

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, May 26. 1691.

Quest. 1. **W**hat's the Reason, that when we view our selves, or any other Object in a Glass, the Image appears as far behind the surface of the Glass as the Object represented is distant from it?

Ans. The Author of this ingenious Query must consider the Nature of Vision, and the manner of Representation of external Objects on the Eye, which is nothing else but the Impression made on the fine and subtle Membrane by the Ray of Light in a rectilinear Motion from the Object. The Judgment of distance is form'd from the greater or lesser Angles which they make upon the Organ. We must consider next the Doctrine of Reflection, wherein he who has but just lookt into Opticks knows that the Angles of Incidence and Reflexion are equal—

from the due comparing of which Principles will arise the natural and genuine solution of this Problem. For suppose, as in the Scheme annex'd, the Glass in a perpendicular Situation, A B. The Object in a direct Line, C D E. The Eye F i f. The Object seen by Reflection G H I.

We say then, the Line G O shall be reflected to F H, and the Line H Q to i, and the Line I P to f, so that the Point G shall be seen as if it were in the Point C, and so of the other Points, the whole Object making the same Angle with the Eye, and therefore is seen as if it were in the place C D E, which is the Solution of the Question.

Quest. 2. What is the Cause of Buggs, and their Cure?

Ans. They are produced, as Lice are by Nits, and are also caused by Sweat, Dust, and Closeness of Rooms; their Cure is wrought by Suffumigation; Orpiment and Linseed Oyl will kill 'em, anointing their places, chinks, &c. very carefully, not missing any, if they are Nitted upon the Furniture of the Room, it must be baked,—this way, with a little Care, has quickly clear'd 'em in several places where they have been troublesome.

Quest. 3. What does that Man deserve, who having receiv'd his Bread from his Friend, and other Necessaries in his Extremities—should in the time of his Prosperity be not only unthankful, but the chief Cause of his Friends Ruine and Poverty.

Ans. Xenophon de rebus Persicis says, The Ungrateful are neither fit to serve the Gods, their Country nor their Friends—What such a Persons desert is, I'll forbear to limit, for fear I shou'd be unjust, and speak too favourably of him and his Crime, which is the Abridgment of all Baseness—but if he be a Person of any sense, he may possibly be sham'd out of it, as an ill Man was, that was concern'd in the following Instance—A mean Man prefer'd by one of Quality, came in time to such a Place as set him above his Benefactor, and then he made use of his Power to throw him down who had rais'd him up—the Gentleman sent him a Picture, in which the Sun was Eclips'd by the Moon, with this word upon it—Totum admit quo nigra ta resulget—it ingratelally puts out that light by which it shines.

Quest. 2. Why a dead Corps should bleed when toucht by its Murtherer?

Ans. We meet with many Instances of this Nature, as the Waters of Jealousie amongst the Jews for the Tryal of Adultery. The Roman Vestals Seive, in which (being falsely accus'd) she carried Water without spilling. In like manner some Courts of Justice admit this Tryal of bleeding as a Proof to good purpose, and such a one as shocks the Nature of a Villain more than many living

Testimonies. Physicians tell us, that Blood Congeals in the Veins presently after Death, and afterwards in two or three days becomes liquid again, as its tendency to Corruption—some attributes it to the sense wherewith all things are endu'd, and which still remains in these dead Bodies, so that having a sense of their Murtherers, and perceiving them near at hand, they suffer two very different Motions, Trembling and Anger, which cause such a Commotion of Blood, that it flows forth from the Wound: And several other Opinions we have about it, but all of 'em inconsistent with Reason; for either there is a Natural Cause of this, or there is not; if there's none, the Dispute is at an end, and we must refer it to a particular Providence of God Almighty, in discovering Murthers by this way; but if it be by a Natural Cause, it must be either Sympathetick or Antipathetick; if by Sympathy, it follows from their way of arguing, that one kill'd by a Bullet at a distance (the murther'd not knowing who it was) can have no emotion of the Spirits when the Murtherer is by, and the Animal Spirits cannot be more sensible and knowing when the Man is dead than when he is alive; as also, if the Person murthered were kill'd in his Wife's Arms, and his Relations defending him, here his Relations should bleed (not he) at the sight of the Murtherer. If it be supposed to be effected by Antipathy, then it would concenter all the dead Persons Blood, and make it retire to the Heart instead of bleeding; so that we conclude such Instances are meerly providential, and the immediate Effects of God's Justice, when they really happen.

