CASE

OF A

LARGE ADIPOSE TUMOR

SUCCESSFULLY EXTIRPATED.

By ASTLEY COOPER, Esq. F.R.S.

SURGEON TO GUY'S HOSPITAL, AND LECTURER IN ANATOMY
AND SURGERY.

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ADIPOSE tumors acquire a greater magnitude than any other swelling ever reaches. They are not composed of fatty matter only, but the adipose membrane is encreased, and their structure is similar, only somewhat more compact, to that of the fatty membrane in other parts of the body.

The cases which have occurred to my knowledge, in which these tumors acquired great magnitude, and have been successfully extirpated, were one which weighed 14lb. 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ removed by myself, in Guy's Hospital, from Mrs. Smith, an inn-keeper at Yarmouth, in Norfolk, one which was removed by Mr. Cline from Mr. Ayres, a silversmith, in Fenchurch Street, which weighed 15lb. Mr. Cope-

land also extirpated a swelling of this kind from the thigh of Mrs. ——— of Tottenham, the weight of which was 22lb.; but the magnitude of the swelling in the following case, was considerably greater than the largest of these.

As these tumors usually arise from those parts of the body in which the larger arteries are not found, and as they are commonly pendulous and extremely moveable, they do not lead to so formidable an operation as many swellings which are of less bulk, but which are either more vascular in their structure, or are seated in the neighbourhood of the larger blood-vessels. But the swelling in question was placed upon the abdomen, enveloping the umbilicus, and occupying that portion of the linea alba at which herniæ are so often found; and it was impossible to be quite sure that this swelling might not contain protruded omentum. This tumor therefore presented more than common danger and difficulty in the operation, independently of its enormous size.

CASE.

Nicholas Pearson, aged 57, on the 26th of September, 1820, was admitted into Guy's Hospital, for the purpose of having a large tumor removed, which grew from the front of the abdomen; and of which he gave the following account:

At the age of 17 he perceived a swelling, about the size of a pea, situated midway between the umbilicus and ensiform cartilage; it was unattended with pain, and did not in any way interfere with his duties as a sailor, which was, at that time his occupation; but it gradually enlarged, and in sixteen years had acquired the magnitude of the head of a child, still producing no uneasiness, except from the inconvenience of its size and weight, which was yet insufficient to oblige him to give up his employment. The tumor, however, continued gradually to increase; and in the space of twenty-nine years from its commencement, had acquired such a bulk, as to render him no longer fitted for the sea, or any useful occupation, he being obliged to support the tumor by a bandage passed round the neck; but, even at this advanced period, it was productive of no pain.

At about this time he was attacked with fever, which, to use his own expression, “settled in the tumor;” and from his description, there is no doubt, it became inflamed, with subsequent ulceration on its surface.

The tumor retained sensibility, but evidently not to the degree of the healthy natural parts of the body; for upon one occasion, while sitting before the fire, an extensive portion of the surface of the tumor was burnt, before he was aware of the circumstance. He did not recover

from the ill effects of this accident for a length of time.

In this state, without any other change than the gradual increase of the tumor, he sustained his disease for forty years, when the tumor had acquired the following prodigious size ; measuring one yard and a quarter around its greatest circumference, and eighteen inches around its neck, extending, when he was sitting down, to his knees ; it had increased most rapidly during the last three years, but, up to the time of his admission, he expressed no other inconvenience than that of the weight he had to support, which of itself rendered him so perfectly incapable of obtaining his bread, that he was driven to the necessity of its removal ; and on the 13th of October 1820, the operation was performed in the theatre of Guy's Hospital, in the following manner :—

The first step of the operation was to draw the tumor to the patient's right side, and then to make an incision through the integuments and cellular membrane at its base ; separating the swelling so far from its connections as to be enabled to ascertain that it was not connected with hernia, or in any way with the abdomen ; but in this investigation it was found, that a considerable portion, much more sensitive than the rest of the tumor, did project from the swelling into the umbilicus, but that it was not a hernia. Having ascertained this important

point, the remaining part of the operation consisted in a simple dissection, with the application of ligatures to the veins which were of considerable size, and bled freely, and to the arteries, which, considering the bulk of the tumor, were not so much enlarged as might have been reasonably expected. The patient lost but an inconsiderable quantity of blood during the operation.

The weight of the tumor was taken immediately after its removal, which, independently of the blood which it contained, was 37 lbs. 10 oz.

No bad symptoms followed the operation, excepting a slight pain in his head on the second day. The wound healed partly by adhesion, but principally by granulation; in eight days he was sufficiently well to rise from his bed, and to walk in his ward.

In order to ascertain the relative weight of the tumor of the patient, my apprentice, Mr. D. Babington, weighed him after his complete recovery, and found that the tumor was rather more than one-fourth the weight of the man. Had this experiment been tried before the operation had been performed, it would of course have been attended with a more correct and satisfactory result.

The tumor is preserved in the Museum at St. Thomas's Hospital.

The Tumor when removed, weighed 37 lb. 100z. Avoirdupois.