

VI. *An Account of a Book entituled, Osteographia, or, the Anatomy of the Bones, By William Cheselden, Surgeon to her Majesty, F. R. S. Surgeon to St. Thomas's Hospital, and Member of the Royal Academy of Surgery at Paris. By John Belchier, Surgeon, F. R. S.*

FOR the Frontispiece to the Book our Author has made choice of a Story very suitable to a Work of this Kind, which is a Description that *Galen*, in *Lib. 1. Cap. 2. de Anatomicis Administrationibus*, relates of a Robber that was killed on a Mountain by a Traveller, whom he attack'd, and whose Body no one cared to have buried, but were rather glad that so wicked a Man should become a Prey to the Vultures. Two Days after *Galen* went to see this Body, and found the Bones picked as clean as if prepared for the Instruction of Students.

This Opportunity he mentions as a Piece of good Fortune, because, in those Days, it was very rare to meet with a Skeleton, by what he observes to the young Physicians in the same Book, that he used to examine Bones which he found in Graves, and in the Ruins of Monuments; and once he met with a Body, which, by the over-flowing of a River, was wash'd out of a Sepulchre that was slightly built on the Bank of the said River; the Flesh being destroy'd, the Bones were left entire.

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He likewise takes notice, that there was a Skeleton in the Physick-School at *Alexandria*, which he thought would amply compensate the Trouble of any one to go on Purpose to study.

The Figure representing *Galen* contemplating the Skeleton, is taken from a Philosopher of *Salvator Rosa*.

At the Bottom of the Title-Page he has given a Print of a *Camera Obscura*, which he mentions in his Preface to have contriv'd and drawn all his Bones by, and without which Assistance (notwithstanding he employ'd the greatest Artists in their way) he found it impossible to give a true and perfect Representation of them, there being so much Difficulty to express the Outlines of Bones in their different Attitudes.

This occasion'd my looking into *Vesalius's* Book of Anatomy more carefully than I had done before, whose Figures have hitherto been esteem'd the most beautiful of their Kind, and are perform'd in so exquisite a Taste, that they have usually been taken for *Titian's*, and always consider'd as a Study for Painters.

Yet whoever will give himself the Trouble to measure his Bones with real ones, will find many egregious Errors, which would take up too much room here to particularize; but upon the whole I find there is no kind of Proportion kept, and that his Bones in general are between one Third and Fourth Parts too short for their Breadth: And tho' his three Skeletons have been so remarkably famous, that several Anatomical Writers have copied after them, yet when carefully examined, it will be very easy to discover many Imperfections in them, though, all together, they strike the Eye wonderfully.

This *Camera* he mentions not only as a great Help to him, by giving true Proportions and Outlines, but likewise for a more speedy dispatch ; doing more this way in one Day, than could possibly be done without in several.

It is a long square Tube set upon two Tressels (as represented in the Print before his Book) whose Inside is made black, to prevent the Reflection of Light ; towards that End which is nearest the Object, is a convex Glass placed in a sliding Frame, thro' which the Rays passing from the Object, converge and meet in a Focus upon the Table-Glass placed near the other End, analagous to the CrySTALLINE Humour and *Retina* in the Eye.

The Object here represented is the Trunk of a Skeleton fix'd to a Painter's Ezel, which being inverted, appears upright on the Table-Glass, on the rough Side of which the Artist delineates with a Pencil, which afterwards he traces off on Paper. The Convex Glass placed in the sliding Frame being moved backward or forward, makes the Object bigger or less, keeping its due Proportions.

This *Camera* has several Advantages beyond the common one ; for in this, Objects as big as the Life may be taken, or reduced gradually to any Scale ; whereas the other only diminishes, and that in a very great Degree.

In this Work the gradual Increase of the Bones is described, even from the first Stages of Ossification, to that of an Adult, when every Bone is represented as large as the Life in different Attitudes ; as likewise most of the Bones saw'd through the Middle, to shew their internal Texture : And in order to shew
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how they are articulated to each other, there are several Plates wherein they are reduced to lesser Scales, and again reduced, to give a View of them all united together in Representations of six different Skeletons, where the Difference of the Growth of the Bones is very apparent, as likewise the different Shapes of the Male and Female Bones. There are likewise several Plates of Bones prepared on Purpose to shew the Ligaments which unite them together, as also the Cartilages at their Ends, besides a great Variety of most curious and remarkable diseased Bones.

And at the Front and Close of every Chapter, as likewise the Blank Pages, are Skeletons of the most remarkable Animals of their kind, which are not only very ornamental, but even very useful; most of them describing the OEconomy of the different Species of Animals.

The Author in his Treatise gives a general Description of the whole Work, tho' not so minutely as some might expect, he thinking it useles to give long Descriptions in a Work of this Kind, one View of such Prints shewing more than the fullest Description can possibly do; for which reason, in the several Chapters, the mechanical Contrivances of the Bones are rather treated of than their Shapes.

Each Book has a double Set of Prints, one before they are letter'd, to shew them in their full Perfection; and the other with Letters, answering to their Descriptions.

The Advantage of a Set of Prints before they are letter'd, will readily be perceiv'd, when compared with the other: And how much these Figures excel any others of their kind, will appear at the first View,
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they being executed in so free and open a Stile, and expressed with so much Spirit, and (what is very rare) without the least kind of Exaggeration.

At the End of his Preface he takes notice, that when he began this Work, he proposed to go through the whole System of Anatomy, adorn'd with the Comparative, in three Volumes in this manner ; the farther Prosecution of which Design he has now entirely laid aside, it requiring so much Leisure, as renders him incapable of the Performance ; and the vast Expence attending such a Work (besides other Inconveniencies) will, I doubt, prevent the Execution of it by any Body else, especially in so grand a manner, this being undoubtedly the most magnificent Work of the kind now extant.

F I N I S.