

incision are brought together clean and not bruised and with corresponding layers of tissue in exact apposition, we obtain primary union. Under this term we may include all cases of union in which there is no suppuration or granulation, although it does not necessarily follow that there is no exudation of plastic lymph. The ideal union by first intention is of course one in which the cut openings of vessels and the cut fibres of other tissues exactly correspond and unite, but this probably never occurs after an abdominal section. The union is rather due to the exudation of plastic lymph from the opposite surfaces, which forms a gelatinous glue, and which eventually becomes organized into white fibrous tissue. We can obtain a good idea of this process by observing what takes place when the tendo Achillis is cut by the orthopedic surgeon for the cure of talipes equinus. After the subcutaneous division of the tendon the foot is kept for days in its former faulty position until the ends of the divided tendon shall have become joined again by the exudation of plastic lymph. When a sufficient quantity of this has exuded, and while it is still in a soft and stretchable condition, the surgeon gradually brings the foot to a right angle with the leg, when there is perhaps a space of two inches between the cut ends of the tendon, which are united, however, by this band of soft plastic lymph. The foot is then left in position until this material has become thoroughly organized, when the patient will be found to have the full use of the part. The same thing, I take it, occurs after an abdominal section ; and it is owing to the too early removal of the suture while the plastic lymph is still soft and stretchable, and before it has become organized into white fibrous tissue, that we owe the great frequency of ventral hernia. By leaving in the supporting silk worm gut sutures for one month after the operation, we can avoid not only the risk of ventral hernia, but we are also saved the anxiety of the incision being torn open during a fit of coughing or other effort, and the intestines escaping out of the abdomen, as has occurred in several recorded cases. If the silk worm gut sutures are left in for a month, as I have done in my last fifteen or eighteen cases, they can do no harm, and this accident is absolutely prevented from happening. Although I am not in a position to state