

THE POST-GRADUATE MEDICAL JOURNAL

Vol. V.

MARCH, 1930.

No. 54.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
ANALGESIA AND ANÆSTHESIA IN LABOUR	93
By DAME LOUISE McILROY, D.B.E., M.D., D.Sc.GLAS.	
VARIETIES OF SIMPLE AND THYROTOXIC GOITRE AND THEIR DIFFERENTIATION	99
By H. GARDINER HILL, M.D., F.R.C.P.	
SOME ELECTROCARDIOGRAPHIC PROBLEMS	103
By JENNER HOSKIN, M.D., M.R.C.P.	
POST-GRADUATE NEWS	107
FELLOWSHIP OF MEDICINE AND POST-GRADUATE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.—	
SPECIAL COURSES	iii

ANALGESIA AND ANÆSTHESIA IN LABOUR.

AN ABSTRACT OF THIS PAPER WAS GIVEN AT THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF MEDICAL WOMEN,
PARIS, APRIL, 1929.

By DAME LOUISE McILROY,
D.B.E., M.D., D.Sc. (GLAS.).

*Professor of Obstetrics, University of London (Royal
Free Hospital).*

MANY years of experience in obstetric practice have given me the impression that the agony and suffering of women in their first childbirth has no parallel in medicine except in cases of rare devastating disease. It is surprising how little attention has been paid to the possible methods for the relief of pain during labour compared with that shown for surgical operations. Childbirth has always been looked upon as a natural function and our one endeavour is to treat it by nature's methods. But I feel con-

vinced that pain was never meant to accompany the advent of life into the world, and that it is probably one of the penalties of civilization and the mixture of races. Whenever possible, in every case of labour, pain should be eliminated or diminished as far as possible within the limits of safety for the mother and child. The biblical teaching that pain and travail are associated with childbirth since the curse fell in the Garden of Eden, may to some extent account for the apathy on the part of the medical profession in former ages and the resignation of women to their lot. The Church recognizes the dangers as the Prayer Book has always taught us to pray for women labouring with child. No wonder the process is associated with a feeling of fear when it is so well inculcated from youth upwards. When that great pioneer, Sir James Simpson, of Edinburgh, endeavoured to bring relief to women in labour, his strongest opponents were those who brought out their ecclesiasti-