Observations on equivocal generation: prepared as evidence in a suit for slander / By Thomas W. Blatchford.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

EQUIVOCAL GENERATION:

PREPARED AS

EVIDENCE IN A SUIT FOR SLANDER.

BY THOMAS W. BLATCHFORD, M. D.

ALBANY:

PRINTED BY J. MUNSELL.

1844.

OBSERVATIONS.

In 1836 I was subpœnaed as a witness in a case of slander brought by Lavinia Kennedy against Betsey Gifford, and was requested by defendant's counsel, Messrs. Buel and Stevens, to prepare written testimony upon the question, "Is it possible for a woman to become pregnant by a dog, and to bring forth pups or any other issue as the result of such unnatural intercourse?"* After proving the slander, the prosecution rested, and the defence offered to prove the impossibility of issue from the connexion contemplated in the charge, and upon the plaintiff's counsel conceding the fact, the witnesses were all discharged without testifying. Several gentlemen of both the medical and legal professions have expressed a desire that the testimony thus prepared should in some way receive a more permanent form and a more extensive circulation than it can have while in manuscript, and especially as the popular sentiment is notoriously adverse to the position taken. I should also mention, that the Rensselaer County Medical Society, to which it was submitted two years since, requested a copy for publication. These considerations, and others which I might mention, induce me to offer it to the State Medical Society, to dispose of as the Society shall see fit. I was requested to prepare it with reference to the understanding of an ordinary jury, and I now present it in its original dress.

* The only notice which I have met with that a similar question was ever discussed, I find in the following note in Goldsmith, vol 2, p. 23: "Vide Phil. Trans. passim. Miscellan. Curios. Johan. Baptist Wenck. Dissertatio Physica an ex virilis humani seminis cum brutali per nefarium coitum commixtione, aut vicissim ex bruti maris cum muliebri humano seminis commixtione possit verus homo generari."

If any one feels curiosity sufficient to know the result of the trial, they may be gratified by referring to Wendell's Reports, vol. 19, p. 296.

The subject of Generation is one of deep interest and of great obscurity. While, however, there is much concerning it which is still enveloped in mystery, science, in her steady and majestic march, has shed light upon many of its processes which at one time were considered hopelessly impenetrable. How much higher she may raise the veil to let us see what yet lurks behind, is impossible for us to determine.

We learn from the account given by Moses of the creation, that each plant and each animal throughout the whole extent of organic nature, at the time of their creation, received a command to "bring forth his seed after his kind which was in himself;" and then follows the evidence that the command was obeyed, "and it was so." And it is a fact worthy of observation, that all the investigations of naturalists from the most remote to the latest period, tend only to give additional proof that this LAW is still universally obeyed.

We find every plant and every animal which are furnished with organs for procreation, (and this embraces almost the entire range) have a certain set of organs exactly adapted to the end designed, called the male and female organs of generation—the male to secrete and deposit in propria persona et in proprio situ, a peculiar substance unlike that of any other species of organic matter, and the female to receive and nourish and bring forth the fruit of their united efforts—the union of any other organs or matter than those of the same species being ineffectual to this end. "The congress of the sexes," says Bostock, "attended with the entrance of the male, takes place only in the two first classes of the vertebrated animals; in the amphibia there is the congress without the entrance, while in fishes there is neither congress nor entrance."—Vol. 3, p. 12.

In searching deeper into these arcana, we find these organs arranged under four different combinations:—1st, The male and the female existing in separate individuals, the congress of which is essential to the propagation of the species, which,

I need scarcely say, is the case with the human family, and with most animals with which we are acquainted. 2d, The male and the female existing in the same individual, and possessing the property of impregnating themselves; which combination obtains among most of the vegetable kingdom; it is likewise the same with clams and oysters, and some species of worms. 3d, The male and the female likewise in the same individual, but not possessing the power to impregnate themselves. Here it is rendered necessary that two individuals should mutually impregnate each other, the male organs of one being brought in coaptation with the female organs of the other, and vice versa, and thus each individual brings forth its own young. This is the case with the common angleworm, the garden snail, and many other small animals. 4th, Upon the authority of Sennebier and others, where three individuals are essential to the process of generation, one secreting the sperm, another applying it, and the third bringing it forth. This arrangement of the organs of generation, as far as researches have yet proceeded, occurs only among some few of the tribes of insects.

