

ANESTHESIOLOGY REFLECTIONS FROM THE WOOD LIBRARY-MUSEUM

Codrenin



Detroit's Parke, Davis & Company released Codrenin (*above*) as "a local anesthetic and hemostatic" consisting of a 2% solution of cocaine mixed with adrenaline. Since both chemicals were vasoconstrictors, the mixture worked remarkably well when "painted" on bleeding surfaces. However, when Codrenin was injected, particularly in too large a quantity or intravascularly, clinicians could witness in some patients a spectacular display of cardiovascular instability, seizure activity, and even death. Fortunately, local anesthetics less toxic than cocaine, such as procaine (Novocaine), would eventually be synthesized and would supplant the hazardous combination of adrenaline and cocaine in proprietary mixtures such as Codrenin. (Copyright © the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc.)

George S. Bause, M.D., M.P.H., Honorary Curator, ASA's Wood Library-Museum of Anesthesiology, Park Ridge, Illinois, and Clinical Associate Professor, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio. UJYC@aol.com.