of the heart in systole or in diastole will modify the measurements of the muscular structure, these being greater in the former state than in the latter. The circumference of the valves, however, is in no wise altered by muscular contraction or rigor mortis.

The above course in examining the thoracic viscera is not the one usually adopted. The heart may be opened in situ, or removed by being firmly held in the left hand around the base, including the ascending arch of the aorta, the pulmonary artery, pulmonary veins and venæ cavæ, and by the knife cutting through these structures. The organ can then be taken out and placed in a clean dish for subsequent examination, which does not differ from that already described. It is sometimes customary to open the heart before removal : and this is done in the following sequence: the right auricle is opened by a cut running between the venæ cavæ and the cavity explored ; the cavity of the right ventricle, by a cut on the same line as the above, the two being united after the removal of the heart from the body. The left auricle, by a cut between the pulmonary veins down towards the ventricle. which is opened by a cut on this line, and afterwards the two made continuous to expose the mitral valve. The pulmonary artery and aorta are opened by the knife on the lines before mentioned : the pulmonary, along the right side of the inter-venticular septum ; and the aorta, in a line onethird of an inch to the left of the septum. The objection to this proceeding is that there is no opportunity of discovering the competence of the auriculo-ventricular valves, and the quality, amount and quantity of the contents can be as easily estimated after removal of the organ entire as before its incision.

There does not seem to be any paramount advantage in opening the heart in situ, and as regards the detection of the fluidity or coagulation of the blood, it is of little value. The one point in favor of this procedure is the opportunity afforded for the measurement of the quantity in the different cavities; and it is obvious that the estimation of the usefulness of this is open to several fallacies; the actual capacity of