

**Account of a remarkable production, resembling a tail, which was attached to the extremity of the vertebral column of a man / by Arthur Jacob.**

**Contributors**

Jacob, Arthur, 1790-1874?  
Royal College of Surgeons of England

**Publication/Creation**

[Dublin] : [publisher not identified], [1827]

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/werrmadg>

**Provider**

Royal College of Surgeons

**License and attribution**

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by The Royal College of Surgeons of England. The original may be consulted at The Royal College of Surgeons of England. where the originals may be consulted. This work has been identified as being free of known restrictions under copyright law, including all related and neighbouring rights and is being made available under the Creative Commons, Public Domain Mark.

You can copy, modify, distribute and perform the work, even for commercial purposes, without asking permission.



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

## ACCOUNT

OF A

REMARKABLE PRODUCTION,  
RESEMBLING A TAIL,WHICH WAS ATTACHED TO THE EXTREMITY OF  
THE VERTEBRAL COLUMN OF A MAN.

BY ARTHUR JACOB, M. D.

&amp;c. &amp;c.

I AM indebted to my father for the specimen of remarkable monstrosity which forms the subject of the present notice. In the course of last summer a young man presented himself at the Queen's County Infirmary seeking relief, on account of a tumor which projected between the nates, and caused much inconvenience from its bulk, especially in the sitting posture. It had existed from birth, was about the size of the closed hand of a large man, and was situated upon the lower part of the sacrum, apparently involving the os coccygis. Upon its most convex part was an orifice through which the finger could be introduced, and passed round an irregular resisting body, which partly projected through this opening. The surface was covered by sound skin, furnished with a considerable quantity of hair. The operation of removing it was performed by my father. On dividing the external layer, it appeared that this was



merely a pouch of skin reflected inwardly and embracing a cylindrical resisting body nearly six inches long, and thicker than the thumb. This cylindrical body was doubled upon itself, as if so disposed in order to fit in the pouch ; it also was covered with true skin. This extraordinary production adhered firmly by one extremity to the spine, and upon attempting to detach it the connexion was found to be osseous ; the bone however was so spongy that it yielded to the knife. The superfluous skin having been removed, the lips of the wound were brought together, and it healed satisfactorily, leaving the patient free from distress on this account.

When the pouch was first divided, and the contained member fully displayed, its appearance was so characteristic, that no doubt was entertained of its being a real tail ; which has since caused no small degree of merriment. When the part came into my possession, I made a longitudinal section of it from end to end, and found that it was furnished throughout with a bony core or centre consisting of separate pieces, distinctly jointed to each other with perfect synovial capsules ; as represented in the annexed plate, (No. 15.)

However unwilling I may be to disappoint the hopes of those who have been in expectation of an "*homo ferus caudatus Hibernus*" to place beside the "*juvenis ferus ovinus Hibernus*" of the class *mammalia* order *Primates*, and genus, *Homo* of the



*Systema Naturæ* of Linnæus (cura Gmelin)\* I must say that I very much doubt whether the pretensions of this individual to such distinction be well founded.

That it resembled a tail in its external characters I admit, but dissection proves that the bones which occupy the centre bear no resemblance to *vertebræ*, but on the contrary that they are such as might belong to a man's great toe; consisting of a tarsal bone, (probably the internal cuneiform) a metatarsal and phalanges. It in fact appears to be an example of that description of monstrosity which has often been observed in other situations, a rudiment or portion of an additional limb or extremity. This one is however remarkable from its consisting of but one series of bones out of the five, as well as from the situation which it occupied.

Of supernumerary limbs or extremities attached to various parts of the body we have abundance

\* This variety of the human race has been established on the following notable relation of Nicolas Tulpius (*Observationes med. lib. iv. cap. x.*) headed *Juvenis balans*. "Allatus Amstelredamum, omniumque oculis expositus fuit Adolescens sedecim annorum qui in *Hiberniâ*, a parentibus forte devius, inter oves sylvestres, ab incunabulis altus, induerat quasi naturam ovillam; corpore pernici, perpete pede, vultu truci, carne durâ, cute exusta, artubus strictis, fronte ut obtusa, ac depressa, sic occipitio convexo, ac tuberoso, rudis, temerarius, imperterritus, et exors omnis humanitatis; cætera sanus, et optime valens, destitutus voce humana, balabat instar ovis, et aversatus cibum, potumque nobis usitatum, manducabat solum gramen, ac fænum, et quidem eo delectu, quo curiosissimæ oves."



