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LOCAL ANÆSTHETICS.

When Herr Koller first demonstrated the remarkable properties of cocaine, surgeons naturally exclaimed *eureka*, believing that at last they had come into possession of a safe and efficient anæsthetic for use in minor operations. Nor have they in the main been disappointed. The ophthalmic surgeon and laryngologist have, at any rate, no cause for complaint, because in cocaine their fondest expectations have been realized. All the ordinary operations on the eye are now performed with its assistance, and we have yet to hear of any untoward result following its application in such cases. In operations on the throat and nose more care is required in the employment of the stronger solutions lest absorption through abraded surfaces may take place, but the risks in this connection are not great, and the danger can usually be readily overcome. It is, however, where the drug has to be injected hypodermically and is thus placed beyond the possibility of removal that its dangerous qualities become evident. Thus several cases have been recently reported where fatal syncope followed its employment in this way. The injection of ten minims of a ten per cent. solution into the gum for a tooth extraction caused symptoms of the most alarming kind. It is therefore far from safe in all cases. It is true the susceptibility to the action of the drug is not universal, depending evidently on some idiosyncrasy in the individual himself, but how is it possible to foresee or detect this peculiarity? On this account, therefore, the scope for usefulness of the drug is destined to become limited. Besides, the fact of having to