The fecundating dust, as the secretion from the male organs of generation of all vegetables is called, of thousands of plants mingle together in the atmosphere which surrounds both the mountain and the plain; but unless the female to which the species is peculiarly adapted is present, in vain is the fecundating dust sent forth, the reproduction cannot be effected by the female of any other species. A notable instance of this we have in the populus dilatata, or common Lombardy poplar. It is a native of Italy. The tree containing the male organs of generation only has been brought into this part of the country, and notwithstanding there is near a dozen species of this genus in almost every forest, yet because the female of its own particular species is not present, it has never produced seed, and naturalists predict that as every tree has its particular age allotted to it, and as this tree has thus far been only propagated by cuttings, which of course are merely branches of the parent stalk, and not a new germ in itself, that whenever they shall reach to their good old age,

they will all die together; and they certainly now look very much as if they had reached the confines of decrepitude. Upon the authority of the late Dr. Hosack, we learn that a gentleman at the south, taking pity upon their languishing condition, a few years since imported the female tree from Europe, and that now in that part of the country they bear seed after their kind, and are there seen clothed in all their pristine beauty.

In the animal kingdom, a great class of fishes, the female of which deposits its eggs in the water, through which the male afterwards passes, imparting to the water seminal fluid sufficient to fecundate them, thus bring forth their kind; and although there are a vast variety of fish commingling in the same stream, the peculiar sperm suited to each kind, and that alone, possesses the requisite power to impregnate.

The higher we ascend in the scale of being the more evident does the fulfilment of this law, this great fundamental law of nature, become; and we cannot too highly admire this wise and wonderful provision of the great Creator. For could it be otherwise, we might truly say, in the language of the Epicurean poet Lucretius, who wrote earlier than Virgil:

> "Thence would arise
> Vast monsters, nature's great absurdities;
> Something half beast, half man, and some would grow
> Tall trees above, and animals below;
> Some joined of fish and beast, and everywhere
> Frightful chimeras breathing flame appear.
> But since we see no such, and things arise
> From certain seeds of certain shape and size,
> And keep their kind as they increase and grow,
> There's some *fix'd reason* why it should be so."

If the theory of generation, which among a multiplicity of others, seems to be the favorite among the learned of the present day, be the true explanation of the process, it must forever settle the question of accidental or equivocal generation. About the middle of the seventeenth century, Hamme, Leuwenhoek, and Hartsoeker, three celebrated Swiss naturalists, within a short time of each other discovered, by the help

of powerful magnifying glasses, myriads of minute animalcules in the sperm of animals, so small that it is affirmed fifty thousand of them united would not equal in bulk one grain of sand. They are not present in the sperm until after the age of puberty, nor after the individual, either from disease or age, becomes impotent. They are of every possible variety of form, differing according as the species of animals vary, but always and uniformly precisely the same in all animals of the same species; so much so as to be capable of determining the species of animal which furnished the sperm, and of course that the uterus of the female is exactly adapted to the germ of its own particular species. The ingenious experiments of these naturalists, and especially those of Lewenhoek of Geneva, have been amply and repeatedly confirmed by MM. Provost, Dumas, Blumenbach, Spalanzani, and a host of others.

It may however be said, that the fact of *hybridous productions*, or cross breeds as they are sometimes improperly called, may be opposed to the existence of this general law, which I am endeavoring to trace. With respect to these, however, as far as it concerns the animal kingdom, (and I believe it holds good also in the vegetable kingdom,) it is known that they cannot be produced except between individuals of the same species, and even in these few instances it seems to be the concurrent opinion of naturalists generally that they must first be domesticated, for in a state of nature these productions are not known. Besides their domestication, there must be an exact agreement in three essential particulars.