Quest. 5. How an Orphan may get his Money out of the Chamber of London, and when?

Ans. There are great Heads about this already who are troubled with no other Questions; this, as well as the greater Concern of all Europe depends upon the Issue of the War; when that's at an end, Propose the Question and every body will Answer it.

Quest. 6. Whence comes Corns and Warts, and how may they be destroyed?

Ans. Corns, Warts, and other Callosities are the Effects of motion, hard labour, and crushing, tho sometimes we may add, a proneness to 'em by hereditariness. The Cure is easie, or according to Art a Caustick, that other flesh may supply the room of a Corn, and a Cicatrix to stop the Exuberance of a Wart.

Quest. 9. How Females were Circumcis'd?

Ans. Not at all amongst the Jews, but we read the Egyptians circumcis'd the Nymph of their Females for some Diseases, and that some of the Pagans religiously observe this Custom.

Quest. 8. What Language 'twas Balaam's Ass spake?

Ans. What Language is this? — מִהֶעֱשִׂיתִי לָךְ בִּי הַבִּיתָתִּי וְהִשְׁלַשְׁתָּ רַגְלִים

Quest. 9. Were the Serpents, &c. produced by the Magicians of Pharaoh, real or only cheats by the Magicians, by Tricks of Legerdemain?

Ans. That they were real Serpents, suddenly conveyed thither by the Power of the Devil, we esteem the most probable opinion; and therefore they were not convey'd thither by slight of Hand of the Magicians, for these Reasons, because Serpents are but an odd sort of Creatures to exercise slight of Hand upon, which its death but to touch; because this might give occasion for some ill consequences which would be further drawn by perverse Men from the whole Story. Because, if we could suppose Pharaoh and all his Courtiers such Block-heads as not to perceive a Cheat of that Nature; yet we can't think as much of Moses, who besides his natural sagacity, assisted with all the acquired wisdom of the Egyptians was endu'd with supernatural Wisdom, nor could ought have tended more to the Credit of his Cause, than his discovering the Magicians cheats to the World.

Quest. 10. Whether there be such People as Cannibals?

Ans. Yes, amongst the Indians at this day, who not only

only eat one another, but also Sacrifice their Children to the Devil.

Quest. 11. *Whether there be such a sort of People as have Eyes in their Breast, and no Heads?*

Ans. Our best Authority is too weak for our own Faith, tho' if the World can believe *Mandeville* in his Discovery, they may, but it looks to be a sort of strange Figure for a Rational Soul, perhaps *Physicians* will say not only strange but impossible.

Quest. 12. *Whether Adam and Eve had Navels or no?*

Ans. Yes, they had Navels, tho' not such as ours, being not born, but it was requisite they shou'd have Navels; for *Physicians* tell us, that the use of the Navel is not only to nourish the Child when it is in its Mothers Womb, but that 'tis of great use to the Intestines and Bowels after Delivery, and that 'tis one of the great Seats of our strength.

Quest. 13. *In what part of the Body is the Soul?*

Ans. 'Tis generally held that 'tis every where, (tho' not so easie to define how) nor can it indeed be at all properly in a place, that being of the Essence of Body;—at least we are sure its not in a place in the same manner that Body is, but as a Spirit, if we knew how that was. In the mean while its noblest operations, imagining and thinking are undoubtedly transacted in the Brain, (tho' we doubt the pretty fancy of the *Glandula Pinealis*, to be no more than a Fancy, there having been a much lower use since found out for that part.) This we are sure of, that in deep thinking we feel our Heads otherwise affected than at other times, and afterwards we as certainly know they have been at hard labour, by that pain and lassitude we find in 'em, as that our Feet or Hands have been so, when after a long walk, or manual operation, they are affected much in the same manner: We'll add one Notion more, which may not a little illustrate this Subject. In our former Description of the Soul, we have plac'd the clearest Notion of its Essence in the Image of God, which may tend something to the further Explanation of the Case in hand. For as God is every where in the greater World, (nor can we allow any other *anima mundi*) so is according to its proportion and similitude, the Soul in the lesser, or the Body of Man. It sits perhaps in its Throne in the Head, but its action not confined there, but diffused thro' all the different parts, having an entire power over 'em, and acting 'em according to their Natures, and sometimes contrary to 'em.

