

TREATMENT OF WEAK LABOR PAINS.

Weakness of labor pains before rupture of the membranes is hardly dangerous for mother or child, while weakness of pains after the membranes have ruptured may gradually lead to serious damage, as asphyxia and death of the child, grave symptoms of pressure in the mother and dangerous atonic hæmorrhage during the placental period. Prof. Max Runge, Göttingen (*Therap. Monatshefte*, IV., I, 1890) distinguished (1) *Primary* weakness of the pains, *i.e.*, the pains are weak and inefficient from the beginning of labor, which is seen especially in individuals of weak constitution, and in great distention of the uterus by hydramnios or the presence of several fœtuses; and (2) *secondary* weakness of the pains, in which there is good and energetic contraction at the beginning, but which, from too great resistance, as from a large head, a narrow pelvis or rigid soft parts, finally become weaker and even cease.

The treatment of *primary* weakness consists in strengthening the patient by proper nourishment during the course of labor, or where it is possible, even during pregnancy, the administration of wine, coffee, etc. The bladder and rectum should be emptied, and the supply of good air and the proper temperature of the lying-in-room should be regulated. In weakness of the uterine musculature and slow dilatation of the os uteri, warm vaginal injections of carbolized water (1 to 15 per cent.), repeated every one to two hours, are useful; if these fail, full baths and finally large doses of narcotics are indicated. In abnormal distention of the uterus it is advisable to puncture the membranes as soon as the os uteri is half dilated, in order to avoid a prolapse of the umbilical cord at a time when version and extraction would be impossible.

The treatment of the *secondary* weakness must be more energetic; firstly come stimulants, as wine, champagne; in great sensibility, opiates or a few inhalations of chloroform are to be advised. In case the pains become spasmodic, large doses of narcotics, as chloroform-narcosis, chloral hydrate, 30 grains by the mouth or $1\frac{1}{2}$ drachms per rectum, morphine subcutaneously, ($\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ grain), are indicated, in order to give the patient rest. Warm baths of forty-five minutes' duration are often very efficacious.

Puncture of the membranes when the os is incompletely dilated, or the trunk of the child has not descended into the pelvis, is not without danger, as the umbilical cord may prolapse; hence puncture should be avoided as much as possible.

He would reserve the introduction of a bougie into the uterus for especially difficult cases. Frictions of the uterus with the hand are only

applicable just before the passage of the head over the perineum, or during the placental period.

Runge rejects, as does Schröder, the use of ergot during the first and second stages of labor, thus being opposed to Säxinger and Schatz; but on the contrary, he emphasizes the value of ergot and especially of cornutin (Kobert's) for the placental period. He leaves undecided the question whether strychnine is an oxytocic or not.—*Annals of Gynecology and Pediatrics*.

SIR JAMES CRICHTON-BROWN ON SEX IN EDUCATION.

The address which Sir James Crichton-Browne delivered to the members of the Medical Society of London on the occasion of celebrating the hundred and eighteenth anniversary of the Society on the 2nd inst., was one of great interest and extreme importance, for it dealt with a question which must have a commanding influence on the destinies of the human race, *viz.*, the extent to which difference in sex should call for difference in education.

Sir James is of opinion that the best way of estimating the difference between the intellects of men and women is to consider and to determine the difference between their bodies. These differences are, he maintains, real and deeply founded in structure, and he selected three points for special elucidation—the actual weight of the brain in the two sexes, the specific gravity of the two chief structures, the gray matter and the white of which it is composed, and the manner in which blood is distributed to its different parts. He showed that the female brain is lighter than that of the male, not only absolutely, but relatively to the respective statures and weights of the two sexes; that the specific gravity of parts of the female brain is less than that of corresponding parts of the male brain; and that the blood supply, which in the male is directed more towards the portions which are concerned in volition, cognition, and ideo-motor processes, is in the female more directed towards portions which are mainly concerned in the discharge of sensory functions. These facts lead to the conclusion that the brain of man is an organ broadly distinguished from that of woman, and that each is fitted for its own particular work. By forcing the education of girls in directions formerly reserved more exclusively for males, he admits they have had opened up to them interests and attainments formerly denied them, but he asserts that the benefits and apparent advantages have been attained by serious drawbacks, and that the new spheres of work open to women are apt to involve grave dangers to health, both immediate and pro-