1. Both species must possess organs of generation exactly alike.
2. The time they go with young must be the same.
3. They must agree in their manner of copulation.

Hybrids among animals occur only in a very few classes. There is that of the horse and the ass kind, but here we find the female ass and the mare furnished with organs of generation precisely similar, their period of gestation is the same, being a little over eleven months, and so is their manner of

copulating; thus there is a concurrence of these three important particulars, essential to pregnancy in cross breeds. The same similarity occurs between the male organs of generation in the jack and the stud as occurs between those of the females of the same species. But here a circumstance should be mentioned which shows very strongly the antiphysical nature of such abnormal productions. The hybrids of these animals never possess the power of reproduction; although as far as the investigations of the anatomist can ascertain, they are furnished with all the necessary organs of generation, and the male mule is vastly more lecherous than either the jack or the stud. Aristotle, however, a celebrated ancient philosopher, contended that the male mule could impregnate the female ass, because the organs of generation seemed so perfect; but Dr. Goldsmith very shrewdly remarks, that there being no instance of its occurring since the death of Aristotle, he should think two thousand years quite sufficient to try the experiment and settle the question.

It has been ascertained, says Cuvier, that the female zebra may successively produce young with the horse and the ass; and here too is an exact agreement in the three essential particulars.

Another instance is that between the sheep and the goat. Here, likewise, we find the three essentials present; the organs of generation, and the manner of copulation are the same, and they both go with young five months. Indeed so great is the resemblance between the sheep and the goat, that Cuvier says, speaking of the sheep, "they are so slightly entitled to a generic separation from the goats, that the two produce a prolific offspring, which however is again entirely lost in that of the sheep in two or three generations. Yet if we examine the goat and the sheep anatomically, we shall find their conformation entirely and minutely the same."

It is still an undecided question among naturalists to what country we are originally indebted for the sheep, and from what parent he sprung; for those which are now in existence are considered as a degenerate race, formed in a measure by the hand of man, as they became domesticated, and are pro-

pagated particularly for his benefit. Goldsmith is of opinion that they sprung from the mouflon, or musmon, found in the uncultivated parts of Greece, Sardinia, Corsica, and the deserts of Tartary, a bold, noble, and beautiful animal, though nothing like as useful as his degenerate offspring; and he facetiously remarks, that this is not the only animal in which *beauty* may be advantageously exchanged for utility.

"No two animals," says the same author, "can be more alike than the stag and the fallow deer; alike in form, alike in disposition, in the superb furniture of their heads, in their swiftness, and alike also in their timidity; and yet no two animals keep themselves more distinct, or avoid each other with more fixed animosity. They are never seen to herd in the same place, they never engender together, and of course form no mixed breed. In short they both form distinct families, which though seemingly near, are still remote; and although with the same habitudes, yet retain an unalterable aversion."—*Goldsmith's Nat. History*, vol. ii., 213.

So between the roebuck and the deer, and the roebuck and the stag, while they resemble each other in many particulars, they are never known to engender together; and one of the reasons doubtless is, that while the deer and the stag go with young eight months, the roebuck goes only five and a half.

Upon the *dog*, the *wolf* and the *fox*, (three animals resembling each other so closely, that Cuvier says a written generic and specific description of the one suits the rest, and if it were not for drawings and specimens, no just idea could be given of the differences between them)—upon these animals fruitless experiments have again and again been made to ascertain whether they would cohabit promiscuously with each other. The organs of generation are alike in all three, and the manner of copulation is the same likewise; but a difference exists between them in the period they go with young. The fox goes six weeks, the dog nine, and the wolf fourteen. This is doubtless the great barrier, which, together with the almost irreconcileable hatred subsisting among them toward each other, the wise Creator has set up to prevent their promiscuous union. If so, we may safely predict that every suc-

ceeding experiment will be alike unsuccessful. No naturalist labored more perseveringly in this field than the elegant and indefatigable Buffon. He procured pups of the wolf and the dog when they were under a fortnight old, he brought them up together in a large retired enclosure, suffered no individual to molest them, and none to visit them but their keeper; and although the wolf, which was the female, was regularly in heat at the season, no kind of sexual intercourse was ever observed between them; and although the experiment lasted three years, and every regulation was adopted calculated to favor the end proposed, the result was the same as in all preceding experiments, having the same end in view.

