

## COCAINE CHLORIDE.

A very considerable degree of interest has been manifested by the Medical Profession in the usefulness of hydrochlorate of cocaine as a local anæsthetic.

A medical student of Vienna, named Koller, has discovered that a 2 per cent. solution of the hydrochlorate of cocaine when dropped into the eye in quantities of first 2 drops and then of 3 drops, with ten minutes interval, gave, after another ten minutes interval, an anæsthetic condition of the cornea and conjunctiva, which remained for 10 to 20 minutes and then gradually passed off.

Cocaine is the alkaloid of the leaves of a shrub (the erythroxylon coca) which grows and is cultivated in South America, especially in Peru and Bolivia.

The natives there chew the leaves, and profess to derive from them greatly increased power for physical labor. It has been used in a similar way in Canada, with a like object, and the same result. It has not yet apparently given to any one any insensibility to mental fatigue.

A poisonous dose produces death in the warm-blooded animals, who are less affected by it than the cold-blooded ones, by paralysis of the respiratory centre. Its toxic effect is small and its action not cumulative.

The installation of a 2 per cent. or a 4 per cent. solution into the eye renders the conjunctiva and cornea insensible to the knife. If, however, the incisions are to be carried much deeper, as for instance in the operation for squint, then, before dividing the muscles, the solution must be applied within the incision, when, after a few minutes interval, the operation may be completed without causing the patient any pain.

It is a mydratic, though much feebler than atropia, and its mydratic effect soon passes off. From the paleness of the conjunctiva which follows its application it would seem that it causes contraction of the conjunctival vessels.

It has also been used in gynecology to render the mucus membrane of the vagina and cervix uteri insensible to operations performed upon them, and with success.

It has been found useful in laryngeal phthisis, and in operations performed upon the mucus membrane of the nose, the membrana tympani, and the lower end of the rectum and anus.

It has also been recommended in the treatment of the morphia habit and in alcoholism. In these latter cases, a solution of the hydrochlorate has been used hypodermically.

There is certainly a very large class of cases where an agent possessing the properties attributed to the hydrochlorate of cocaine would be of very great value to both operator and patient. There are a large group of every-day cases, where the question arises, which is easiest borne, the anæsthetic or the pain of the operation without the anaesthetic? and it is in these cases particularly that cocaine may become useful.

Its use is so far limited to rapidly absorbing surfaces as mucus membranes; applied to the skin it has but little, if any, effect.

## LOCAL AND GENERAL.

Litré, the author of the dictionary, is said to have so regulated his life during the thirteen years he was writing his great work as to give the least possible time "to the current requirements of existence." He rose at eight o'clock and wrote for an hour while his room was being put in order. Probably he also kept an eye on the housemaid, and saw that she did not "arrange" his books and papers so that it was impossible for him to find anything after the operation had been completed.

Then he read proof until the midday meal; wrote again from one to six, and, taking one hour for dinner, returned to work and kept it up until three o'clock in the morning, or until the allotted task was completed. Then he retired to rest, to rise at eight o'clock and repeat the routine of the previous day *ad finem*. In this way he managed to prepare 415,636 pages of manuscript.

And yet this man lived to a good old age, and nobody can say that his was not a useful life, and probably a satisfactory one to himself, even if he did not die in the odor of sanctity. Still one's intellect is forever dependent upon an organism prone to resent overwork, and I believe it to be the