

In the time of Redi belief in the origin of insects and most of the lower animals by spontaneous generation was almost universal, but he proved by a series of experiments recorded here that flies, bees and other insects are hatched as larvæ from fertilized eggs, and that the larvæ develop into the mature insects. After discussing the beliefs of the ancient Greek philosophers and others whose authority held weight in his time, Redi describes a number of experiments, by which he demonstrates that the maggots which appear in decaying meat change into pupæ ("eggs"), and that from these pupæ flies emerge. He also discovered the hatching of maggots from true eggs, and determined that these eggs were deposited by flies. The proof that the maggots and flies were not generated from the meat, but always from eggs deposited by flies of the same kind, was furnished by the discovery that meat placed in closed vessels or underground did not become wormy. By using the flesh of many kinds of animals in his experiments, he also showed that the species of flies obtained were independent of the kind of meat in which they were bred. Cheese-flies and fruit-flies were also proved to develop from larvæ hatched from eggs.

The habits and life-histories of many other animals are discussed, and the absurdity of the current beliefs concerning their origin exposed. The widespread beliefs in the origin of bees from the decayed flesh of bulls, wasps and hornets from horses, scorpions from the dead bodies of their own kind, spiders from flying seeds, and filth, etc., are all shown to be myths and old wives' tales.

Special attention is given to the consideration of gall insects and parasites of various kinds. Unfortunately, although Redi attempted to disprove the generation of these forms from the tissues of their hosts, his investigations were not complete enough to demonstrate his idea, and only led him back to his former trust in the teachings of Aristotle.

The translation is written in a clear, simple style, and includes in the introduction a short life of Redi and a bibliography. The illustrations, most of which represent various species of Mallophaga and parasitic Hemiptera, are reproductions of those in the Italian edition, and exhibit a considerable degree of accuracy.

One error may be noticed here. The insect called by Redi "Cavallucci" is not a Mantis but a Phasmid, probably *Bacillus Rossii* Fab. This is evident from the illustrations.