

In such cases it may be found necessary to get the animal to the nearest stable for rest and treatment. But in the majority of instances a horse will continue on and complete his journey without much inconvenience. The effects of the injury are however apparent after a few hours' rest in the stable.

Treatment of an over-reach will vary according to the extent of the injury. In some cases a small wound, which hardly seems to be worth any attention, is the centre of a considerable area of damaged tissue, which is likely to undergo septic changes, causing the wound to assume an unhealthy character: while on other cases the wound is simply an incision which will heal rapidly.

The first step is to cleanse the wound from dirt; and this is best done by a stream of cold water. Soaking the foot in hot water is the general practice; but unless the injured heel is hot, swollen, and painful, this is not to be recommended. To secure the healing of the part by first intention is the great thing, and cold water is more likely to assist the process than hot fomentation followed by the usual poultices. Indeed, the use of the ordinary bran or linseed meal poultices which are generally kept on the wound for many hours, is calculated to favour the septic process; and there is good reason to believe that many trifling cases of over-reach, which would heal rapidly if left alone, become unhealthy sloughing wounds under frequent soakings of the foot in hot water and the frequent application of poultices.

An over-reach of an ordinary kind, when there is no serious damage done by the surrounding tissues, may be successfully treated by the application of an antiseptic; but some drying powder is better than ointments or lotion. After thorough washing with a stream of cold water from syringe or hose, the loose portions of horn should be trimmed off by a pair of sharp scissors, and the wound then be sprinkled with a powder composed of one part red oxide of mercury to twenty parts of sugar. The sprinkling should be repeated as often as may be necessary to keep the wound dry. As soon as a scab forms, no further treatment is necessary.

Brushing or cutting sometimes causes a contused wound on the inner surface of the fetlock joint, or near the knee in cases of speedy-cut, attended with a certain amount of swelling, which has the effect of rendering the part more liable to a repetition of the injury.

The slight wounds inflicted in the accident of cutting are chiefly important as indicating the fact that the horse is addicted to the habit and the treatment is naturally directed rather to the prevention than to the cure of the injury.

Cutting or brushing occurs under certain fixed conditions. Either the animal is feeble, and therefore unable to control the movement of its limbs, or there is some malformation in the limbs themselves, or the shoeing is at fault. The first of these causes is readily detected by an examination of the animal, and no special attention need be given to the prevention of cutting—at any rate, until the horse's condition has been improved.

The same may be said of bad shoeing as a cause of cutting. If the shoes are seen to be clumsy and badly fitted, with the inside edge projecting beyond the walls of the foot, there will be no difficulty in rectifying these defects. But in the case of cutting from malformation, it is often very difficult to discover the error in the position of the limbs in relation to each other. A very slight distortion of one or more of the joints of one limb, will give a trifling turn upwards to the foot, quite sufficient to cause the inside edge of the shoe, or the wall of the foot to come in contact with the fetlock of the opposite leg in trotting. To be able to decide as to the proper system of shoeing for the prevention of cutting, it is necessary to see the animal walk and trot, and to note the exact position of the feet during these movements; after which it will be a comparatively easy matter to determine what kind of shoe is most likely to rectify the malposition of the feet.

It is obvious that the position of the inside quarter of the foot may be altered by varying the relative thickness of the inside and outside quarters of the shoe; viz. a thick inside and a thin outside will turn the inside edge slightly upwards, and remove the inner sides of the coronet and fetlock outwards, or away from the opposite leg. Reversing the arrangement of the shoe will bring the fetlock nearer, and turn the inside edge of the shoe further away from the opposite foot. A considerable number of changes in the position of the foot may be effected by arranging the thick quarter of the shoe alternately on the inside and outside of each foot, and in the course of these trials the right method may be discovered for the prevention of the habit of cutting, still in some cases no system of shoeing will be successful in entirely preventing the habit.

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