

A local anæsthetic, as I understand it, is a something that destroys the sense of feeling and renders operations upon the human system painless, and acts only and directly upon the part or parts to which it may be applied.

This is a most wonderful age, and one of the most wonderful things about it is that so many men should have happened to be experimenting at the same time and for so many years along beside each other to finally discover each in his turn (and that not distant from each other) the greatest and only perfect-working local anæsthetic of the day. Yes, these preparations have flooded the market until you can scarcely give away the best of them. Painless dentistry is the talk of the day. The people demand that a local obtundent be used by the dentist when performing surgical operations in the mouth. Cocain is a very useful drug, one that has the properties of a local anæsthetic. Other drugs have been found to possess to a limited degree this anæsthetic property. No doubt cocain is the active principle of nearly all the numerous preparations for local anæsthesia which are in the market. Many overdrawn statements have been set forth regarding the virtues of these nostrums above mentioned. People have been shamefully imposed upon by the use of them, and I wonder that they have faith to have anything used to-day. Cocain is a powerful drug either for good or for bad according as it may be handled. Ill results are not only reported but observed and noted dai'y by members of our profession, where cocain has been indiscriminately used. One thing is certain, cocain must be properly combined and not alone with other drugs—a grain of brains tempers most wonderfully the otherwise dangerous drug. The knowledge that ill effects have been experienced through the employment of cocain as a local anæsthetic need not debar us from making use of all that is good in it. Scientific research has already proven that cocain is, when properly combined with other drugs, the most effectual local obtundent we possess at the present day. It seems surely a step in advance to use a local anæsthetic for nearly all dental surgery, while in the old order of things general anæsthesia was universally resorted to and the various vapors were forced into the whole system through the blood until all consciousness was destroyed, and to such an extent that the operator could only tell by the closest observation whether his patient would ever awake to behold the sunshine of earth again or not. Under this spell the patient was totally helpless, while with the local anæsthetic they are not only conscious of what is being done but can in many instances render the operator valuable assistance and yet suffer little or no pain. It is claimed by some that a five per cent. solution of carbolic acid and water injected into the tissues on either side of a tooth to be extracted is very effectual, if not equal