NOTES ON A CASE OF SUDDEN DEATH FROM "SHOCK," FOLLOWING A BLOW OVER THE EPIGASTRIUM.

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ALTHOUGH the above-noted injury is mentioned in text-books as a cause of sudden death, cases illustrating it are so rare that the following seems to be worth recording.

Driver J. N., R.H.A., was brought up to the Auxiliary Hospital, Woolwich, at 12.50 p.m., on December 14, 1906. On examination he was found to be dead.

Previous Medical History.—Unimportant.

History of Injury.—(As elicited from his comrades, and partly taken from a newspaper report of the inquest.) Driver N. was grooming his horse down at midday stables. He was wearing stable clogs, and the stable floor was of cobble. He was standing in front of and over the horse’s head, grooming its neck, the horse’s head having been bent down for that purpose; the horse suddenly “playfully” threw up its head, catching N. a blow—which appeared to the onlookers a slight one—over the “stomach.” N. fell backwards, owing, his companions imagined, to his clogs slipping on the cobble paving stones, and in falling cut the back of his head “behind the right ear.” As he did not attempt to get up his companions went to his assistance, and found that he was not breathing. They at once procured a stretcher and brought him up to the hospital.

Condition on Admission.—Dead. Very extreme pallor of exposed cutaneous surfaces. There was a contused wound over the right parietal bone, immediately above and behind its centre. This did not expose the bone. There was no bleeding from ears, nose or mouth, and no evidence of any external injury.

Post-mortem Examination held Twenty-four Hours after Death.—Post-mortem rigidity extreme. A contused wound of scalp as described above, not exposing bone. No bleeding from ears, nose or mouth, and no subconjunctival haemorrhage. No evidence of any injury elsewhere. On removing the “skull cap” the dura was seen to be somewhat pale, otherwise normal. Brain removed, vault and base of skull carefully examined, but no slightest trace of a fracture was seen. No pressure on the cervical cord evident from above, and no dislocation of odontoid process palpable from above.

Brain.—Weight 55 ounces, healthy; no haemorrhage into its substance found after many careful sections; cerebellum, pons and medulla healthy and no haemorrhage into their substance. Tongue, pharynx, oesophagus, larynx, trachea and lungs normal. Heart: 14 ounces; some hypertrophy, muscle healthy and valves absolutely normal; no atheroma of big vessels. Liver (weight 72 ounces), spleen (weight 12 ounces), and kidneys (right, weight 6 ounces, left, weight 7 ounces), very congested, otherwise normal.
A Tour at D'thalla in the Aden Hinterland

Stomach: Contained a small quantity of well-digested food; somewhat congested, otherwise normal. Intestines: Congested, otherwise normal. Peritoneum: Healthy. The abdominal cavity generally had a very congested appearance. The vessels over the splanchnic area were full and dilated. I removed the cervical cord and found it healthy and intact, and the odontoid process unbroken and in its proper position.

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Travel.

NOTES MADE DURING A TOUR AT D’THALLA IN THE ADEN HINTERLAND.

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D’thalla is distant about seven days’ march from Aden, travelling over a caravan route of sandy desert and dried river-beds, and consists of a number of stone buildings built on the side of a hill. It is ruled over by an Ameer, and like all Arab villages, has its sacred well and mosque.

Climate.—The cold weather extends from October to March; during the months of December and January it is quite cold at nights, one requiring three blankets to sleep comfortably. Fogs are common at this season, and often hang about for several days at a time. During the cold season there is little sickness amongst British or native troops. The rainy season is from June to September, rain-showers lasting several hours, occur generally in the evening, and at night are attended by thunder and strong winds. The hot season is not trying. It extends from March to June, and the highest register of the maximum thermometer was 93° F. It is of interest to note the difference between the climate of Aden and D’thalla, yet the latter place is only seven days’ march from the former, and compares favourably in climate with most Indian hill stations.

Nature of the Country.—It is a country of low-lying hills intersected by narrow valleys sparsely covered with scrub. During the rainy season the valleys are under cultivation with Iowari and Bajree grain. Plots of ground, constantly under cultivation, properly manured and watered daily, will grow most English vegetables. A vegetable garden started by Brigade-Major S. M.