a distinguished psychiatrist.

"...I arrived in a distant quarter, a sort of oasis of solitude in the middle of Paris that the river, surrounding it with its two arms, seems to defend against the encroachments of civilization. It was in an old house on the island of Saint-Louis, the Hotel Pimodan, built by Lauzun, that the bizarre club of which I was a member recently held its monthly sittings where I was to attend for the first time."



EXPLORING

Moreau was one of the first in the scientific community to become familiar with hashish, having first encountered it during his stays in Egypt in the 1830s. Moreau believed that studying mind-altering substances would provide insight into the psychotic state by replicating the madness, or dream state while leaving the consciousness intact. After having sent invitations to the intellectual elite of Paris, Dr. Moreau planned to use his remaining hashish to study the thoughts and reactions of the greatest minds of the time. They would consume the hashish in a greenish paste referred to as dawamesk (a sticky concoction of hashish, cinnamon, nutmeg, pistachio, cloves, orange juice, sugar, butter, and cantharides).

Dr. Moreau then encouraged his subjects to explore their mind and utilize their creativities, as he observed. He found the hashish made the mind happy, stimulated, even excited, soon figuring out that dosing played a vital role. A small amount generally produced a calming effect, bringing a sense of warmth and contentedness, while a substantial dose sometimes pushed the mind to wander with sporadic ideas, time became distorted, dreams would fill the mind, along with the disassociation of ideas. Gautier describes his experience through his senses, picking up on the subtleties of life, especially taste, appreciating even the water for its nuanced flavor.

Hashish made an impact in many of these creative legends lives; Alexander Dumas references hashish in *The Count of Montecristo* (1844)

“Taste this greenish paste, and the boundaries of possibility disappear, the fields of infinite space open to you, you advance free in heart, free in mind, into the boundless realms of unfettered reverie.”

Cannabis made its way into French society through something as dark for humanity as war, and, as cannabis does, moved toward good in the world and into the lives of some of the greatest creative minds of the time.

Cannabis is a tool for inspiration, insight, and has long been embraced for its effects on the body and mind. This botanical has built a culture around it and produced a voice through the centuries, shaping the creative evolution of society.

The Club des Haschischins is an instance in the saga of cannabis which highlights this plant's unique role in the creative realm of the mind. It reminds us cannabis is for both thinkers and scholars, philosophers and sages. This tale propels us beyond the stain of unpropitious stoner stigma, capturing the essence of genius symbiotically emerging alongside cannabis in the world.

DAWAMESK

"It was also Moreau who handed out the individual doses in the form of a green paste that he took from a glass jar and presented on Oriental porcelain dishes. Each dose was approximately the size of a thumb and taken from a gold and silver spoon, which attendees either ate with a meal or mixed it into a strong-tasting Arabic coffee."

HASHISH

CLOVES

NUTMEG

SUGAR

BUTTER

PISTACHIO

CINNAMON

ORANGE JUICE

CANTHARIDES

THE HÔTEL DE LAUZUN WAS BUILT BETWEEN 1650 AND 1658 BY ARCHITECT LOUIS LEVAU