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THE  
LONDON MEDICAL REVIEW  
AND  
MAGAZINE;

BY A  
*SOCIETY OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS.*

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VOLUME THE THIRD:  
INCLUDING FOUR MONTHLY NUMBERS,  
FROM MARCH TO JUNE 1800.

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*Solus veritatis amor, et communis utilitatis studium, ad has partes  
suscipiendas impulerunt. BAGLIVI Oper. in Præf.*

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**London:**

PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY,

BY S. GOSNELL, LITTLE QUEEN STREET, HOLBORN.

Published by H. D. SYMONDS, Pater-noster Row; VERNOR and HOOD, Poultry;  
CUTHELL, Middle Row, Holborn; RICHARDSON, Royal Exchange;  
MURRAY and HIGHLEY, Fleet Street; CALLOW, Crown Court,  
Soho; and Cox, St. Thomas's Street, Southwark.

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VOL. III. N° XIV. APRIL MDCCC.

ANALYSIS OF BOOKS.

ART. I. *Ausführliche Darstellung des Darwinschen Systems, &c.*  
i. e. *Complete View of Darwin's System of the Practice of*  
*Physic, together with critical Remarks on the same.* By  
DR. CHRISTOPHER GIRTANNER. Vol. I. Octavo. 599  
pages. ROSENBUSCH, Goettingen. 1799.

THE title of this work does not convey a complete idea of its contents. It is not only a view of Dr. D.'s practical System, but of all his speculations in physiology and pathology, and we may also add, in physics. It contains not only the Zoonomia, but a great number of the opinions and observations of Dr. D. which are scattered in other works and essays. Thus we here meet with his theory of the electric eel; his ideas of light and colours; his hypothesis concerning heat; his opinions concerning winds; and his remarks on the analogy between poetry, painting, and music, &c.

The plan which Dr. Girtanner has adopted for arranging

VOL. III. N° XIV.

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Art. 11. *On the bodily Conformation and mental Capacity of Negroes.* By Professor BLUMENBACH.

**D**URING a tour which I made through Switzerland, I saw in the picture-gallery at Pommersfeld four negro heads by Vandyk, two of which in particular had the lines of the face so regular, that the features seemed very little different from the European. At that time, as I had never had an opportunity of acquiring a proper knowledge respecting the form of the negro head and cranium, by studying nature, and as I remembered that Professor Camper, in a dissertation read in the Academy of Painting at Amsterdam, had mentioned that the greater part of the most eminent painters, and especially Rubens, Vandyk, and Jordaens, when they painted Moors, copied from Europeans whose faces had been blackened for that purpose, I ascribed the European look of the above negro heads to this common fault. Some months after, however, I had an opportunity of convincing myself that there are real negroes whose features correspond very nearly with those of the Europeans, and that the above heads in the gallery of Pommersfeld might be a true representation of nature.

Going to pay a visit at Yverdun to the two brothers Treytorrens, one of whom, the Chevalier, had been thirty-five years in the French service, particularly at St. Domingo; and the other, by means of the opportunities which his brother enjoyed, had a collection of natural curiosities that contained many rare articles. When I entered the court of their elegant habitation, which is situated on the road to Goumoens, I saw no person to shew me into the house, except a woman of an agreeable figure, who was standing with her back towards me. When she turned round to give me an answer, I was much surprised to find that she was a female negro, whose face perfectly corresponded with her figure, and fully justified the fidelity of likeness in Vandyk's negro heads, which I had seen at



Pommersfeld. All the features of her face, even the nose and lips, the latter of which were a little thick, though not so as to be disagreeable, had they been covered with a white skin, must have excited universal admiration. At the same time she was not only exceedingly lively, and possessed a sound understanding, but, as I afterwards learnt, was extremely well informed and expert in the obstetric art. The handsome, pretty negress of Yverdun is celebrated far and near as the best midwife in the Italian part of Switzerland. I was informed by her master, the Chevalier, who has in his service also a negro man as elegantly formed as a statue, that she was a creole from St. Domingo; that both her parents were natives of Congo, but not so black as the negroes of Senegal.

Since that period I have had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with many negroes, and have procured for my collection a great many anatomical preparations from negro bodies, which, together with what I have read in different voyages, tend more and more to convince me of the truth of the two following propositions:

1. That between one negro and another there is as much (if not more) difference in the colour, and particularly in the lineaments of the face, as between many real negroes and other varieties of the human species.

2. That the negroes, in regard to their mental faculties and capacity, are not inferior to the rest of the human race.

The three negro skulls, which I have now before me, afford, by the very striking gradation with which the lineaments pass from the one to the other, a very evident proof of the first proposition. One of them, which Mr. Michaelis was so good as to bring me from New York, and of which I have given an accurate description in another place, is distinguished by such a projecting upper jaw-bone, that, if the same peculiarity belonged to all negroes, one might be tempted to suppose that they had another first parent than

Adam.



