

Man, æt. 51. Large left sided scrotal hernia of 23 years standing distending the scrotum nearly to the knee. It was reducible, but when reduced caused discomfort in breathing. Eucaïne anaesthesia, Bassini operation performed. Keen did not want to use general narcosis on account of the embarrassment caused by the reduction of the hernia, and which might have gone so far as to endanger life were the patient unconscious. If he were conscious of the discomfort he could have told of it, and had the hernia re-established before dangerous symptoms developed.

In many cases the patient can aid the surgeon by holding himself in the position most convenient for the carrying out of the operation, whereas, if unconscious he has to be literally bolstered into the position desired. In one case reported, that of an amputation of the thigh, the patient held up the stump, while the surgeon treated the bleeding vessels.

The fact that the muscles retain their tonus must be a disadvantage, especially in abdominal work. Under general narcosis, the muscles are relaxed and flaccid, but only become so after very large doses of cocaine. In abdominal operations the retching and vomiting are also likely to interfere with the operator.

Probably the chief advantage that this method can claim is that it does not have the same injurious effects on the heart, lungs and kidneys, as do the old anaesthetics. Many operators who have employed it go so far as to say that there are no contra-indications to its use. Thus, for example, cases of diabetic gangrene have been operated on without ill effects; others suffering from renal inflammations have been anaesthetized by cocaine and been none the worse. Even severe cardiac lesions, and cases of advanced pulmonary tuberculosis are not harmed by the injection or analgesia. As an example; you are called to see a man with a septic peritonitis or a strangulated hernia, but the patient also suffers from Bright's disease. This is a case of certain death without operative interference and almost as certain if chloroform or ether are administered. With cocaine the operation can be performed without further injury to the kidneys.

In the majority of cases there is not the same amount of depression as follows general narcosis, and there is less liability to shock, so that the patient leaves the table in a better condition, and is better prepared for convalescence. I have not been able to find any figures to show whether or not the convalescence is shorter or more satisfactory than under the old methods. Old persons are said to show no ill effects, and to stand cocaine better than chloroform.

Another fact greatly in favor of cocaine is the ease of its adminis-