

WHEN SHOULD THE UMBILICAL CORD BE LIGATURED?—By Dr. Budin, ("Bull. Gen. de Therap," Feb. 1876). To this simple enquiry a very prompt reply would probably be given by the majority of practitioners, and that to the effect that it should be done as soon as possible; and yet, as Dr. Budin's excellent memoir shows, the question should be well weighed before so ready and positive a reply is given. Dr. Budin, who is a rising young physician of much promise, read his memoir before the Société de Biologie, of Paris, where it was well received by the members present, including Claude Berrard and other celebrities. Dr. Budin made two series of experiments, each comprising a number of observations. In one he did not cut the cord until pulsation had ceased, and in the other the section was made immediately after birth. In both the blood escaping from the placental end of the cord was collected, and it was found that whilst in the first series it amounted to twelve cubic centimètres, in the second it was no less than one hundred cubic centimètres. Dr. Budin concludes, therefore, that it is best to wait until pulsation has ceased in the cord before it is ligatured and cut, because if the section be made sooner the foetus is deprived of eighty-eight cubic centimètres of blood. Dr. Budin, moreover, states that the fœto-placental circulation is a completely closed one, and therefore in the normal condition of things no blood escapes from the placental tissues externally.—*British and Foreign Medico-Chirurgical Review*.

METHOD OF OPENING ABSCESSSES WITHOUT CAUSING PAIN.—Dr. Borg ezini, of Boulogne, recommends for this purpose the application to the skin, for from three to five minutes, of a solution of two parts of carbolic acid in one part of glycerine. If the skin is inflamed, as it usually is in acute abscesses, the anæsthesia should not be too long applied. Dr. B. thinks that this anæsthetic may be utilized in autoplastic operations, and for superficial neuralgias.—*La Tribune Médicale*, 26 Dec. 1875.

[Dr. Bill four years ago demonstrated the anæsthetic properties of carbolic acid locally applied, in his elaborate and interesting article published in the July (1872) number of the *Am Journal of Medical Science*, page 35.—ED.]

## Materia Medica.

### THE PHYSIOLOGICAL ACTION OF ALCOHOL.

The Nos. of the *Practitioner* for January and February of the present year contain an instructive paper on this subject, by Dr. T. Lauder Brunton. The direct points in this paper are summed up as follows:—

1. Alcohol, in small quantities, increases the secretion of the gastric juice and the movements of the stomach, and thus aids digestion. Although unnecessary in health, it is useful in exhaustion and debility.
2. It increases the force and frequency of the pulse, by acting reflexly through the nerves of the stomach.
3. In large doses it impairs digestion by over-irritating the stomach.
4. It may produce death reflexly by shock.
5. After absorption into the blood it lessens the oxidizing power of the red blood corpuscles. This property renders it useful in reducing temperature. When constantly, or even frequently, present in the blood, it causes accumulation of fat, and fatty degeneration of organs.
6. It undergoes combustion in the body, maintains or increases the body weight, and prolongs life on an insufficient diet. It is therefore entitled to be reckoned as a food.
7. If large doses are taken, part of it is excreted unchanged.
8. It dilates the blood-vessels, increases the force and frequency of the heart by its action on the nervous centres, to which it is conveyed by the blood, imparts a feeling of comfort, and facilitates bodily and mental labour. It does not give additional strength, but merely enables a man to draw upon his reserve energy. It may thus give assistance in a single effort, but not in prolonged exertions.
9. The same is the case with the heart; but in disease alcohol frequently slows instead of quickening the pulsations of this organ, and thus economizes instead of expending its reserve energy.
10. By dilating the vessels of the skin, alcohol warms the surface at the expense of the internal organs. It is thus injurious when taken