

the parietes of the abdomen; behind is a deep notch on either side between the ilium and the base of the sacrum. It supports the intestines, and transmits part of their weight to the anterior wall of the abdomen.

The Lesser or True Pelvis (*pelvis minor*).—The lesser pelvis is that part of the pelvic cavity which is situated below and behind the pelvic brim. Its bony walls are more complete than those of the greater pelvis. For convenience of description, it is divided into an **inlet** bounded by the superior circumference, and **outlet** bounded by the inferior circumference, and a **cavity**.

The Superior Circumference.—The superior circumference forms the brim of the pelvis, the included space being called the **superior aperture** or **inlet** (*apertura pelvis [minoris] superior*) (Fig. 238). It is formed laterally by the pectineal and arcuate lines, in front by the crests of the pubes, and behind by the anterior margin of the base of the sacrum and sacrovertebral angle. The superior aperture is somewhat heart-shaped, obtusely pointed in front, diverging on either side, and encroached upon behind by the projection forward of the promontory of the sacrum. It has three principal diameters: antero-posterior, transverse, and oblique. The **antero-posterior** or **conjugate diameter** extends from the sacrovertebral angle to the sym-

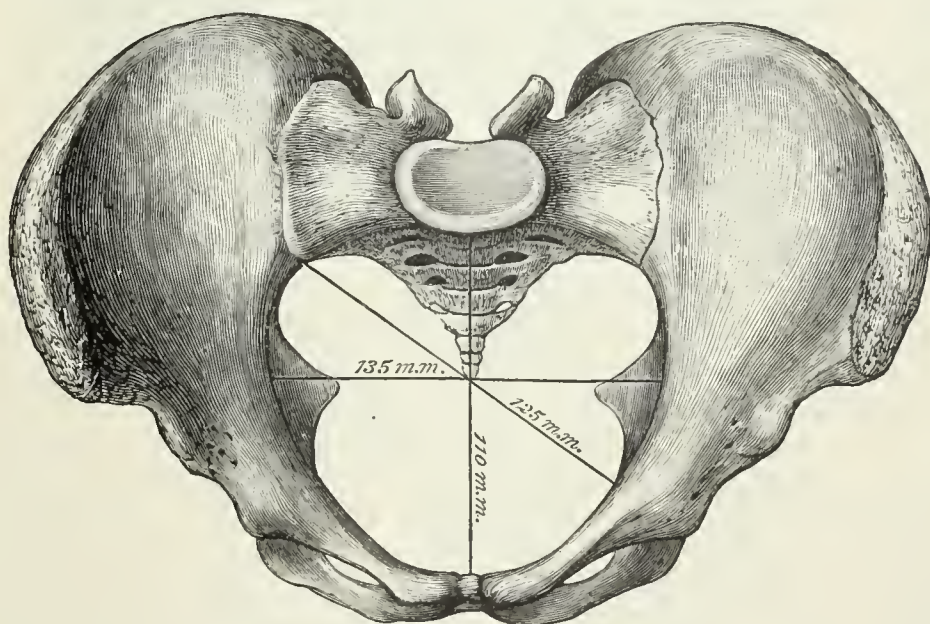


FIG. 238.—Diameters of superior aperture of lesser pelvis (female).

physis pubis; its average measurement is about 110 mm. in the female. The **transverse diameter** extends across the greatest width of the superior aperture, from the middle of the brim on one side to the same point on the opposite; its average measurement is about 135 mm. in the female. The **oblique diameter** extends from the iliopectineal eminence of one side to the sacroiliac articulation of the opposite side; its average measurement is about 125 mm. in the female.

The **cavity** of the lesser pelvis is bounded in front and below by the pubic symphysis and the superior rami of the pubes; above and behind, by the pelvic surfaces of the sacrum and coccyx, which, curving forward above and below, contract the superior and inferior apertures of the cavity; laterally, by a broad, smooth, quadrangular area of bone, corresponding to the inner surfaces of the body and superior ramus of the ischium and that part of the ilium which is below the arcuate line. From this description it will be seen that the cavity of the lesser pelvis is a short, curved canal, considerably deeper on its posterior than on its anterior wall. It contains, in the fresh subject, the pelvic colon, rectum, bladder, and some of the organs of generation. The rectum is placed at the back of the pelvis, in the curve of the sacrum and coccyx; the bladder is in front, behind the pubic symphysis. In the female the uterus and vagina occupy the interval between these viscera.