Neurological Vignette

Pott’s Spinal Caries: Pott’s Paraplegia

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Percivall Pott (1714–1788), surgeon to St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, is generally credited with the first detailed account of spinal tuberculosis. He described in 1779 [1] and in 1782 [2] (fig. 1) a triad of paravertebral abscess associated with kyphosis and paraplegia.

References
1 Pott P: Remarks on that kind of palsy of the lower limb which is frequently found to accompany a curvature of the spine – London, 1779; in Medical Classics. Williams & Wilkins, Baltimore, 1936, vol 1, pp 271–323.

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Fig. 1. Pott’s description of paraplegia in 1782 (above) and 1779 (below); Percivall Pott.