

CANADA

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SKETCH OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF ANATOMY.*

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The origin of anatomy, like that of many other sciences, is lost in the mists of ages. The embalmers among the Egyptians must have had some rude knowledge of the human frame acquired in their process of preserving the dead, but, as they belonged to the lowest class, and were abhorred and despised on account of their occupation, what rough knowledge they may have got concerning the arrangement of the internal organs was kept secret, and so not used for the general good of the community.

It has been asserted by some that the Greeks of the time of Homer were well acquainted with anatomy, and that Homer, in describing wounds, showed an accurate knowledge of the structure of the human frame; but the fact is, that the terms used by Homer were then the common ones employed by the people, and had no exact scientific significance. In later times these same terms were used by all anatomists in special treatises on the subject, and conveyed a certain definite meaning; thus Homer's knowledge appeared much greater than it really was. Eusebius states that Athotis, a traditionary monarch of Egypt, wrote several treatises on anatomy. Hamilton, who wrote a

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