



The story of quinine

Have you ever heard of quinine? It is one of many famous medicines discovered here in the Amazon rainforest. Let's find out more about it.

Quinine is used to cure malaria, a very dangerous disease that is spread by mosquitoes. It is made from the bark of the cinchona tree.

The tree is named after the Countess of Chinchon from Peru. In 1630 she was very sick with malaria and had a high fever. Her doctor gave her a drink made from cinchona and she got better.

People in Europe heard about this medicine and then came to the rainforest to collect the plant.

It was first called quinine in 1820 by two French scientists, Mr Pelletier and Mr Caventou, who made the first modern medicine from the tree bark.

For almost three hundred years quinine was used to cure malaria as well as many other dangerous illnesses.

In 1944 scientists made the first artificial quinine. But natural quinine is now very important again because many kinds of malaria cannot be cured using modern drugs any more.

So remember, we must protect our rainforests because maybe other important medicines will be found.

Short story



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