

*The Relief of Intussusception by Gastrotomy.*

A recent meeting of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society was of peculiar interest for the surgical members, in consequence of a discussion which arose on a very remarkable case which had been under Mr. Jonathan Hutchinson's care. The details of the case will be found in our report of the Society's proceedings at page 661. This remarkable case gave Mr. Hutchinson an opportunity of suggesting a revision of the opinions of surgeons on the propriety of operations for intussusception. There can be no question that they are in general opposed to operative interference. Thus, Mr. Pollock (*Holmes's System of Surgery*, iv, 619) says: "The proposal to open the abdomen should not be entertained"; Mr. Bryant (*Practice of Surgery*, p. 318): "Operation in intussusception is scarcely justifiable"; Mr. Holmes (*Surgical Treatment of Children's Diseases*, p. 570): "With regard to cutting into the peritoneal cavity, I would entirely abstain from any such proposal in a case which I regarded as one of intussusception"; and other opinions to the same effect might easily be quoted. But a perusal of the context will show that these surgeons, in condemning so decidedly the operation in cases of intussusception, were thinking of cases in which the symptoms are urgent and the intussuscepted bowel tightly strangulated: so that adhesions rapidly form between the opposed serous surfaces at the point of invagination (which is the neck of the stricture), soon followed by ulceration in the line of the stricture itself, whereby the protruded bowel is often cast off into the cavity of the intestine, and life is, comparatively often, saved.

The merit of Mr. Hutchinson's paper (and a very great merit it is) consists in calling the attention of surgeons and of surgical pathologists to the occurrence of cases which bear more resemblance to incarceration of bowel than to strangulation, and to the probability—hitherto certainly unsuspected by pathologists—of finding the opposed serous surfaces of the invagination unadherent, even after a pro-