Adam. On the other hand, the lineaments of the third have so little of the exotic form, and are so different from the first, that if I had not dissected the whole head perfectly entire, and just as it was when cut from the body, I should be in doubt whether I ought to consider it as having actually belonged to a real negro. The second holds a mean rank between both, and in its whole form has a great likeness to the head of the Abyssinian Abbas Gregorius, a good engraving of which by Heiss, in 1691, from a painting by Von Sand, I have now before me, and which not only proves in general the close affinity of the Abyssinians with the negroes, but approaches much nearer to the ugly negroes, to speak according to the European ideas of beauty, than the well-formed negress of Yverdun, or the handsome young negro whose head I dissected, as before mentioned, or than a thousand others whose features are little different from those of the Europeans. What I have here said is indeed nothing else than a confirmation of a truth long known, which has been already remarked by unprejudiced travellers, as will appear by the following quotations. Le Maire, in his *Voyage to Cape Verd, Senegal, and Gambia*, says: "Blackness excepted, there are female negroes as well made as our ladies in Europe." Leguat, in his well-known *Voyages*, tells us, that he found at Batavia several very pretty negresses, whose faces had the perfect European form. Adanson, in his *Account of Senegal*, speaking of the female negroes there, has the following passage: "The women are almost as tall as the men, and equally well made. Their skin is remarkably fine and soft, their eyes are black and open, the mouth and lips small, and the features are well proportioned. Some of them are perfect beauties. They are exceedingly lively, and have an easy, free air, that is highly agreeable." Ulloa, in his *Noticias Americanas*, observes, that some of the negroes have thick projecting lips, a flat nose, eyes deeply sunk in the sockets, which in general are called *gertudos*, and wool instead

of



of hair. He then adds: "Others, whose colour is equally black, have features perfectly like those of the whites, particularly in regard to the nose and the eyes, and smooth but thick hair."

The testimonies and examples which serve to prove the truth of the second proposition, respecting the mental faculties, natural talents and ingenuity of the negroes, are equally numerous and incontrovertible. Their astonishing memories, their great activity, and their acuteness in trade, particularly with gold-dust, against which the most experienced European merchant cannot be too much on his guard, are all circumstances so well known, that it is not necessary to enlarge on them. The great aptitude of the slaves for learning every kind of nice handicraft is equally well known; and the case is the same in regard to their musical talents, as we have instances of negroes playing the violin in so masterly a manner, that they have gained as much money as enabled them to purchase their liberty.

Of the poetical genius of the negroes, instances are known among both sexes. A female negro, who was a poetess, is mentioned by Haller; and a specimen of the Latin poetry of Francis Williams, a negro, may be found in the History of Jamaica. The interesting letters of Ignatius Sancho, a negro, are well known; and the two following instances will serve as a farther proof of the capacity and talents of our black brethren, in regard to literature and science. The Protestant clergyman J. J. Eliza Capitein was a negro; a man of considerable learning, and a great orator. I have in my possession an excellent print of him engraved by Tanjé, after P. Vandyk. Our worthy professor Hollman, when he was at Wittemberg, conferred the degree of Doctor of Philosophy on a negro who had shewn himself to advantage, not only as a writer, but as a teacher, and who afterwards came to Berlin as a counsellor of state to his Prussian Majesty. I have now before me two treatises written by him, one of which in particular



ticular displays extensive and well-digested reading of the best physiological works of the time. Of the uncommon knowledge which many negroes have had in the practice of medicine, very favourable testimony has been given by Boerhaave and De Haen, who were certainly competent judges; and the sound skill and delicate expertness of the Yverdun accoucheuse are, as already said, celebrated throughout the whole neighbourhood.

To conclude, the Academy of Sciences at Paris had among the number of its correspondents M. Lislet, a negro in the Isle of France, who excelled in making accurate meteorological observations. On the other hand, whole provinces of Europe might, in my opinion, be named, from which it would be difficult to produce at present virtuosos, poets, philosophers, and correspondents of a learned academy.

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Art. 12. *Transcript of an official Account of the last Illness and medical Treatment of General Washington.* By Doctors JAMES CRAIK and ELISHA C. DICK.

“SOME time in the night of Friday the 13th of December, having been exposed to a rain on the preceding day, General Washington was attacked with an inflammatory affection of the upper part of the windpipe, called in technical language *cynanche trachealis*. The disease commenced with a violent ague, accompanied with some pain in the upper and fore part of the throat, a sense of stricture in the same part, a cough, and a difficult rather than a painful deglutition, which were soon succeeded by fever and a quick and laborious respiration. The necessity of blood-letting suggesting itself to the General, he procured a bleeder in the neighbourhood, who took from his arm in the night twelve or fourteen ounces of blood: he would not by any means be prevailed on by the family to send for the attending physician till the following morning, who arrived at Mount Vernon at about 11 o'clock on Saturday.

Dis-