The mesmerists were hostile to ether and chloroform. They claimed that mesmerism was safer as an anesthetic agent. The advocates of mesmerism kept alive the interest in the subject and helped pave the way for the acceptance of chemical anesthetics. 89 references.

F. A. M.


Before the era of modern anesthesia, attempts were made to relieve the suffering of childbirth. The ideal agent for the relief of such pain has not been found. The advisability of complete analgesia and amnesia during labor has been questioned. Early efforts to relieve the pain of childbirth were met with opposition. Sir James Y. Simpson is credited with the introduction of modern anesthesia in obstetrical practice. He first used ether for childbirth on January 19, 1847, and on November 8 of the same year he used chloroform for the first time in an obstetrical case. John Snow administered chloroform to Queen Victoria for the birth of her eighth child. In the United States there was a long delay in the application of anesthesia for obstetrical purposes after it was used for surgical cases; however, a case was reported in April, 1847, in which ether had been used in a case of labor. The principle American champion of the use of ether in childbirth was Walter Channing. Augustus Kinsley Gardner administered chloroform for the first time in this country for a normal delivery in February, 1848.

Nitrous oxide was introduced into obstetrical practice by Klikovitsch of Petrograd in 1880 and by Wincekel of Dresden in 1881. Nitrous oxide and oxygen were used by J. Clarence Webster of Chicago in 1909. Scopolamine hydrobromide and morphine sulfate were introduced by von Steinbüchel in