

the exact time at which the plastic lymph becomes organized into white fibrous tissue, yet I will be in favor of leaving in the sutures at least until the process has had time to be completed. In my last few cases I have been introducing a few buried silk worm gut sutures through the cut edges of the abdominal fascia, which of course remain during the whole of the patient's life, and which, therefore, render the occurrence of ventral hernia impossible. These were introduced after the through and through suture had been placed in position and before the latter were tied.

The above was written six years ago and seems to have had some influence upon the practice of the abdominal surgeons of America, for since then the time for the removal of the suture has been greatly extended. After six years further experience the writer may say that he has left in the through and through sutures one month in several hundred cases, and with the most satisfactory results.

During the last year he has crystalized his procedure into the following formula : When the abdominal wall is not more than one inch in thickness he employs through and through silk worm gut stitches half an inch apart, which he leaves in one month ; but when the abdominal wall measures over one and under two inches in thickness he brings the peritoneum and muscles and fascia together with buried silk worm gut to remain forever, and the skin is closed with a subcutaneous silk worm gut stitch which is removed in ten days. When the abdominal wall is over two inches thick then in addition the fat is brought together with fine catgut after having tied the buried sutures.

An interesting question is, what becomes of the buried sutures ? Are they absorbed ? Or do they remain indefinitely as they were first placed ? In what percentage of cases do they suppurate ? The first question may be surely answered in the negative. The writer has found these stitches while performing laparotomy for the removal of the second ovary more than four years after they were first introduced, and they were as clean and smooth as on the day they were buried. He believes that they remain indefinitely so. The answer to the third question varies a little, according to the operator and the rigorousness of his asepsis. Dr.