

Medical Matters.

COCAIN.



THE benefits of Cocain as a means of producing local insensibility are now well known; and it is undoubted that a most valuable method of treatment of irritable surfaces has been obtained in consequence of the discovery of this drug. There are, however, certain disadvantages which its use entails, and which have recently been discussed in an Austrian medical contemporary. It is, for example, pointed out that Cocain often causes considerable trouble if it be used in the performance of operations on the throat. In cases, for example, where small polypi were formerly removed by means of a snare or curved forceps from the interior of the larynx, the pain occasioned was very slight, and, as a general rule, the treatment was unaccompanied by difficulty or danger. When Cocain, however, is used, it has been shown that the insensibility of the larynx which is produced permits saliva to run from the mouth down into the trachea, and thus sometimes to set up troublesome lung irritation. Then, with regard to the active dangers of Cocain it is well to remember that some patients are excessively sensitive to the influence of the drug. A case, for example, is narrated in our contemporary in which a very small amount of Cocain was painted upon the mucous membrane of the larynx, and the patient was almost directly afterwards attacked by violent convulsions, then great excitability, passing on into collapse; and for eight hours he remained in a distinctly dangerous condition. A second case was that of a man who suffered from violent convulsions for five hours after the use of Cocain, and then became so collapsed that camphor injections had to be given, and for some days afterwards there was considerable weakness and general prostration. Two other instances are also narrated in which similar symptoms followed the use of the drug, although, fortunately in all these, recovery finally ensued. The necessity of caution therefore is evident, and the Nurse should watch carefully for any abnormal symptoms shown after the use of Cocain. So far as treatment goes, it has been found that strong coffee, ordinary stimulants,

and the subcutaneous injection of ether, are usually successful in restoring the patient.

MEASLES IN PIGS.

THE possibility of the ordinary infectious diseases, to which human beings are subject, occurring amongst the lower animals, has probably often occurred to veterinary practitioners, and the experiments which have been recently carried out in Germany upon this matter are therefore of much interest. Dr. Bayla has stated that he rubbed into the mucous membrane of a young pig's nose the mucus from the nose and mouth of a child suffering from undoubted measles. Four days later, the animal had a discharge from the nose, and its eyes were red and watery; the next day it was obviously ill, refused food, shivered, and had a temperature of 103° ; on the eighth day, the face and ears showed a number of red spots; and within twenty-four hours later there was a similar rash all over the body, which in appearance exactly resembled that of ordinary measles. A fortnight later, one of two pigs, which had been in contact with the young pig for a short time, was taken ill, and its keeper asserted that it had swine fever and would die. It apparently went through the same course of illness, but in four days began to get well, the rash disappeared, and the skin peeled. A week later, the other pig began to be ill, and went through an exactly similar attack. The facts, as narrated, are very interesting, because, on the one hand, they may explain the manner in which epidemics of infectious fevers occur, and, on the other, they certainly deserve to receive the careful attention of Medical Officers of Health, so that in future outbreaks of what is popularly known as "swine-fever," it may be ascertained whether or not this disease is really only another form of measles. The facts also raise a much greater question. Everyone knows how infection from a calf suffering from cow-pox protects human beings from an attack of small-pox. It is, therefore, at least possible that it may be hereafter found that serum from domestic animals suffering from diseases similar to scarlet fever or measles, may protect children from an attack of those diseases. If that were so, the importance of the fact need hardly be emphasized, because in many epidemics it would be possible to limit its ravages, and probably to save a countless number of lives.

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