

## Medical Matters.

### THE TIME FACTOR IN OPERATIONS.



The *British Medical Journal* (Oct. 4th, 1902) draws attention to a fact, too often overlooked by surgeons, that, other things being equal, the amount of shock varies directly with the length of time the patient is on the operating-table. Before the days of anæsthetics celerity in operating was the first consideration; but, with the advent of anæsthetics, operating became much slower. It is, however, now becoming more and more obvious that expeditiousness is just as important as ever; and as surgeons become more impressed with this fact, strychnine injections and saline infusions will gradually come to be more seldom required.

### THE USE OF LINEN SEWING-MACHINE THREAD.

Mr. E. A. Barker, in a recent issue of the *Lancet*, warmly supports the use of linen thread for ligatures and sutures in almost any situation. He has used it almost exclusively during the past two years, and finds it possesses the following good points: In the first place it can be procured everywhere, and it is relatively very cheap; it can be easily sterilised by boiling in plain water, and can then be stored in alcohol. It is enormously strong, and ties an excellent knot.

The author thinks that this linen thread is not absorbed at all, for when watched in exposed situations, such as in the long wound made in amputation of the breast, the thread, when removed at the end of ten days or so, is in exactly the same condition as when it was put in. It must be well understood that the material here noticed is linen as opposed to cotton thread. The latter is not strong enough for ligatures, and, moreover, rots when boiled. But this linen material is different, and the flax fibre of which it is made is long and very smooth.

### WEIGHING THE HEART.

At the last sitting of the Académie des Sciences Professor Bouchard communicated the results of certain researches undertaken in conjunction with M. Balthazard on the volume of the heart in certain diseases. The Professor stated that in men and women the volume

varied considerably, the normal measurement of a male heart being eighty-nine square centimetres, and the female heart seventy-six.

By employing curious formulæ, invented by Professor Bouchard, when the dimensions of the surface of the heart have been obtained by orthogonal projections, the weight of the heart can be ascertained as exactly as if it were possible to weigh it on a pair of scales.

### THE GERM OF LAZINESS.

That strange disease called laziness, known the world over, not dependent upon time or season, flouting the researches of the learned and sometimes attacking them in their search, is doomed to death. Its totem, its microbe, has been discovered. So we are told, at any rate, and on scientific authority.

Dr. Stiles, of the United States Agricultural Department, addressing the Sanitary Congress at New York, declared that uncinariasis, or hook-worm disease, which he recently discovered, was chiefly responsible for the abnormal laziness existing among the "poor white" people or "crackers" in some of the Southern States. The disease produced a condition resembling chronic malaria, and robbed the system of its energy and vitality. The degenerate dirt-eaters and pickle-eaters in the South were sufferers from the disease, and their abnormal and peculiar appetites were caused by it.

The disease, says the doctor, stunts both bodily and mental development, and impedes the efforts of reformers for the employment of child labour in Southern factories by making workers over twenty years of age seem fourteen to sixteen. As a matter of fact, those who come from those districts to factories improve their health as they shake off uncinariasis.

Dr. Stiles said that the strongest systems, if made to live under the conditions of the "crackers," would exhibit the same symptoms of degeneracy, and conversely, the entire race of "poor whites" is susceptible of being raised from their present condition by proper diagnosis and remedies. For this purpose, Dr. Stiles promised that the Department would issue a pamphlet for circulation in the afflicted districts.

The South American delegates declared their belief that Dr. Stiles had accurately described the conditions in their localities, and promised to continue his investigations on their return home.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)