A CASE
OF AN
EXTRAORDINARY ENLARGEMENT
OF THE
SCROTUM,
WITH AN OPERATION SUCCESSFULLY PERFORMED FOR
ITS REMOVAL.
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COMMUNICATED BY
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THE disease which has long been familiar to Barbadoes until within a very few years, and almost exclusively confined to that island, and which has been perhaps with impropriety denominated elephantiasis, has of late spread with unexampled rapidity through the whole of the West Indies. It is more particularly prevalent amongst the Blacks, although a considerable number of the white population are sufferers from its attacks. The parts most commonly affected, are the inferior extremities, but the arms, penis, scrotum, and even the viscera are not unfrequently the seat of the disease.

The symptoms by which the elephantiasis is characterized both in its acute and chronic form, have been detailed with such great precision by various writers, that it supersedes the necessity of any further description in this place; my object being merely to relate a singular instance of this disease as occurring in the scrotum, which lately came under my observation. The enormous magnitude this part acquired, is, I believe, unprecedented in the records of medicine. It is not however merely on account of its singularity, that I have been induced to draw up the following history, but because I consider it a case of considerable practical importance: for however rare such cases may hitherto have been, they are at present by no means unfrequent, and their number seems to be increasing almost daily.

Montserrat, a negro, aged about 30, belonging to the estate of the late John Bourryau, esq. received, when a boy, a kick on the right testicle from a mule. The testicle swelled, but by the application of medicines it was soon reduced to its natural size. Some time after this, he first became subject to the rose (the name by which the elephantiasis is called throughout the islands,) which produced a permanent enlargement of both his legs. Some years elapsed before the scrotum became the seat of the disease, but from his ignorance of dates, I am only enabled to obtain the

following very imperfect history of the progress of his complaint. Five years ago the scrotum is said to have been somewhat larger than his two fists. Its increase afterwards was gradual and progressive, and did not incapacitate him from working, until within the last two years and a half. Since that time it has enlarged rapidly, and he has remained in almost total confinement, being unable to remove himself and burden from his habitation.

Although prepared by descriptions for the scene I was about to witness, yet it was not without sentiments of the most lively commiseration and astonishment, that I first viewed this singular production in October last. Language is inadequate to convey a satisfactory idea of the magnitude and appearance of this tumour, and all my efforts to procure a drawing of it proved unsuccessful.

On removing his petticoat there was exposed to view, a tumour of rather an oval form, seemingly suspended from, and greatly stretching the abdominal integuments and spermatic cords, reaching backwards to the verge of the anus, and descending to within an inch or two of the ground. It measured longitudinally from the symphysis pubis to its base 29 inches, circularly 43. The spermatic cords could be distinctly felt, somewhat enlarged, the penis was completely enveloped; the urine was discharged in a full stream and without

difficulty at an orifice situated nine inches below the pubis; on stretching this laterally, the extremity of the penis could be seen at the distance of about three inches; this canal was formed by an elongation and distention of the prepuce. The surface of the tumour was equal, smooth, with superficial veins; the superior part thinly interspersed with hair; the inferior scaly at times. The integuments felt extremely thickened, but were not of equal firmness, and retained for a time the impression of the finger. His appetite was good, his bowels regular, and his general health unimpaired. He informed me that when on his back in bed, and under the impression of lascivious ideas, he was subject to erections of the penis, at which times this member would project an inch or two at the orifice above mentioned; but that they were never terminated or attended by seminal emissions.

After carefully examining the scrotum I informed him, that in my opinion, no internal remedies or external local applications could possibly lessen or alleviate his disease; neither could any operation be performed short of removing the whole tumour, which would necessarily be attended with considerable hazard. He replied that life was become burdensome to him, that he would rather die than remain longer in his present situation, and that he was ready to submit to any

operation how great soever the risk. My friends Doctors William and Thomas Swanston, having done me the favour to visit him, and concurring in the opinion I had expressed, it was resolved that the operation should be performed; but the weather being extremely unfavourable, he was recommended to wait until it should become more cool and settled. On finding that there was a possibility of his being relieved, he became so importunate to have it done immediately, that with a view to quiet his great impatience, a large blister was applied on each side of the scrotum, and kept open by the unguent sabinæ; a seton was afterwards made in each side; but notwithstanding these discharged freely for nearly six weeks, no diminution of bulk was observable.

