

13th and 14th centuries, when in Italy the glimmer of awakening learning became again visible, Galen was still the court of last resort in matters medical; and Mondinus and Carpi, the first two men who publicly attempted human dissection confined their attention to demonstrating Galen's doctrines.

But in the early years of the 16th century there came the Moses who was to lead the people out of their bondage to tradition into the freedom of independent investigation. He was not primarily a physiologist, but an anatomist.

Andreas Vesalius, a Belgian, who at the age of 28 issued from the printing press at Basle his epoch making work "*De Fabrica Humanis Corporis*" which is not only the foundation of modern scientific anatomy, but, in many points, remains to-day uncontradicted and unimproved.

Vesalius had a contract of sufficient magnitude on his hands to point out Galen's mistakes in structure, and to convince men of these on the evidence of their own eyesight, so that he made few attempts at interpreting functions and in the main was content to allow Galen's explanations to continue. But here and there he cannot refrain from a sarcastic comment. Galen's doctrine of the passage of blood through the interventricular septum he treats thus: "The septum of the ventricles, composed, as I have said, of the thickest substance of the heart abounds on both sides with little pits impressed in it. Of these pits, none, so far at least as can be seen by the senses, penetrate through from the right to the left ventricle, so that we are driven to wonder at the handiwork of the Almighty by means of which blood sweats from the right into the left ventricle through passages that escape human vision."

Vesalius' contribution to the knowledge of the circulation was the clearing away of the cobwebs of authority and tradition around the structure of the body, and in this way he opened the door through which, nearly a century later, Harvey would pass in and demonstrate the truths concerning function.

Between these two men there came in Italy certain others, each advancing knowledge a little farther. One of these, Realdo Columbus, a pupil of Vesalius though a vain and in many ways an ignorant man, described probably for the first time correctly, the pulmonary circulation in a book published in 1559, there stating that the pulmonary veins carry not air but blood from the lungs to the heart and that it is in the lungs and not in the heart that the blood gets its bright red colour.

Some, however, claim that Columbus' discovery was not his at all, but was copied from Servetus, of whom, as one of the most interesting characters, in the history of medicine, we might say a few words.