

OUR BODILY FRAME

amount of anatomical knowledge two thousand years before Christ, or even earlier. We do not, however, find more exact observations, founded on the dissection of mammals, and applied, by analogy, to the human frame, until we come to the Greek scientists of the sixth and fifth centuries before Christ—Empedocles (of Agrigentum) and Democritus (of Abdera), and especially the most famous physician of classic antiquity, Hippocrates (of Cos). It was from these and other sources that the great Aristotle, the renowned "father of natural history," equally comprehensive as investigator and philosopher, derived his first knowledge. After him only one anatomist of any consequence is found in antiquity, the Greek physician Claudius Galenus (of Pergamus), who developed a wealthy practice in Rome in the second century after Christ, under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. All these ancient anatomists acquired their knowledge, as a rule, not by the dissection of the human body itself—which was then sternly forbidden—but by a study of the bodies of the animals which most closely resembled man, especially the apes; they were all, indeed, comparative anatomists.

The triumph of Christianity and its mystic theories meant retrogression to anatomy, as it did to all the other sciences. The popes were resolved above all things to detain humanity in ignorance; they rightly deemed a knowledge of the human organism to be a dangerous source of enlightenment as to our true nature. During the long period of thirteen centuries the writings of Galen were almost the only source of human anatomy, just as the works of Aristotle were for the whole of natural history. It was not until the sixteenth century, when the spiritual tyranny of the papacy was broken by the Reformation, and the geocentric theory, so in-