

nent physicians. Among these were two who did more than any previous individuals to advance the science of anatomy. These men were Erasistratus and Herophilus. They both wrote large works on anatomy, which are, unfortunately, lost, but from which Galen, Oribasius, and others quote extensively. Herophilus and Erasistratus were probably the first who ever dissected the human body, for Philadelphus and Eurgetes gave orders that the bodies of all criminals should be handed over to the School of Anatomy for dissection. Thus at this early period, when the dissection of a human body was looked upon with horror and as an act of desecration, the enlightened and far-sighted Ptolemics, in spite of vulgar prejudices and religious scruples, enabled the School of Medicine of Alexandria to make a great stride forwards in learning, knowledge and reputation. It is said that Herophilus dissected 700 bodies, and that both he and Erasistratus made a common practice of opening living bodies in order to discover the origin of life. Tertullian, a learned father of the Church, who lived at the end of the second century, charges Herophilus with this crime; he says, "Herophilus, that physician, or rather butcher, who dissected 600 men in order to find out nature, who hated man in order to learn the structure of his frame, could not by these means come to a more perfect knowledge of his internal structure, since death produces a great change in all parts so as to render the appearance after death different from what it was before, especially since they did not die a natural death, but expired amidst all the agonies to which the curiosity of the anatomist was pleased to subject them." Celsus, who lived about 20 B.C., also says that Herophilus and Erasistratus vivisected human beings; he mentions it incidentally, as if it were a well-known fact, and does not appear at all shocked at such a proceeding. It is very probable that these anatomists did occasionally vivisection a criminal, since human life in those days was considered of little value, and the people were accustomed to see criminals cruelly tortured before being put to death, so that *vivisection* would, perhaps, be regarded with less horror than *dissection* of a dead body. It is the custom of historians to attribute these charges against Herophilus and Erasistratus