

SUMMARY

Dr Thomas Hodgkin, from whom is derived the eponym of Hodgkin's Disease, was a pathologist at Guy's Hospital, London. He was also a humanitarian who championed the cause for liberty of oppressed people in the Middle East, Africa and America. In one of his philanthropic missions to the Middle East in 1857 he spent a week in Malta. He wrote a letter to a member of the Senate of the University of London urging closer relations between this University and that of Malta. He died in Jaffa in 1866. The first cases of Hodgkin's Disease in Malta were described in 1949.

INTRODUCTION

One of the features of the Victorian Age that induced people from the United Kingdom to travel to Palestine was the religious association which that land had with the Bible both as devotional literature and as a historical source, hence the emergence of a missionary zeal and a search for knowledge on the part of travellers from the United Kingdom at a time when the Bible and theological interests influenced numbers of British people of high social standing and wealth. Among these travellers were Sir Moses Montefiore and Dr Thomas Hodgkin. Since the early sixties I have paid visits to the Lazzaretto buildings in connection with my studies on the Quarantine System of the 19th century. My last visit there was in 1987 (1). While exploring the remains of one of the cemeteries there I noted an inscription on a tombstone erected to the memory of an Irish girl, Anne Flynn, by Sir Moses and his wife. Anne was their maid who had died of "pleurisy" at the Lazzaretto while undergoing quarantine there on 1st August 1839. My 1987 visit led me to embark on a quest for the identity and life style of Sir Moses Montefiore. I little thought that in tracing the footsteps of Montefiore I would encounter - albeit for a brief period - an equally outstanding visitor to our shores; perhaps more welcome because he was a medical man with a niche in the fabric of the history of medicine - none other in fact than Dr Thomas Hodgkin.

FAMOUS PHYSICIANS FROM GUY'S HOSPITAL

During the first half of the nineteenth century three outstanding physicians working at Guy's Hospital in London pinned their interests upon three specific and different diseases which still bear their names. They were Thomas Addison (1795-1860) who drew attention to an anaemia associated with bronzed skin and diseased suprarenal capsules (Addison's Disease); Richard Bright (1789-1858) whose name is associated with the description of renal disease with dropsy and albuminuria (Bright's Disease); and Thomas Hodgkin (1798-1866) from whom is derived the eponym Hodgkin's Disease characterised by anaemia, enlargement of the lymph nodes and spleen.

THOMAS HODGKIN

He was a physician working as a pathologist on the staff of Guy's Hospital (1825-37). He recorded the disease, later named after him, in a paper "on some morbid appearances of the absorbent glands and spleen" in 1832; but it was only in 1864 that Dr Samuel Wilks (1824-1911) pathologist at Guy's Hospital conferred upon the disease the present eponym of Hodgkin's Disease (2).

He was a Quaker, i.e. a member of the Society

of Friends devoted to peace principles and engaging in priestless religious meetings. He spent his life helping oppressed people of all sorts especially persecuted Jews. In fact he abandoned medicine in favour of philanthropic work travelling as companion to Sir Moses Montefiore.

SIR MOSES MONTEFIORE

Sir Moses Montefiore was a British Jewish merchant and philanthropist of Italian descent. After amassing a fortune he retired from business and dedicated himself to the service of the Jewish race in England and overseas. In 1837 he was knighted by Queen Victoria. In his travels through the Mediterranean in 1827, 1828, 1839, 1840 and 1857 he passed through Malta where he spent some periods in quarantine on Manoel Island (3). He intervened on behalf of the Jews in the Middle East and in Europe pleading with the Czar, the King of France and the Pope in the interests of his co-religionists. He died in England at the age of one hundred and one years in 1885.

MALTA VISIT 1857

On the 25th February 1857 Hodgkin, with Sir Moses and Lady Montefiore, left England for the Holy Land, travelling overland for part of the jour-

ney. They arrived in Malta from Marseilles on the steam ship *Orontes* on the 29th April 1857 (4). On landing in Malta, they were given a very friendly reception by Sir William Reid, the British Governor (1851-58). Although a man with a life-long military career, Reid "was well equipped with scientific knowledge". He was a Fellow of the Royal Society of London and very interested in promoting education and raising the standards of local agricultural pursuits (5). These interests explain why Reid was so keen in drawing the attention of Montefiore and Hodgkin to the school for young gardeners established in the gardens of St Antonio Palace, his summer residence at Attard; to his experiments on the rearing of silkworms on castor oil plants; and to his collection of agricultural implements obtained from America for updating Maltese Agriculture (6).

