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Original Articles

THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE OBSTETRIC FORCEPS

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My first duty must be to thank you for the honor done me in being asked to address you to-night. I accepted the invitation with a feeling of great misgiving as to my ability adequately to discharge the duties required of me, and I must confess that this feeling did not diminish as my address began to take shape, and that perhaps it reaches its acme at the present moment, as I face this audience of my fellow practitioners.

In choosing a subject I had to bear in mind that it should be one of general interest, and at the same time one not too hackneyed. When I tell you that I propose to speak on the use of the obstetric forceps you may think that whilst the first condition is fulfilled, the second is hardly met. Yet it holds in obstetrics, as in other departments of medicine, that a review of the commoner lines of treatment is required from time to time. This is necessary, not only because our conception of the indications for such treatment becomes modified, but also because more modern methods may offer better and safer means of arriving at the desired result.

In no department of medicine is custom and routine so difficult to overcome as in obstetrics. We are afraid to step aside from the beaten path, lest if things go wrong we be blamed. The public requires to be educated, and the public is slow to learn. For these reasons therefore it is well that at such gatherings as this we should consider critically some of the commoner and more

*Address in Obstetrics, read before the Ontario Medical Association, June, 1914.