Equally unsuccessful too have been the experiments of those physiologists who injected with a common syringe the sperm of one species into the uterus of another species; while the experiment has often been successful of injecting with a common syringe the sperm of the male into the uterus of the female of the same species, the female thus becoming pregnant and bringing forth her young in the due course of nature. I am aware of the reports of early travellers in this country asserting upon the authority of others, that the Indians had succeeded in causing a promiscuous intercourse between their dogs and the wolves; but neither Goldsmith nor Buffon put any confidence in these vague reports, especially as they are contradicted by so much that is actually known.

The question to which I have been requested to prepare an extended answer, is, whether in my opinion, a woman can under any circumstances become impregnated by a dog and bring forth pups, or any other issue, as the result of such unnatural intercourse. I answer, that if the preceding observations are founded in fact, it is utterly impossible. If animals agreeing in almost every necessary particular of habit and structure do not possess the requisite power, it cannot be expected in those who differ so widely as man and dog. They differ totally in those three essential particulars of which I have before spoken; the organs of generation, the manner of copulation, and the period of gestation.

The difference between them in the organs of generation is

very great. Without being very particular, I would notice that man is provided with one appendage to the organs of generation, which if he loses by excision or wants by nature, he is almost as impotent as an eunuch, and scarcely possesses the power to propagate his own species; indeed some authors are of opinion that the loss of it entirely deprives the individual of the procreative power. I allude to the seed-bladder, called by anatomists the *vesiculæ seminales*. This appendage is entirely wanting in the dog. It is not peculiar to our species; some animals, as the goat, the ram, &c., have it much more largely developed than man. While physiologists are not agreed as to every use of this little appendage, none doubt that one very important office is forcibly to contract upon its fluid contents, and assist in injecting the sperm into the uterus of the female at the moment the local excitement has been raised to the highest pitch. Blumenbach still thinks, notwithstanding the strictures of the great John Hunter to the contrary, that it is to the testicle what the gall bladder is to the liver. Animals in which it is not found are usually very long in the act of copulation, and they have not the power to *propel* the sperm into the uterus of the female, as all animals have which are furnished with vesiculæ seminales; but to compensate for this want of power in the male, we find the female of their species provided with a strong sphincter, or grasping muscle, at the outer parts of the organs of generation, which during the excitement of coition grasps with prodigious, unrelenting force the penis of the male, until by simple compression of parts she extracts sperm sufficient to satisfy her desires, and without which contrivance he could never propagate his species. This is the case with the bear, the opossum, the jackall, the fox, the dog, &c., &c. Those animals on the contrary, which are provided with a large seed bladder, are usually very quick in the operation. Witness the sheep, the goat, the bull, &c.

The dog is also supplied with a double pair of glans, one pair at the extremity of the penis, and a second and much larger pair attached around the body of the penis, around which the sphincter of the female clings with a sort of spas-

modic contraction, entirely independent of her will. The penis of the dog is provided with a tubular bone, which extends to the extremity of the penis, and which is supposed to compensate for the want of blood cells furnished to most others of his class, and all these parts are deemed essential to the secretion and ejectment of his sperm.

The two species differ as widely in the construction of the uterus, and these differences, to say nothing of one being uniparous, or bearing one at a birth, and the other multiparous, or bearing many at a birth, are sufficient to make a great difference in the manner of copulation. In our own species it is a muscular propulsion of the sperm by the male, almost entirely unassisted, into the uterus of the female. In the dog, on the contrary, it is a kind of muscular secretion, or mechanical compression, produced entirely by the contraction of the female organs, excited to their highest degree by the presence of the male. In the one, the male is the active agent in making the deposite while the female remains nearly passive, in the other the male remains almost entirely passive while the female is the active agent.

