

Vesalius also studied under Johann Winther, the well-known anatomist who first accurately described the pancreas, and was for his numerous scientific acquirements ennobled by Charles V. Whilst in Paris, the war between Francis and Charles V. broke out, so Vesalius went to the low countries and served as physician and surgeon from 1535 to 1537. At the end of the latter year he travelled to Italy, and was made professor of anatomy at Padua at the age of 24. Here he remained till 1543. Whilst professor at Padua he published his great work (1542). In 1544 Charles V. appointed him chief-physician to the Court, and when that prince abdicated in 1555, Vesalius continued in the same position under Philip II. It was here he established his reputation and passed the most brilliant portion of his life. In 1564 there died under his care a Spanish nobleman, and not knowing the cause of death, he asked permission of the relatives to make a post-mortem examination; this was granted him, and on opening the body it is said that some of his assistants perceived that the heart was still beating. The patient's friends were immediately informed, and being naturally indignant at the circumstance, denounced Vesalius to the Inquisition. He was tried and condemned to death by this tribunal, but the king interfered and would not allow the sentence to be carried out, and Vesalius was ordered to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to atone for his supposed crime. Whilst passing through Venice he was appointed to the chair of anatomy at Padua, vacant by the death of Fallopius. He accepted the appointment, but had to complete his pilgrimage before entering on his duties. But, alas! his evil destiny still pursued him, and he never more set his foot on Italian soil, for on his return from Palestine, the vessel in which he sailed was wrecked on the island of Zante. Vesalius escaped to land, but died miserably soon after from hunger and exhaustion in the 50th year of his age (1564). Thus perished one of the greatest anatomists the world has ever known; he must ever excite our respect by his extensive knowledge and wonderful powers of observation. Considering the crude state of anatomy when Vesalius appeared upon the scene, and the perfection at which it had arrived when