



History of Coca: The Divine Plant of the Incas

W Golden Mortimer M.D.

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Originally published in 1901, the following description comes from the first edition:

This work, although of a scientific nature, has not been written exclusively for scientists, for the theme is of so universal a scope as to be worthy the attention of all who are concerned in lessening the trials of humanity, or who wish to shape the necessities of life through a more useful and consequently a more happy being.

Centuries before the introduction of cocaine to anaesthetic uses, the world had been amazed by accounts of the energy creating properties ascribed to a plant intimately associated with the rites and customs of the ancient Peruvians, and first made known through the chroniclers of Spanish conquest in America. The history of this plant, known as Coca, is the history of the Incan race and is entwined throughout the associations of the vast socialistic Empire of those early people of Peru.

The characteristics and botanical peculiarities of Coca, and the economic uses of plants of the family to which it belongs are described, and an effort is made to harmonize the early uses of the substance – which are now shown to be of necessity, and not of luxury – with its present employment, through facts of modern physiology.

No effort has been made to make this work in any sense a book of Coca therapy, but a study of the early necessities and the hypothesis here advanced as to the rationale of its empirical uses will doubtless be ample to impress the true status of Coca, and will suggest its application in the affairs of modern life for conditions similar to those which originally demanded.

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Richard Williams:

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