ABNORMAL PHALANGES IN A HUMAN HAND: A CASE OF BRACHYDACTYL.

By Walter Kidd, M.D., F.R.S.E., F.Z.S.

H. N., aged 47, master mariner, presented the following condition of the phalanges of both hands:—

The first digit has the normal number of phalanges, and is short and very broad, with a broad nail.

The second, third, and fourth digits have only two phalanges and no nails. The distal extremities of these digits are formed into soft pulps, each
Abnormal Phalanges in a Human Hand

with a small groove or depression on the dorsal aspect, and round this depression the papillary ridges are grouped in concentric rows, which are faint at the proximal side of this area.

The fifth digit has two phalanges which are nearly ankylosed, very slight passive movement being possible, and it has a small, well-formed nail.

On the foot the digits also have each two phalanges, and no nails are missing. The second and third digits are partly webbed.

This abnormal development thus consists in the absence from the second, third, fourth, and fifth digits of the hand of one of the phalanges, and of any rudiment of a nail in the second, third, and fourth. The missing phalanx of the fifth digit must be the middle one, but it is less easy to determine in the second, third, and fourth which phalanx is missing, on account of the well-formed pulps and the grooves, where perhaps nails are indicated.
This condition of the hand is described by the man himself as hereditary. He has two daughters with a similar appearance of the hands, and his own mother, mother’s sister, and maternal grandmother have all presented this appearance of their hands. His observation does not extend to the phalanges of the feet. He says that the tradition in his family is that other ancestors before his grandmother have shown this abnormality.

It may be further noted that the two hands and feet respectively resemble one another, and that on the nailless digits of the hand (second, third, and fourth) adventitious bursae are formed, so that the pulps are extremely mobile.

A photograph and radiograph of the hand are appended.