of examples on record. I extract the following remarkable instances from Haller's Essay on monsters, (*opera minora*, T. iii. p. 50) "Puer cui tertium crus a dextro femore oriebatur, pendulum, mobile, absque rotula, digitis octonis, quorum duo medii majores essent. Puer tripes, pede superfluo, supra genu exeunte. Vitalis puella pede tertio ejusdem cum reliquis magnitudinis; in eo hallux bene factus, reliqui digiti imperfecti. Fetus crure tertio sub cute latente. Fetus cum crure ex hypogastrio prodeunte. Fetus capite nimis grandi, *pede ex natibus prodeunte*, absque tibia. Fetus *cum sacco cutaneo sub nate* in quo humerus, et digitus, et reliqui artus latere videntur." This last appears to have been an example similar to that which I have noticed.

The records of medical science are not destitute of examples of tail bearing men.\* In the *Miscellanea curiosa Academiae naturæ curiosorum*, (Anni 1690, p. 222) we have an account of an "*homo caudatus*" by Emanuel König, the subject was the son of a Doctor of laws, and his tail which was half a span long, grew directly down from the os coccygis, and was coiled toward the perinæum, causing much discomfort. Stephen Blancardus of Amsterdam, in a work which I have not seen, states that he had examined a man from whose

\* It is remarkable that these examples should have escaped the notice of Lord Monboddo, anxious as he was to prove the existence of *homines caudati*. The instances brought forward by him are evidently derived from fabulous sources.



sacrum a tail depended fully a span in length. In the same *Miscellanea curiosa*, (an. 1688) we have a communication from one Michael Lochner, "De puero caudato," which being very brief, and written in a merry vein, is I think entitled to credit. I therefore subjoin it without apology. "Puer annorum octo (nomine et loco ob certas rationes parco) nec pinguiarius nec carnarius, sed gracilis admodum, facieiue Hippocraticæ, parentibus concomitantibus opem meam obnixè implorat. Sciscitor morbum, heu! altum silentium! et pater et mater et gnatus mutus Hipparchion; quisque eorum

Erubuit stupuitque, omnesque verecundia motus  
Abstulit.

Insto interrogando, tandemque has silentii scaturigines et pudorem intempestivum cum denique removissem, e parentibus comperio inspectione opus esse. Subiit animum de ventre inspiciendo, ast illam inspectionem non efflagitabant quippe puerulus erat, sed alium locum, cujus in titulo nulla mentio, evolvunt, remque altioris indaginis, infimæ tamen subsellii esse referunt; remotis nempe caligis peccantis pueritiæ bifolium Calendarium (sic Barlæus stylo Gruteriano, salsé nimis nates pueri denominat) ostentant. Visui tunc propé hedram se offert excrescentia oblonga, cylindrica rigiducula, deorsum tamen intra clunes inflectenda, paululum mobilis, doloris expers, longitupine digiti medii, crassitie pollicis, ejusdem cum



*cute coloris, consistentiæ introrsum versus osseæ.*  
 Amputationem anxie desiderant, cum eam crumenimulga lotio-physica et fastuosa medicastra (quarum in Noride nostra tot reperibiles

— grues quot Strymonis unda

Excipet vel Phrygios Mæander olores,

suaserit. Me renuente amputationemque istam dissuadente cum nihil exinde calamitatis, excepto incommodo sessitationis, senserit, læti parentes, stipulata prius alti silentii fide cum Ascaniolo caudato recedunt.

I have been assured by a person of veracity who states the fact from actual observation, that he knows an individual who has a production or continuation from the os coccygis, which can be felt through the clothes, and causes inconvenience when the person sits ; and that it is generally believed that several members of the same family have a similar appendage. Whether all the examples to which I have alluded, resembled that which I have examined, I do not pretend to decide, but from the bony centre of Michael Lochner's specimen, I think it was probably of the same nature. Whatever doubts may be entertained respecting these productions, there can be none that this is the first instance where the doubtful member has been amputated, and the patient relieved from discomfort and reproach.

FINIS.















