

The drug, which is obtained from the ripe seed, has been recognized in different Pharmacopæias for many years as a valuable poison and for external use in cases of Myopia. Quite recently a further chemical examination by the Wellcome Chemical Research Laboratories has resulted in the isolation of a new alkaloid which will doubtless add to the value of the plant although the demand may be limited.

R. D.

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## COCAINE.

### (*Erythroxylon Coca.*)

In the Agricultural Bulletin of the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States page 336 vol. VII. there is an account of this plant as grown in the Botanic Gardens Singapore and a report from the Imperial Institute on a sample of dried leaves submitted by the late Mr. Machado for analysis and valuation. The colour of the leaves was not quite good but "the percentage of alkaloids present was equal to the average amount found in commercial supplies of Coca leaves from other sources." Planters are also cautioned that the demand is small and that leaves would be over-produced if extensively cultivated.

At the present time the price is high and leaves from the East appear to be exported from Java only. The plant is exceptionally hardy and is grown as a hedge-plant in the Singapore Gardens. There would be a great saving in handling and freight if anyone cared to try the production of Cocaine instead of exporting leaves.

R. D.

### The Production of Cocaine in Peru.

This subject receives attention in a recent number of *The Engineer*, in an article which is reproduced in *Peru To-day* for September 1911. In introducing the article, the latter publication points out the importance of the cocaine industry in Peru; this is shown by the circumstance that the value of the annual production of the drug is £2,500,000. A great part of this is exported, while most of the rest is consumed by the native Indians.

The account in *The Engineer* states that the processes employed in Peru for the extraction of cocaine from the leaves of the coca plant (*Erythroxylum Coca*) are crude, owing to the fact that the treatment takes place in the interior, on account of the expense of transport of the leaves; the extent of this expense is illustrated by the fact that 200lb. of coca leaves are required for the manufacture of 1lb. of cocaine. Doubtless, improved means of communication will bring the manufacture nearer the coast, and then better methods will be employed.