

The White Ribbon

FOR GOD AND HOME AND HUMANITY

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Single Copy 3d.**MOTHERHOOD WITHOUT FEAR.**

(By Vance Thompson.)

The all-absorbing events of the last days of July prevented the spread of the most joyful message ever sent from the scientist's laboratory to woman. It was that henceforth she will bear children not in pain and terror, but in gladness. Paris knew of it; the French Academy of Medicine had accepted it, but it got no further. Mr Thompson was then in the city, and to him has fallen the wonderful opportunity of carrying the good news to the men and women of Britain. Here it is.

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Attention must be called to the fact that the practice here described has nothing to do with the morphine-scolamin treatment originating some years ago in Freiburg, and which recently has had some measure of exploitation under the popular name of "twilight sleep." This can be administered properly only in hospitals, and its use in general practice should, and probably will, be forbidden by law. But detoxicated morphine, without the slightest danger to the mother, causes neither check nor delay, does not interfere with the necessary rhythmic muscular contractions, and makes painless childbirth a scientific certainty.

It was in Paris—ten days before the wild and unexpected war broke over Europe—this article was written; and at the time there seemed to be no subject in all the world of wider and deeper significance. It touched the very sources of life. It brought to the women of the world the wonder of

a new certainty—that no longer need love be ransomed with pain and terror. And this is what women talked of. They talked of the wonder of painless birth-giving—that their children should be born into a world where there was neither pain nor screaming horror. And men talked of it. They talked of the new generation—born without pain into a humanity which should be better and gentler—redeemed from the ancient law of suffering. It was as though a new day had dawned for the human race. Men looked into the eyes of women and were unashamed; and women looked into men's eyes and were unafraid. The birth-curse was broken. And I left Paris, and went to the sad hills of Alsace.

Then a week, ten days—

And what I saw was the foul pageant and festival of pain. Painless childbirth? In the ashes of villages, in the burning dust, children were born and died; and the mothers died. Painless birth? Oh, the ancient curse fell heavy and black on the women of France; and in agony and horror, in blood and a smother of unclean flies, they brought their children to sudden life and more sudden death. Civilisation was blotted out; humanity was sister to the dog.

Until the new day breaks—

What war cannot destroy is the mighty discovery whereof I have written here. And the glory of generals will pale in the splendour of this conquest of patient scientists.

The Great Discovery.

It was Georges Paulin, the distinguished French chemist, who found—after years of research—the miracu-

lous drug which has saved womankind from the ancient curse. There is nothing new in the use of anodynes in childbirth; but heretofore the use of morphine and kindred drugs has been dangerous, and often instead of checking the pain, it has served to prolong it. What Monsieur Paulin set out to find was an anodyne which should be harmless, and which should do away with all pain without interfering with the orderly and rhythmic process of birth. Professor Charles Richet and other scientists have long been studying the action of living ferments. It was along this line that Monsieur Paulin worked. He took a solution of chlorhydrate of morphine and treated it with a living ferment. The morphine, thus treated, was transformed into a regularly crystallised substance. Officially it is known as morphine désintoxiquée—that is, the toxic qualities are removed—and is distinguished chiefly by its solubility.

It is over two years ago that this medicament was discovered. There followed a long series of experiments on animals, carried on by Monsieur Paulin and his collaborator, Doctor Pierre Laurent.

These two names should be written in every woman's heart—names of a dusty chemist and inconspicuous young physician.

Rabbit and cat and hound, the grosser mammals of the farmyard—these experiments lasted a year. The two dusty scientists did not go, as usually the man of the laboratory goes, into the animal world—seeking for truth in fragments of skin and strips of quivering flesh, while round him everything wails and moans. What Monsieur Paulin took there was