The weather being now mild, I performed the operation on Sunday, the 5th of December, in the presence of Doctors Swanstons and Caines, who very obligingly favoured me with their most valuable counsel and assistance. The only difficulty that seemed to occur was with regard to the possibility of saving the penis; with a view to effect this, an incision two or three inches in length was made, commencing from a little below the symphysis pubis; the penis was by this means exposed, and the extended præputium being divided, a flexible catheter was introduced into the bladder; all our efforts to accomplish this having

previously failed owing to the retrocession of the penis. The spermatic vessels of each side were next laid bare and secured by temporary ligatures passed round the cords. The incision was continued backwards to the verge of the anus, and the dissection carried upwards towards the penis. The tumour being removed, the spermatic arteries were secured separately, and the upper ligature slackened, but allowed to remain in case of need. The integuments were brought together by a few stitches and strips of adhesive plaster, and were sufficient to surround the root of the penis; so that this member was the only part that remained uncovered. The hæmorrhage during the operation was inconsiderable, (except from a branch of the left pudic) the precaution being afterwards used of passing a ligature round the larger arteries previous to dividing them. My patient recovered without experiencing the most trifling unpleasant symptom. The wounds in the groins and in perinæo, were firmly united at the end of three weeks, but the penis was not completely cicatrized before the beginning of April.

On examining the tumour after its removal, the testicles were found to occupy their natural position; the left one was about the size of a hen's egg; the tunica vaginalis of the right side contained three pints of water, and the testicle was considerably diminished. The right side of the

scrotum being opened, the integuments at the upper part were about two inches, nearer the base they increased to four inches and a half in thickness; a fluid oozed from its substance, and the cavity was filled with a gelatinous matter and fluid, which also became gelatinous on cooling. The tumour weighed 70lbs. There was nothing peculiar in its structure.

Early in February, Montserrat commenced taking Fowler's solution, with a view of reducing the enlargement of his legs. This remedy was tried at the suggestion of Dr. William Swanston, in whose hands its use has been attended with considerable advantage. Arsenic has been long employed in the East Indies for the cure of elephantiasis, (vide Asiatic Researches) and Montserrat appears to have derived benefit from it. His legs are somewhat less, and he says they feel slacker and much lighter.

In similar operations if the incision be made on each side of the penis, and the skin dissected inwards, perhaps a quantity sufficient to extend round the penis may be preserved. This would greatly accelerate the cure.

Having no instances of a like operation to direct our judgment, and ignorant in what state the testicles would be found, (for the absence of emissions seemed to indicate that they had become

useless) no attempt was made to preserve them. Besides this, the thickness of that part of the integuments which must have been left as a covering, appeared to forbid the hope of their readily uniting, and the consequent inflammation and swelling of the testicles, would have added greatly to the danger of tetanus. There may be cases however of a more favourable nature, where it may be thought advisable to save these glands. I have said that these enormous swellings are now very frequent, and are becoming more so every day. I have a patient on the adjoining estate, and there are several others in the island, in whom the scrotum is from one-half to two-thirds as large as in the case above related; and there are numerous instances of enlargement and thickening of the scrotum, which are no doubt the same disease in an incipient state. When yet small, I have found setons on each side useful in reducing the swelling, but I fear such diminution will be merely temporary.

Morgagni in letter 43, article 42, quotes some observations from Waltheius, in which the scrotum and penis are described to be so tumid, that the latter extended itself down to the knees, and the former below them; the thickness of each of these parts corresponding to this length. On examination, the skin was found to be three times thicker than natural, and the weight of the tumour amounted to near 50lbs. Morgagni received the

print of a similar case from Syracuse. There is also one of 60lbs. weight spoken of in the History of the Royal Academy of Sciences of Paris, for the year 1711. As I have not an opportunity of referring to these works, I am ignorant of the particulars of the cases, and of the mode of treatment that was adopted.

Mr. Corse describes the case of Paunchoo, an inhabitant of the East Indies, in the Second Volume of the Medical and Chirurgical Transactions, (with an engraving) in whom the scrotum reached to the ankles, and was 25 inches in length, and 38 in circumference. This, as well as those related by Morgagni, are instances of the same disease; but the present is the largest, and the only case, so far as I know, in which an operation was attempted; and I trust the success which has attended its performance, may induce medical gentlemen to propose, and patients in similar circumstances to submit to, a like operation, with the well grounded hope of experiencing a happy termination.