

Medical Matters.

EUCAINE.



THIS drug has been largely experimented upon, during the last few months, and has showed itself to be possessed of remarkable qualities. It is closely related to cocaine, and is fully as powerful in the production of local anæsthesia. But the former is free from the various obnoxious and poisonous properties which are so serious a drawback to the use of the latter. It is important to remember, however, that there are two salts of eucaine, namely, the hydrochlorate and the hydrochloride. The latter sets up troublesome local irritation, and therefore it is now very rarely used; the former salt is free from any objectionable property. An interesting point regarding this drug is that it does not appear to set up the same craving for its employment which is so noticeable a feature after cocaine has been used, and which has caused so much ill-deserved disrepute to attach to the use of the drug. In the opinion of many medical men, eucaine will therefore in time altogether supplant cocaine.

DRINK AND DISEASE.

MEDICAL men have for long been aware of the close connection which exists between intemperance in the parents and the development of brain diseases in their offspring; but a large series of statistics which have recently been collected bring this fact into striking prominence. It is, for example, shown that in English asylums the exciting cause of madness in one case out of every five is intemperance; and in men the proportion is almost one out of every four. The fact is one the importance of which to the nation can hardly be exaggerated; because it proves that the habit of drinking to excess is not only destructive of the ability of a very large section of the working classes to earn a livelihood, but that it is also responsible for an immense amount of incurable illness. And when to this is added the fact that probably ten persons will suffer from other diseases due to intemperance, in comparison with one whose brain will give way in consequence, of intoxi-

cants, the sum total of the injury, caused to the nation by alcohol, approaches figures which are simply appalling.

GRAVES' DISEASE.

THIS was first described with accuracy by Dr. Graves, and is usually known at the present day as Exophthalmic Goitre, in consequence of the two most prominent symptoms being a protrusion of the eyeballs, and a swelling of the thyroid gland in the neck. It is a fact, however, which is frequently overlooked, that in a great many cases of Graves' Disease there is no goitre, while in others there is no eye trouble. Formerly, it was believed that the symptoms were due to enlargement of the thyroid gland causing a poisonous excess of its secretion to be formed and poured into the blood. This theory, however, has been practically abandoned at the present day, and the most modern views attribute the symptoms to diseases of the digestive organs. This matter is at present being very carefully discussed in German medical circles, and patients in that country are placed upon a diet of milk and farinaceous food, and are given antiseptics in the shape of Salol so as to remove from the intestines any germ life which may be causing the disturbances which are so frequent in this disease. It is perhaps for the same reason that it has been found advantageous to give peptonised milk instead of the ordinary form, inasmuch as this requires less digestive activity for its assimilation. The new theory illustrates a movement which is exercising considerable force at present in the medical world—the belief that certain diseases, of which the causes have hitherto been most obscure, are really due to a form of blood-poisoning. Such a theory would be considerably strengthened if it were proved that patients suffering from Graves' disease were curable by strict attention to their digestive system. It is, at any rate, a curious confirmation of the theory that palpitation of the heart, which is so striking a symptom of the disease, is very commonly caused by indiscretions in diet; for it is well known to all medical men that many sufferers from dyspepsia are firmly convinced that they are the victims of incurable heart disease.

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Fine Rich, and Delicious

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