

making it in front sufficiently thick to cut a space large enough to insert the point of a spoon, through which opening the patient was fed on soup and gruel until the fracture united. This splint was applied, and the mouth closed on it. The fractures were immediately set, and bandages were applied under the chin to the top of the head. In ten days the bone had completely united, leaving no trace visible of the fractures.—John L. Doggott, Bedford City, V.A.

**THE DURATION OF PREGNANCY.**—Issmer (*Archiv für Gynäk.*, vol. xxxv, Part 2) publishes certain researches on the question of the duration of pregnancy. According to clinical observation, it appears that the date of birth is an event independent of menstrual congestion. Dr. Issmer noted the history of 22 ovariectomies and 2 operations for removal of the appendages, and inferred therefrom that typical menstrual hæmorrhage is a direct result of changes in the ovaries. In most cases that hæmorrhage is the outward visible indication of expulsion of an ovum. It is important, if possible, to ascertain the date of conception, and to determine from which menstrual period the fertilised ovum arises. Dr. Issmer collected 1,220 cases where the date of the last period was authenticated, 628 where the date of conception could be fixed, and 471 where both were known. The date of the last menstrual period is certainly the surest for beginning the reckoning of pregnancy under ordinary circumstances, as it is an event which the patient can correctly observe. Close inquiries in cases where the date of conception can be fixed show that the probability of impregnation during the first fourteen days after menstruation compared with its probability during the remainder of the menstrual cycle is as 2.68 to 1. One-third of all impregnations occur between the eighth and twelfth days, counting from the beginning of the last period. Pregnancies arising from conception during the first half of the cycle are the shortest. The chances appear to be as 3.67 to 1 that impregnation followed the last period rather than the last but one. The be-

ginning of labour represents a reaction to the sum of certain internal and external stimuli, dependent upon the amount of the stimuli and on the power of resistance which the uterus can offer. A male foetus is expelled, on an average, 1.5 day earlier than a female. The normal duration of pregnancy is 280.1 days. The range is from 260 to 304 days, only reckoning cases where the foetus is well developed.

**RECENT HYPNOTICS.**—Dr. H. Dehio (*Petersburg. med. Wochenschr.*, No. 33, 1890) gives the result of trials of various hypnotics in the Dorpat Clinic for Nervous and Mental Diseases. Hypnone in doses of 10 to 15 drops was useless, and methylal and chloralamide were found of little use in the few cases in which they were tried. Paraldehyde was and remains the most reliable hypnotic used in the clinic. In severe cases a dose of 5 to 6 grammes was followed by another of 3 to 4 grammes; this was found sufficient to give a night's rest. As a rule the drug acted well, but sometimes only slight sleep followed, and in other cases tolerance was soon established. But these occasional disadvantages are counterbalanced by the fact that the drug, even in large doses, does not influence the heart or respiration. Paraldehyde may upset the digestion, causing diarrhoea. The medicine must be pure, it must not redden litmus paper. If kept exposed to daylight or in badly-stoppered bottles it soon becomes acid. After the prolonged use of paraldehyde the following symptoms may appear: loss of appetite, grey coloration of the face, dryness of the skin, and loss of body weight; at the same time the drug does not produce somnolence. These symptoms soon disappear on discontinuance of the drug. Paraldehyde, however, is the sheet anchor in the Dorpat Nerve Clinic. Amylene hydrate was also found of use, and has the advantage of not affecting the digestive tract, although it may produce headache and depression. Urethan is of service in doses of 45 to 90 grains in mild cases of insomnia. Sulphonal was given in doses of 15 to 60 grains. It was not found so useful as paraldehyde and amylen hydrate. Drowsiness, weakness, and