

A curious case of a lusus naturae / by Dr Knox ; communicated to Dr Duncan by Matthias Gahagan.

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Publication/Creation

[Edinburgh] : [publisher not identified], 1791.

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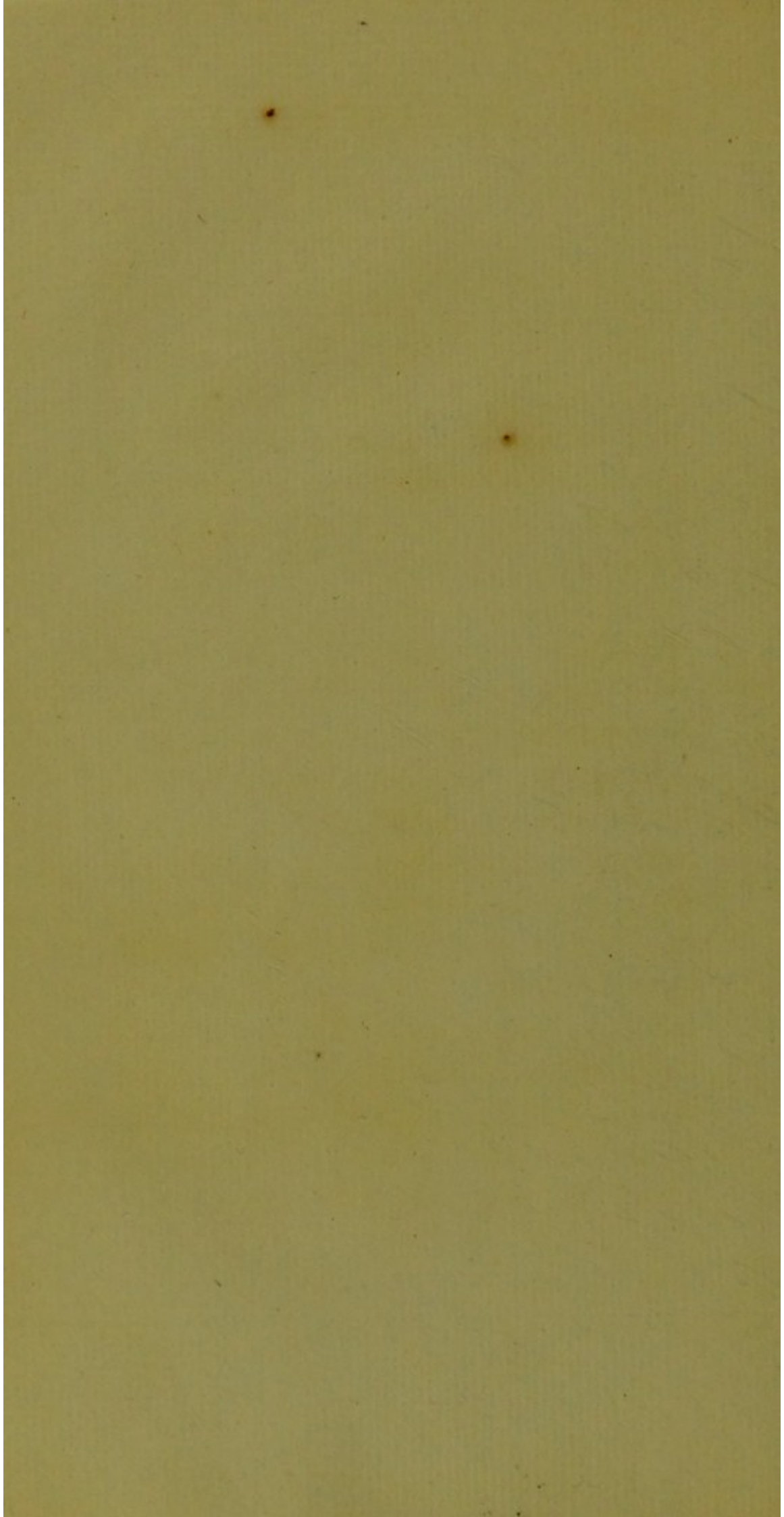
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VIII.

A curious Case of a Lusus Naturæ, By Dr Knox, of the Island of Tortola. Communicated to Dr Duncan by Dr Matthias Gabagan of Grenada.

EARLY in the morning of the 20th of July 1789, I received notice, (along with some other gentlemen of the Faculty), informing me, that a negro woman had just before been delivered of an infant, of a very extraordinary and uncommon appearance, and requesting that I would attend and examine it. On view, it appeared to be a monstrous production ; and as, at that time, the public curiosity was much excited, and the accounts which have been since circulated, of its figure and appearances, are in general erroneous, it may not be improper to inform the public, of the actual state of this Lusus Naturæ, as it

appeared on an external view, and on dissection.

