

The Midwife.

PAINLESS PARTURITION.

For the last twelve months there has been administered to the maternity cases at the Hospital Beaujon, Paris, under the Direction of Professor Ribémont Dessaigne, Chief of the Maternity Section, a preparation of morphine which produces complete analgesia, and renders childbirth a practically painless procedure while having no effect upon the rhythmic contractions of the uterus. The drug acts upon the nervous centres and the sympathetic nerve, and while affording a blessed relief from pain has apparently no prejudicial effect on mother or infant.

The drug, which was first discovered by M. Georges Paulin, has now been tested by Dr. Ribémont Dessaigne in 420 accouchments.

Reporting upon its effects to the French Academy of Medicine, the Professor claimed that with its aid—

1. It is possible to-day, without causing the slightest danger to the mother, to produce an analgesia sufficient to ensure an entirely painless childbirth.
2. This treatment causes neither check nor delay; indeed, it seems rather, in the great number of cases, to accelerate the process of childbirth.
3. The infants born are, in the proportion of one in three, voiceless—a condition which it is perfectly easy to put an end to, and which is, in fact, often advantageous.
4. The after effects are favourably influenced.
5. It is a scientific certitude that hereafter women may bear children without pain.

In no case were there any bad after-effects. The orderly process of birth was not modified. There was no sign of over-exertion; there was no reaction; there was no fatigue even; there was none of that moral anguish—that moral breakdown which so often follows childbirth. The mother had suffered no physical torture. Not in one of them was depression or nervous excitement discovered. Those who bore children in the evening fell quietly asleep and slept until day—instead of passing the usual night of insomnia.

Midwives who are the unwilling witnesses of so much anguish which they can, it is true, relieve, but which they cannot prevent, will learn with deep thankfulness of the possibilities opened to the patient and long suffering mothers of the human race, and will hope to see the new treatment tried in this country.

The effect of the drug upon the unborn child is of course an important consideration, and a contemporary gives the following report upon 115 cases.

At birth seventy-seven cried lustily. Of the others twenty-eight came silent into the world;

but the regularity of their heartbeats, the rosy tint, tonicity of their muscles were ample evidence of sound health. In a little while some of them piped up shrilly and then slept.

Others took an immediate nap—naps not of long duration, a few seconds, two or three minutes at most—and then howled manfully.

There were ten others. These ten preserved a stolid and disquieting silence. So the professor held them up by the heels. Nine of them broke into yells of indignation.

But one of them—the stolidest of the hundred and fifteen—looked at the world upside down and made no outcry. Then the omniscient doctor turned the sleepy little head up and blew into the gaping mouth—once, twice, thrice. A satisfying howl answered this last indignity!

WHEY AND MEAT-JUICE FOR INFANTS.

Mr. J. Sadler Curgenvin, M.R.C.S., in "The Child's Diet," published by Mr. H. K. Lewis, 196, Gower Street, W.C., gives some useful information as to the use of whey and meat-juice.

"When a child being fed upon a milk food becomes upset, vomiting, and suffering from diarrhoea, it is often necessary to stop all milk in its diet. One of the following foods may then be found useful for a time, to be used only until the acute symptoms have subsided, to get the child, as it were, over the stile:

- " 1. Bread-jelly.
- " 2. Albumen-water, made with white of egg.
- " 3. Whey and meat-juice.

"The third food, whey and meat-juice, is perhaps the most useful of the three, and if cream and a little sugar-of-milk are added to it, it forms a complete food, and can be given to a child for almost an indefinite time without harm. The whey contains the salts and carbohydrates of the milk, together with the soluble albumens and some of the fat; the meat-juice replaces the casein of the milk, and the proportion of fat can be made up by the addition of cream. However, in cases of illness when digestion and assimilation are defective, the food for a time must be weak, so that only a small quantity of meat-juice should be added, and perhaps no, or very little, cream.

"During illness in an infant from two to three months old, it will be found that from 10 to 15 drops of meat-juice to a 2-ounce bottle of whey will be as much as can be digested; but this must be increased gradually until the child is taking about 2 ounces of the meat-juice in the twenty-four hours, provided it is taking no milk, and cream to the extent of a good teaspoonful in each bottle must be added."

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)