respite from pain. I should like to have word and speech with that first rabbit—bred for torture in a laboratory—who knew the amazement of painless rabbit-birth. Her story should go down the ages.

What all these animal experiments showed was that the new drug, while it suppressed the pains of birth-giving, conserved wholly the natural muscular activity.

This was the solving of the whole problem. Here was a medicine that did no harm, that did not check or hinder nature's way—that did, indeed, leave nature freer than it had otherwise been—and that did banish and abolish the hideous pain that clutched and tortured every female thing.

The patient men of science had made the Great Discovery.

When the dusty men of the laboratory had tried their new medicine upon the animal world, they took it confidently to the greatest gynecologist in Europe. I have named Doctor Ribemont-Dessaigne, accoucher of the Beaujon Hospital and of many others in Paris.

The Hundred and Twelve Mothers.

There have been so many attempts to use pain-deadeners in childbirth. Anyone can tell you all about them—the oldest family physician, or the youngest doctor swinging on the tail-board of an ambulance. Morphine, chloral, chloroform, and the like will still the pains of childbirth, but they have the defect of checking the muscular contractions—or at least of diminishing them. It is only in exceptional cases that the sound practitioner resorts to these dangerous pain-deadening methods. Better the pangs, he will tell you, and a safe birth.

Without enthusiasm, without much confidence, Professor Ribemont-Dessaigne made his first experiment. I wish I could tell you the name of that brave woman who consented to the first trial, for she did consent. In the pauper-thronged hospitals, over which a physician of Doctor Ribemont Dessaigne's standing is as a veritable czar, he might have chosen any pale woman of the people for his experiment. What had she known of it, had death stepped in at the doctor's side and taken her? But it was not thus. A woman offered herself. A heroine? I think she was a heroine.

Success, of course—or you had not been reading this page.

The new drug was almost, but not absolutely, poisonless. It killed the pain—or made it merely a tolerable and curious sensation of discomfort. It did not delay or prolong the birth-process. And it laid no risk upon the child.

With clear eyes the woman looked at her attendants. She was not unconscious. Now and then she drifted away into a pleasant dream and smiled, as though she were listening to a little voice very far off. Even at such times a word, a question, would recall her. She would open her eyes—wide, astonished, happy eyes, with the mother-love in them.

And Professor Ribemont-Dessaigne discovered this: The drug does not act locally, as its inventors fancied from their experimentation that it did; it acts upon the nervous centres and upon the sympathetic nerve. And, above all, he ascertained that it did not in any way modify the rhythmic contractions by which nature sends into the world the little child.

That was one case; it was the first case; and then Professor Ribemont-Dessaigne went down into the hospitals in Paris.

Every bed was filled in the great hall of the Beaujon Hospital. And Professor Ribemont Dessaigne walked there. With him went amazement. For in the great hall, where life battled that it might live, there was silence. Not an outcry, not a wail.

"I went from one woman to another, said Doctor Ribemont-Dessaigne, "and in each and all I observed the birth-process was going on with perfect and rhythmic regularity—without halt or check—and painlessly."

And he will tell you that what impressed itself upon him most was the strange silence—and the smiling faces of women. He had touched the edge of a miracle.

One hundred and twelve experiments Professor Ribemont-Dessaigne made (with the aid of his colleague, Doctor Le Lovier), and every case was successful. Indeed, there was a sort of reiteration of success, for, though there were but one hundred and twelve mothers, there were one hundred and fifteen children—three happy, unterrified, unpained mothers bearing twins. And these were chosen cases. They were chosen because they were difficult, because the birth-pangs seemed intense, because the childbirth halted. All successful. In the long, beneficent history of medicine, I do not see what discovery can rank with this one, which has given womankind joy for sorrow, and laughter in place of bitter cries. I do not write of this discovery as being in an experimental stage. It has been accepted by the French Academy of Medicine—the date was the third week in July. Surgeons, gynecologists, chemists, doctors of all degrees, have examined, tested, approved. For once, scientific men have been unanimous.

What the Babies Think of It.

Will you go back for a moment to that strangely silent room in the hospital?

You remember that over it brooded a great silence. No woman shrieked in agony. One and all, the women lay quiet, with drowsy, happy faces. To each the drug had been administered—an injection of a cubic centimetre and a half of the liquid miracle. It acted directly upon the nervous centres; for a minute or two the nerves would jump, and at last settle back into quiet. Then some of the women dozed lightly. Not all of them. Others of them were filled with a kind of ecstatic gaiety. They talked with the nurses, telling of their amazement, for they sensed the rhythmic contractions of birth, but had not the slightest sensation of pain. So they laughed softly to themselves. In eighty-four out of the hundred and twelve cases studied by Doctor Ribemont-Dessaigne in the hospitals of Paris, the analgestia was complete; in twenty-four it was incomplete, but in these latter cases the birth-pains were so slight that the women refused an additional injection, stating it was not worth while. A little pain they did feel, but it was so tolerable they did not wish it away. Thus, the drug does not act in exactly the same way upon each woman. In one case the normal dose produced an analgesia which lasted only for thirty minutes; other injections had to be given. But it was found that, on the average, the effect of one normal injection lasted for ten or twelve hours, which sufficed for the completion of the birth.

It should be stated again—and with emphasis—that the injection of the drug in no way modifies the orderly process of birth.