The external view exhibited an appearance, which, to one unacquainted with productions of this nature, was truly extraordinary. It had two heads, perfectly well formed, covered with very black hair, in greater quantity than is usual with infants at the time of birth. The features of the two faces were regular; they had an exact resemblance of each other; and, had it not been, that the singular circumstance of a double head conveyed a horrid idea, the two faces might have been considered as pleasing ones. Behind the two heads, the first object which presented itself, was a double arm, formed by what may be considered as a junction of the left arm of one foetus, with the right of the other. They were firmly united from the articulation at the shoulder to the elbow, but had each a distinct humeral bone, both of which were articulated to a concavity of the scapulæ, united so as to form an appearance of one shoulder. These arms, (or this double arm), were extended and erect, so as to appear over the heads; and from the elbow to the extremities

tremities of the fingers, they were separate, distinct, and well formed. Two arms appeared, which were perfect in every respect. The breast was very broad, and a little indented in the middle; from thence downwards little difference was to be perceived in the figure of the parts, from those of a well-formed new-born infant. The lower extremities were single, and perfect in appearance; and there was a single funis.

The appearances on dissection were not less extraordinary, than those exhibited on an external view. On removing the integuments, one sternum only was discovered, and which had no other uncommon appearance, than that it was much broader than usual, was indented in the middle, and wanted the xiphoid cartilage. It was articulated on each side by the intervention of the cartilages to the ribs, which were perfect in number, and sent off from two spines. These spines were separate and distinct from their origin at the neck, to their extremities, and did not terminate in any thing like an os sacrum or coccygis, both of which were entirely wanting.

The sternum being removed, on the first view of the contents of the thorax, there seemed to be only the viscera of an individual; but, on opening the pericardium, which was single, it was found to contain two hearts, one of them of a proper form and size, having its auricles, ventricles, and vessels, in a perfect state; the other smaller and imperfect; its arterial vessels were small and contracted, and the left auricle and pulmonary vein were wanting. It was at first conceived, that the lungs consisted only of one pair, as each lobe had the pulmonary artery from a distinct heart; but, upon a further examination, two other lobes were discovered, situated under the first; they were small, compressed, and in a very imperfect state, and appeared to want the proper vessels.

On opening the cavity of the abdomen, the first object which presented itself, was a liver of a very uncommon size and shape, stretching from side to side, so as to fill both the hypochondria. It appeared to be double, possessing two gall bladders, and two sets of biliary vessels. Under the liver, were found two
distinct

distinct stomachs, situated in a concavity of the liver, on each side. From each stomach proceeded a distinct duodenum, into each of which the ductus communis on each side opened itself, in the usual manner. The intestines were double and distinct, and united by a separate mesentery to each spine. They continued in this state throughout the duodenum, jejunum, and more than two thirds of the ilium; they then united. In their progress an inch or two further, they seemed only simply to adhere, and then, suddenly inosculating, they became one gut, and continued in that state till the rectum terminated in the anus. There were two spleens, one situated under each stomach; the omentum was small and shrivelled, and it could not be discovered if it was originally double. The kidneys were double; one pair were perfect; each had its ureter, which opened, in the usual manner, into the bladder; the other pair were small, compressed, and imperfect, the ureters being wanting. The bladder was single, and in every respect perfect. The pelvis in which the bladder, &c. were placed,

was formed by an union of the two spines at the last two vertebræ, and the ossa innominata. The pubis was small, and not perfectly formed; and the os sacrum and coccygis, as has been already observed, were wanting. On a further examination, it was discovered, that each trachea was affixed to a distinct lobe of the lungs, and each œsophagus opened in a distinct stomach. This creature had the genital parts of an individual female.

The throng of people whom curiosity had brought to view this production, rendered a more minute inspection impracticable; but the appearances already described, were the principal which were observed, or which it is necessary to mention. To enter into a general consideration of the subject of monsters, and the controversies which have agitated the learned with respect to their origin, would, on the present occasion, be superfluous, nor could it convey any new information to professional men, for whom this history is principally intended. It will therefore suffice to observe, that cases of this nature are by no means new, or very uncommon.

Many

Many are related in the Philosophical transactions, and memoirs of the learned Societies in Europe; and the subject has been accurately investigated by many medical and anatomical writers, and particularly by the learned Morgagni, in his excellent work de Sedibus et Causis Morborum.

IX.

