

The Passing Bell.

Mary Hunter

IT IS WITH very deep regret that we record the death of Miss Mary Hunter, a Fellow of the British College of Nurses Ltd., who passed away at Bothlyn, Lenzie, Dumbartonshire, on August 19th. Following her General Training, which she received at the Glasgow Royal Infirmary, Miss Hunter entered the Health Visitors' service in which she served for many years with distinction.

A Fellow of the British College of Nurses since 1927, Miss Hunter was a warm supporter of the professional policy of the College and in the passing of her staunch and kindly personality the Nursing world is the poorer.

Book Review.

Childbirth Without Fear.*

By Grantly Dick Read, M.A., M.D. Cantab.

AS A HISTORY of the problems of childbirth, practitioners would no doubt find this book interesting and amusing.

Dr. Read has made an extensive study of his subject, as far back as Biblical days.

Few expectant mothers, however, can have any fear of childbirth in these enlightened days. With all due respect to the author, is it not a pity, from a psychological point of view, to even suggest FEAR?

Advice and guidance on all stages of pregnancy are available to every woman. Also there are handbooks for those who are not within easy reach of clinics.

The ante-natal school and organisation will no doubt attract a certain section of cultured and intellectual women.

D. B.

*Published by William Heinemann (Medical Books), Ltd., 99, Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

Change of Address.

WE ARE ASKED TO ANNOUNCE that on and after October 9th, 1954, the head office of the Milton-Deosan group of companies will be at: 42-46, Weymouth Street, London, W.1.

Telephone: HUNter 0731.

Telegrams: Miltherex, Wesdo, London.

The factory remains at:

10, Brewery Road, London N.7.

What to Read.

Fiction

"So the Struck Eagle." Majorie Stewart.

"Bell from a Distant Temple." Ronald Fraser.

"The Valley." Dorothy Charques.

"Sweet Thursday." John Steinbeck.

"Maiden Voyage." Rupert Lang.

"The Flower Girls." Clemence Dane.

Word for the Month.

How many people meet, who never yet have met.

SHELLEY

The Midwife.

International Confederation of Midwives' London Congress, 1954.

Relief of Pain in Childbirth

By Dr. R. J. Minnitt, M.D., F.F.A.R.C.S.,
F.R.C.O.G., D.A.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS AGO on the 16th October, 1933, Gas and Air Analgesia was administered for the first time to a patient in the Liverpool Maternity Hospital. Following this and during the winter of 1933-34, further investigations into the value of this new treatment were carried out under the direction of Dr. R. J. Minnitt. After this still further research on analgesics suitable for midwives to use was undertaken for the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, who, in January, 1936, published a report based on this investigation. This resulted in the Central Midwives Board allowing the midwife to make use of Gas and Air Analgesia as treatment within her province under regulations prescribed. These included adequate instruction in the principles and practice of obstetrical analgesia, and an examination to test the efficiency of the candidate. At the present time Pupil Midwives receive this instruction during their training.

For *Successful Administration of Gas and Air Analgesia* it is essential that the midwife should be enthusiastic and have confidence in her patient. This fact also bears an important relation to the amount of relief the patient receives.

It is in *Ante-Natal tuition* that the midwife can use these attributes to the best advantage. The preliminary talks that the midwife has with her patient before labour starts provides the greatest scope for teaching her how to obtain the greatest relief. The mother's fears must be allayed by impressing upon her the fact that the administration is under her own control, that it is quite harmless to herself and to her unborn child, and that consciousness is not lost. She must be taught how to use the apparatus and specially how to hold the mask.

Again the principles of relaxation can be taught and the patient encouraged to practise these for a few minutes each morning, so that relaxation becomes automatic.

It must be appreciated that Gas and Air Analgesia is only intended for normal women undergoing a normal labour. Any pathological condition such as heart or respiration affections or toxæmia of pregnancy would exclude the administration of Gas and Air Analgesia by a midwife. In every case a medical certificate must be obtained saying that the patient is suitable for Gas and Air Analgesia.

Failures in the administration are due to:—

Starting it too late in labour, or to

Non-co-operative patients who may be hysterical, dislike gas and fear inhaling it.

It is in such cases that the value of the pre-natal education of the patient by the midwife is manifest. If the patient thoroughly understands how the relief is obtained, it goes a long way towards producing the desired effect.

It is by the appreciation of the circumstances which have tended in the past to spoil the efficient use of the technique that faults in the administration can be eliminated, and thus greater success may be achieved.

Relief of Pain in Childbirth.

By Miss Margaret Brooksbank.

Northern Ireland.

Historical Review.

SIMPSON, THE DISCOVERER OF chloroform, was the first to try to find relief for women in labour. For nearly a hundred years it was the only alleviation available, but the

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