Montefiore and Hodgkin left Malta after a week on the 6th May on the P & O Liner *Indus* for Alexandria to continue their journey to Jaffa and Jerusalem (7).

THE UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

At the end of his visit to Malta, Hodgkin wrote on the 3 May 1857, to Sir James Clark who was a member of the Senate of London University urging closer connections with the University of Malta. We do not know what was the outcome of this plea as the minutes of the Senate of London University for 1857-58 fail to reveal any reference to Thomas Hodgkin or to the University of Malta. Perhaps Hodgkin's letter to Sir James Clark was a private one and Sir James Clark did not raise the matter in the Senate (8). The subject of Hodgkin's letter leads one to believe that during his visit to Malta he had occasion to enquire into the system of studies of our Medical School which had undergone several reforms in the early decades of the 19th century thanks to which on the 14th August 1839 the Senate of London University resolved to admit candidates from Malta's Medical School for its medical degree (9).

That Hodgkin was particularly concerned with the development of medical education is shown by his writings on the subject. He wrote an essay on medical education in Great Britain in 1838; he was a member of the Senate of London University from its foundation until his death; he gave the first systematic lectures in pathology in the United Kingdom; and founded the Pathological Museum at Guy's Hospital and published its catalogue in 1829 (10). With such academic background it is not surprising that Hodgkin should intercede on behalf of the Malta medical School. If his letter to Sir James Clark ever comes to light it would secure Hodgkin a lasting place in the medical annals of Malta.

VISIT TO MOROCCO

Hodgkin accompanied Montefiore to Morocco in 1863 when Montefiore went there to intercede for the cause of the Jews. They left Dover on November 16 and travelled overland to Gibraltar. The British navy obliged the party by sending a ship, *HMS Magicienne*, from Malta to carry them in December 1863 from Gibraltar to Mogador from where, by crossing the Atlas desert, they arrived at Morocco City (Marrakesh) on 26 January 1864 (11). The sultan heard their pleas and promised the protection of the law to the Jews in his domain.

Hodgkin wrote an account of this voyage under the title of *Narrative of a Journey to Morocco* in 1863 and 1864 which was published after his death (London, 1866). He described incidents of travel, the scenery and the geological features of the country but there is very little about the medical aspects of the region beyond some observations about ophthalmia, an inflammatory condition of the eyes - very likely trachoma - then very common in various areas of the Mediterranean and North Africa.

It is of interest to note that Malta's impact of 1857 on Hodgkin's mind had not yet faded from his memory for in his narrative he refers to an unnamed Maltese savant in the area of Marrakesh whom he was invited to meet but was unable to do so. Who was this Maltese man of learning? (12). And in which area of culture did he distinguish himself? If this man is ever identified we might add another facet of Hodgkin's connection with Malta.

FINAL JOURNEY

Hodgkin's final journey to the Middle East was to Jaffa where he died of "dysentery" on 5th August 1866 (13). A memorial was erected over his grave by Sir Moses Montefiore. In an obituary notice Hodgkin was described by the *British Medical Journal* (14) as "one of the pioneers of pathology in Great Britain and an accomplished and observant physician" and "one who loved his fellow men". As to his philanthropy the *Guy's Hospital Gazette* said: "He never had a thought that any human being in distress, to whatever nation he might belong, was strange or foreign to him" (15).

HODGKIN'S DISEASE IN MALTA

It has been remarked that the treatment of Hodgkin's Disease with chemotherapy is one of the successes of oncology during the past three decades and that Hodgkin's Disease was the first adult solid tumour to yield to combination chemotherapy (16).

The first cases that were treated in Malta by

chemotherapy (Nitrogen Mustard Hydrochloride) were recorded in 1949 by Dr A Lanfranco, then Assistant Physician to the late Professor J E Debono, Senior Physician at St Luke's Hospital. Lanfranco found that chemotherapy had a definite place as a palliative measure in this disease (17).

In 1984 Safras Ali and R. Borg from the Department of Pathology of St. Luke's Hospital published a study on Malignant Lymphomas in which they discussed the incidence, prevalence and histological types of Hodgkin's Lymphoma as observed in Malta (18).

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