

CANADA

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HYDROCHLORATE OF COCAINE.

The exchanges which have come to hand during the past two or three weeks, more particularly those published in the large cities of the United States, have contained extended notices of the anæsthetic properties of this remarkable drug. Ophthalmologists are especially enthusiastic regarding it, and hitherto nearly all the experiments and clinical observations have been made by them in connection with the surgery of the eye. Experiments were first made with the drug before the Ophthalmological Congress recently held at Heidelberg, where a solution was dropped into the eye of a patient, causing complete anæsthesia of the conjunctiva and cornea. Dr. Noyes of New York, who happened to be present at the congress, was the first to bring the preparation prominently before the notice of the profession on this side of the Atlantic, and since then several observers have been busily engaged investigating its properties.

Cocaine, which has been known for some time, is an alkaloid obtained from the leaves of the *erythroxylon coca*. It combines with acids to form salts, which are very soluble in water. Ten years ago Dr. Ott, an American physiologist, showed by experiments on animals that a solution of cocaine, given in small doses, stimulated, and then, in larger doses, entirely destroyed sensibility, acting on the posterior columns of the cord and on the sensory nerves.

The preparation now so prominently before the profession—the hydrochlorate of cocaine—has been known for about a year. Laryngologists have been using it for some time past locally to diminish the sensibility of the larynx for purposes of examination.