



DR. JOHN A. WILSON

ARCHAEOLOGY

Young Egyptologist Named To Succeed Prof. Breasted

THE far-flung expeditions and researches into the past of civilization conducted by the Oriental Institute, University of Chicago, are to be directed by a comparatively young Egyptologist, Dr. John A. Wilson. Announcement of Dr. Wilson's appointment as acting director, to succeed the late Prof. James H. Breasted, has been made by the president of Chicago University.

Dr. Wilson is 36 years of age and was a pupil of Prof. Breasted's in his study for the Ph.D. degree in Egyptology. Since then, he has accompanied expeditions to Luxor, Egypt, sent out by the Institute to copy and study inscriptions on the ancient walls. He is author in collaboration of several volumes on Egyptian writings.

Science News Letter, March 7, 1936

RADIO

March 10, 3:15 p. m., E.S.T.
ADVENTURES IN COLOR—Charles Bittinger, artist-physicist of Washington, D. C.

March 17, 3:15 p. m., E.S.T.
THE "IRISH" POTATO — Dr. F. J. Stevenson, United States Bureau of Plant Industry.

In the Science Service series of radio discussions led by Watson Davis, Director, over the Columbia Broadcasting System.

MEDICINE

New Childbirth Anesthetic Gives Safe Refreshing Sleep

Tried in Five Hundred Cases in Washington, D. C. Paraldehyde-Benzyl Alcohol Scores Complete Success

A SAFE way of taking the suffering out of childbirth has long been a goal of medical scientists as well as the prayer of countless mothers the world over. One by one, various anesthetics and pain-killing agents have been tried—chloroform, ether, nitrous oxide or "laughing gas," twilight sleep, to name a few familiar ones.

Some have been rejected because of danger to mother or child. Others were of limited use because complicated apparatus and skilled anesthetists were needed to give them. Others have brought only partial relief of suffering, or have relieved the pain in some cases and not in others.

Latest step in the long quest is the development of a new anesthetic mixture consisting of paraldehyde and benzyl alcohol. It was developed in the pharmacology laboratories of George Washington University's medical school by Dr. George B. Roth, in collaboration with Dr. Howard F. Kane, head of the obstetrical department where it was given its clinical trial on mothers in childbirth.

Safety is one of the greatest advantages of the new anesthetic mixture. It is only mildly toxic, and if pure and properly given is considered safer than any of the other methods used to relieve suffering in childbirth. It has been tried in 500 cases at George Washington University Hospital and no ill effects have been noted in mother or child. It can be easily given, another big advantage.

After the injection, in almost every case, the mother falls into a deep, refreshing sleep. The mother can be roused to answer questions, and occasionally is a bit restless. But when she awakens, hours after her child has been born, she has no memory of the experience at all and has suffered no pain during the birth process.

Another of the advantages of the new anesthetic is the fact that the babies are in much better condition when they are born. They do not need to be slapped or held upside-down to make them start

breathing. They cry normally almost immediately after birth and are pink and healthy looking.

The chemicals which are responsible for this safe relief of childbirth pains have been known for some time. Paraldehyde is what is known as a hypnotic and has been used to quiet victims of delirium tremens and nervous disorders and as an antidote to strychnine. Benzyl alcohol is a mild local anesthetic and was added to overcome difficulties in the administration of the paraldehyde.

The paraldehyde-benzyl alcohol mixture is not, Dr. Kane points out, suitable for use in surgical operations.

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MEDICINE

Mother Tells Experiences With New Safe Anesthetic

By a Mother Who Had a "Paraldehyde" Baby

This was written by the wife of a Washington, D. C. medical scientist. She was one of the many obstetrical cases upon which the new painless childbirth drug, a mixture of paraldehyde and benzyl alcohol, was given its clinical trial.

Like every woman, I suppose, who is expecting her first baby, the delight at the thought of the coming child was overshadowed by my dread of the actual childbirth. I tried not to remember the too-vivid accounts I had heard of other women's sufferings. Perhaps because I am a medical scientist's wife, I had heard more of these than most women. Even the knowledge that I was to have a new anesthetic to help me through my ordeal, one which my doctor assured me would deaden the pain absolutely, failed to lessen my fear when the time actually came to go to the hospital.

What happened exceeded my most optimistic hopes. The experience was not only painless but most restful as well. They gave me an injection and presently I fell asleep. When I awoke I felt much refreshed and was surprised to learn that my baby had been born hours before.