

described by Dr. Paul V. Luisada of Washington, D.C. When 14 violently paranoid, delusional, disoriented patients were admitted to the Area D Community Mental Health Center, investigation revealed that the subjects had smoked phencyclidine (PCP).^{*} During hospitalization the patients remained violently psychotic and unpredictable for nine days despite higher doses of phenothiazines than are

^{*} Also known as Angel dust, PCP is used as a tranquilizer in veterinary medicine.

usually required to control schizophrenic psychoses. The patients' personality reintegration took an average of 15 days and although they had no prior psychiatric histories four were readmitted after taking the drug again and two others were eventually readmitted with true schizophrenia.

Laetrile Smuggling

Customs officials recently uncovered a ring that has smuggled large amounts of contraband laetrile or

Krebiozen^{*} into the United States and Canada from Mexico and Germany where the drug is legally produced from apricot pits. Claims that the drug is effective in treating cancer have not been substantiated by scientists. A recent study at Sloan-Kettering Institute showed that laetrile had "absolutely no value in combating cancer, prolonging life or inhibiting tumor growth."

^{*} Also known as amygdalin, Aprikern, vitamin B 17, Cyto H-3 and KH-3.

MD REMEMBERS: An Outstanding French Clinician

■ Pierre-Carl Edouard Potain, who was born July 19, 1825, in Paris and received his medical degree in 1853, became the leading clinician in his native city, thus fulfilling the prediction of his older colleague Armand Trousseau. A popular teacher, benevolent physician, and keen observer, Potain wrote an exhaustive treatise on cardiovascular and pulmonary disorders in patients seen at la Charité. He invented an aspirator and the first practical sphygmomanometer, developed a solution for diluting blood prior to corpuscle counts and appreciated the value of x-rays soon after their discovery.

Beginning with a doctorate thesis on vascular murmurs following hemorrhage, Potain identified the *bruits* that are diagnostic of various cardiac and circulatory problems. He described the sign of aortic dilatation as increased dullness in the upper two intercostal spaces to the right of the sternum and a second sound resembling the beat of a small Arab drum. In a classic account of gallop rhythm he reported that the abnormal sound resulting from the abruptness of ventricular dilatation occurs during the presystolic period corresponding to auricular contraction, an observation that was later verified when heart sounds were recorded simultaneously with electrocardiograms.

Background. Potain was descended from a long line of physicians who had practiced in Poissy and Saint-Germain since 1662 but his father had failed to master anatomy and became a postmaster.

Since he was determined that his son should carry on the family tradition and he was unable to afford his early schooling, Père Potain took Pierre into the woods every day, regardless of the weather, and for ten years taught the boy languages and literature. As a result of this Spartan regimen, frail young Potain gained stamina and a fine knowledge of Latin.

In 1848 he placed second in the examination for an internship in the hospitals of Paris and began his medical training, but the fol-

professor agrege of Paris hospitals, he made what was considered in 1862 a "revolutionary" demand by requesting the creation of a laboratory at L'Hôtel Dieu. During the Franco-Prussian War he left the laboratory and hospital and declining an offer to head an ambulance service, served as an infantryman; he fought in several battles and cared for the wounded in his spare time.

As professor of clinical medicine at la Charité from 1876 until his retirement in 1900, Potain made rounds and taught students in the mornings, saw patients in his large private practice in the afternoons, and on Wednesdays gave free consultations to the many poor people who sought his advice. He devoted evenings to reviewing his notes, to listening to music by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and to reading the works of Blaise Pascal and French scholar Paul Louis Courier.

For his contributions to medicine and physiology, Potain was elected to the Academy of Medicine, the Academy of Science, the Institute of France, and he was named a Commander of the Legion of Honor. One of his student admirers, describing the noted clinician's tall, thin, somewhat bent body, furrowed face, sparse whiskers, and crown of scanty gray hair, said: "Certainly nature did not put herself out for him." Although Potain was never robust, he had a long productive life and died in his sleep of aortic stenosis on January 5, 1901.



Dr. Pierre-Carl Edouard Potain.

lowing year while treating patients of a cholera epidemic at the Salpêtrière he contracted the disease and went to Metz to recover. On completing his internship, he worked in Dr. Jules Baillarger's service at the mental hospital of Ivry and then became chief of heart specialist Jean Bouillaud's clinic.

Soon after Potain was appointed