Quest. 14. *If 'tis convenient to speak the Truth at all Times?*

Ans. Undoubtedly its not convenient, but the meaning I suppose is, Whether it be necessary: We answer, its neither one nor t'other. 'Tis undoubtedly necessary never to speak an Untruth; but the contrary holds not, that we always must speak Truth, since there's a Medium of Negation, something that's neither one nor t'other, namely, not speaking at all. Indeed there seems a Fallacy in the Term speaking Truth; when we speak, it always must be Truth, but we must not speak always.

Quest. 15. *What is Reason?*

Ans. Reason may be considered either in Principle or Act, or as the Schools express it, Reason Reasoning, or Reason Reasoned, Ratio Ratiocinans, or Ratio Ratiocinata. The principle is a power deeply rooted in the Soul of Man, if not the same with it, whereby it can apprehend simple or abstracted Notions, as Universals, &c. can join those Notions together, and thence form Propositions, and from those Propositions it thus forms, or from its own innate Ideas, and self evident principles, compared with one another, deduce true and legitimate Conclusions. The Act, or rather effect or operation hereof is a Syllogism; nor can any Man in the World reason without making one, tho' not in its just Forms, yet easily reducible unto them. To be more plain, Reason in this sense, is the drawing true Conclusions from true Premises; nay, so excellent an Art is it, that it extracts natural and undeniable Truth from the most notorious Falshoods, by reducing the Adversary to an absurdity, by comparisons and oppositions, familiar to those who are acquainted with this Noble Art.

Quest. 16. *Whether the Miracles done by the Egyptian Magicians mention'd in the Book of Exodus were real, or only illusions?*

Ans. The Devil has a great Experience in Natural Magic, or the Powers of second Causes produced by Agents and Patients fitly joyn'd, and by many Artifices and Se-

crets in Nature which are not ill, there are several strange things effected by Men, to the admiration of such as know not the reason, so far can the Devil act (as before) but no farther, his greatest Miracles being the pure Effects of Nature fitly mixt, and therefore it was that the Egyptian Magi when they found a supernatural Agent making real Serpents, &c. they cry'd out, this is the Finger of God.

Quest. 17. *Whence proceeds Sight, and the Cause of the Eyes Motion?*

Ans. This Question is double, the first much knottier than the latter, and more difficult to be express'd.—Seeing is a compound Act, as tasting or feeling is. The pupil of the Eye before it can convey any thing to the Fancy, moves into a direct line with the Object that is to be conveyed, the Medium of this conveyance is light, which Medium being diaphanous or transparent, (as is the Eye,) helps on towards the fixing the Image of the Object in the Eye by reflection, as Water, and Looking-Glasses entertain a resemblance of such Objects as are placed near them. When we say we see a Horse, a Cock, a Dog, and so on, 'tis only the Image of that Horse, Cock, Dog, &c. that reflects upon our Eyes, as they would do upon a Looking-Glass were they before it:—If there be any Philosophers amongst Lovers, perhaps they may tell you of other remarks of Looking-Glasses in one anothers eyes. As to the latter part of the Question: 'Tis the Life that is the effective Cause of Motion, the Eye, a Leg, or Hand, &c. moving, when the Person thinks not, nor wills 'em so to do, but ordinarily the Will employs them.

Quest. 18. *Was the Fall of Adam on the Day of his Creation, or how long after?*

Ans. After the finishing of every days work, God Almighty pronounced all Good, therefore Adam fell not on that day, unless we would have him made after the sixth day. The exact day is not revealed, nor is this Curiosity significant; nor can the Querist expect more, since he himself would fail in relation of some particular Actions which he has done within a few years, which it had been possible to have recorded, all which helps are denied in this Case.

Quest. 19. *What weapon was it that Cain slew his Brother Abel with?*

Ans. This was 130 Years after the Creation, in which time as Adam and his Sons had addicted themselves to husbandry; so no doubt but they had got several convenient Tools proper for the business, one of which 'tis probable Cain slew his Brother with; but his Jury, his Witnesses, and Judge, was only God, so there were no Witnesses to prove the Matter of Fact.

Quest. 20. *What's the Reason a Fool can ask more Questions than a wise Man can answer?*

Ans. We acknowledge, tho' we foresee the application that none who act like wise Men, will pretend there's no Question which he can't answer. Any fair Question indeed may receive a fair Solution: and such are those which can be answer'd (without ill consequences) either by Experience, Supposition, or Reason: So that the main ground of the common Proverb form'd into this Quere, seems only this, That a Fools Tongue is more nimble, and his Invention glib and fruitful: But Time, Judgment, and thinking, are required to give a good Answer.

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