

THEOBROMA CACAO.

South America is the home of this tree. Dampier, the voyager, who visited the Caraccas in 1682, says:—"The coast is a continual tract of high ridges of hills and valleys, which alternately run pointing upon the shores from North to South. The valleys are from two to five furlongs wide, and in length from the sea three or four miles. Cocoa-nuts, of which Chocolate and Cocoa are made, are the main product."

A Cocoa plantation—or walk, as it is called—may contain some thousand trees, besides which it has grouped about it the stately coral tree, as a protection for the young trees from the too scorching heat. They are not unlike the cherry in form, and seldom exceed twenty feet in height. The nuts are enclosed in pods as big as a man's fists put together, and will number almost a hundred in each. The crops are in December and June, and a well-bearing tree will produce twenty or thirty pods, which are gathered during a period of three weeks or so, as they turn yellow. As a ripening process, they are then allowed to lie in heaps, and afterwards spread out in the sun, on mats, and when dry, each nut, about the size of a kidney bean, has a hard thin skin of its own. When required for use, they are roasted, and the husks removed.

Many millions of pounds of Cocoa are now annually consumed in this country, while prior to the reduction of the duty in 1832, the quantity was not half a million. But although this progress has been made, an adverse influence has continually been tending to check its consumption, in the attempt of some manufacturers to gratify the public desire for a cheap article and throwing on the market that only which is inferior and adulterated.

However, shortly after the reduction of the duty, the doctrine of Homœopathy was introduced into this country, and greatly stimulated the use of Cocoa. Being almost the only beverage recommended to those under the homœopathic mode of treatment, it became very essential that a preparation of a quality at once attractive and pure should be made obtainable for their use.

James Epps, the homœopathic chemist first established in this country, was induced to turn his attention to the subject, and with the assistance of elaborate machinery, succeeded at length in perfecting the preparation now bearing his name. The very agreeable character of this preparation soon rendered it a general favourite. An additional recommendation was the facility with which it could be prepared for the table. It but required two teaspoonfuls of the powder to be put in a breakfast cup, then to be filled up with boiling water or milk, and the beverage was ready.

But although this preparation had been especially introduced for the use of homœopaths, medical men of all schools soon began to recommend it. Its natural attractiveness of flavor, and its developed grateful qualities, soon obtained for it a position which had only been withheld from Cocoa through misadventure.

Dr. Hassall, in his work, "Food and its Adulterations," says:—"Cocoa contains a great variety of important nutritive principles—every ingredient necessary to the growth and sustenance of the body." Again, "As a nutritive, Cocoa stands very much higher than either coffee or tea."

Dr. Lankester, says:—"Cocoa contains as much flesh-forming matter as beef."

Dr. Liebeg says:—"Theobromine, the most highly nitrogenized vegetable principle." The most nutritious food is as a rule highly nitrogenized.

Dr. Hooper says:—"Admirably adapted for the sick—for those in health it is a luxury."

Epps's Cocoa, or, as it is more frequently called, Epps's Homœopathic Cocoa, is secured in $\frac{1}{2}$ lb., $\frac{1}{4}$ lb., and 1 lb. tin-lined, labelled packets, and sold by Grocers, Confectioners, and Chemists.

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