If therefore it be true, as I think I have made it abundantly appear, that a certain essential power be wanting in both individuals, a power without which impregnation is impossible, even admitting all other things to favor the opposite result, does it not approach very nearly to a demonstration, that the object contemplated can never be effected?

But if these differences of structure are not sufficient to prove my position, there is the very wide difference between the two individuals in the period of gestation, while in one it is forty weeks, in the other it is only nine.

The only animal which possesses the least shadow of a possibility of ever being able to impregnate the female of our own species besides her own appropriate lord, would seem to be the ourang-outang of Borneo and the East. But even here there are erected two very important barriers, over which it would seem impossible ever to pass. While there is no material difference in either the arrangement and structure of the organs of generation, or the manner of copulation, there

is a difference of two months in the period of gestation, the ourang-outang going but seven months. The other impediment to which I allude is the entire absence in the ourang-outang of that peculiar monthly secretion which makes woman differ from every other female in the long catalogue of beings; a secretion which must take place before she can possess the power of becoming pregnant, and which robs her of this power whenever age or disease deprives her of its regular healthy discharge: a peculiarity which may have been intended to guard her offspring from beastly contamination, from brutal depreciation—the very odor of which secretion is said to be abhorrent to every animal in the world.

Cuvier mentions, that the ourang-outang, like the horse, the deer, the elephant, &c., roam in droves through the forests and deserts; that the male of the ourang-outang is very fond of cohabiting with the negress, which they capture on the coast, while he is deadly in his hatred to negroes and white men. He affirms that instances are by no means uncommon, where they carry the young females into captivity, and detain them for several years, and constantly treat them with the greatest attention and apparent kindness, preferring cohabitation with them to that with their own females, and yet no instances are recorded of any issue whatsoever being the result of such congress.

In the hybridous productions of which we have spoken, there is always a striking resemblance to both parents. In size the mule is between the horse and the ass. It is faster on foot than the ass, but less so than the horse. It has less patience than the ass, but much more than the horse, &c., &c. Now may we not without any breach of charity suppose, that every generation of our race from Adam downwards, has produced individuals sufficiently abandoned to every sense of shame and every feeling of chastity, often to try the unnatural experiment of cohabiting with the dog. Nay, knowing as we do the depravity and degradation of a vast number of our race, have we not at least presumptive evidence that the experiment which we are now contemplating has again and again been tried in every age of the world, to satiate a beast-

ly, lustful desire; but who has ever seen the hybridous, the monstrous production? Who in all his reading and researches, including both ancient and modern authors; who has ever discovered the record of one well-authenticated instance of a being half man half dog? There may have been heard here and there an occasional vague report of such a phenomenon floating around upon the breath of slander, like the one which has subpœnaed me before this court to day as a witness. Instead, however, of merely the report, the fabricated report of such cases being of extreme rarity, ought we not, supposing the congress of dog and woman capable of producing offspring, to see thousands and tens of thousands of these imaginary, growling, barking, yelping monsters, stalking before us at every step we take? But no! no!! never! never!! The all-wise Creator has raised his own peculiar barriers to such designs, which all the lasciviousness and baseness and profligacy and degradation of our species, assisted by hell's infernal emissaries, can never surmount.

These are some at least of the reasons which influence me in the opinion already expressed, that it is utterly impossible, under any circumstances whatsoever, for a woman to become pregnant by cohabiting with a dog, and bring forth any offspring as the result of such a connexion; and much more the regular offspring of the dog. The thing to my mind is an utter impossibility, unless the immutable laws of nature can be supposed to change.

I have endeavored, as requested, to divest this subject of all technical phraseology, as far as possible, that I might be perfectly understood by those who are not expected to be versed in the language of the sciences. How well I have succeeded must of necessity be left for others to judge.