

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, June 30. 1691.

Quest. 1. **A** Child about 12 or 13 Years Old, had for a long time a very severe Ague, which brought her very low and weak, (to the best of my Knowledge, she had it about 10 Weeks) when, one day standing by the Door with her Mother, a Woman dress'd pretty Genteel came up to her, and told her she would cure the Child, provided she would follow her directions, which was promised: The next day she sends a piece of Paper sealed up, with this Order, that they should hang it about the Child's Neck, without opening or looking into it; which was done, and accordingly the Ague left the Child that very day, and it continued well for above three weeks; when a Friend coming out of the Country, would needs be so inquisitive as to see what was in the Paper, and to their amazement they found these words, Devil make her well, and take her into Hell; and that very day the Child's Ague returned again, and continued a great while after. I desire your Opinion, whether a Natural Account may be given of the stopping and returning of the Distemper; and what to think of the Woman, as also whether the Devil hath power of curing Distempers, and whether the Devil had more power than ordinary over that Child whilst those Words were about its Neck?

Ans. Paracelsus treating of Natural Magick, makes an Excursion into Characters, Charms, Spells, Incantations, the Power of Words, &c. at the last adding that the Party concern'd must always have a strong Faith that the end will be attained: Every thinking Man makes some such Conclusion, that Words, Charms, &c. are irrational, therefore not of God, and that whoever runs from their dependance from him to have Remedy elsewhere, do silently confess their Service to, and dependance on the Devil, who is the Author of every thing that is unreasonable, and when we have put our selves under the Devil's Protection, no wonder if for the Credit and Interest of his Kingdom he answers our Expectations at present, which yet will be found most of it to be but a Cheat, and a Deception of our Senses. — If it be objected, that the Child in this Instance, who also was the Subject, had no hand in it, but its Mother. — We answer, Children are the Goods of their Parents, and are commonly happy or miserable, as the Parent manages 'em. We could give ye here several Instances of Parents that have wisht the Devil would take their Children, or that they would break their Necks, or be drowned, &c. which have immediately come to pass. — We doubt not at all but the Devil is Naturalist good enough to know the Cause and Cure of the Ague, and other Distempers; and when the People will make use of such a Doctor, either through Ignorance or Knowingly, 'tis no Miracle at all that we have Instances of the Effect of his Skill.

Quest. 2. whether the common Notion o'th' World be true, that these latter Ages for some Centuries past, have a less share of Learning, Judgment and Invention, than those which have preceded, because we find them deficient in finding out such advantageous Arts as their Fore-fathers have done: — If true, whether it proceeds from their Carelessness in informing their Minds, or that God did in a more especial manner Capacitate those of former Ages for the Discovery of such things as were requisite for the Necessity, Instruction, and Pleasure of all Mankind: — if false, how comes it to be the Opinion not only of Indifferent, but very Ingenious Men that it is so?

Ans. It is disputable, whether the Invention of useful Arts is infinite or not; but upon a Supposition of Truth in both Cases, I see no reason to conclude this Age comes short of the preceding Ones, as to priority in Arts and Sciences; we'll consider the first part of the Dilemma, and suppose the Invention of useful Arts infinite: if so, we must conclude (as we find by daily experience) that at length arising to be too numerous, some would be lost and supplanted by others, which would not be, if the first were more useful. — Again, if the Invention of useful Arts be finite, they can be but once Invented: So that those

which have already done it, cannot pretend a Preheminence to those that follow who also would have found the same out if they had lived before, as is seen by the great Improvements daily made of what is invented: Further, 'tis a vulgar Error, that any valuable Art is of one Man's inventing; as for instance in Sailing, how many Ages passed before the Invention of Sails, or a commodious Building of Ships, or before the Compass was invented, and how long before the Invention of the Compass was the Nature of the Load-stone discovered. If we take a view of the liberal Sciences, can we believe that Aristotle's Philosophy was all his own, or rather a Compendium of what other Philosophers had writ before, and by him methodically compil'd, with some additions? As to Curious Mechanicks, as some are improved, and as the Subject is large, so some are new invented. *Ælian* and *Pliny* mention one *Myrmecides*, that wrought out of Ivory a Chariot with four Wheels, and as many Horses, in so little room, that a little Fly might cover them all with her Wings: — As also a Ship with all the Tackling to it, no bigger than that a small Bee might cover it with her Wings. Tho' these were great Curiosities, and probably of one Man's Invention, we need not seek beyond the Limits of our Island for its parallel. In the 20th. Year of *Q. Elizabeth*, one *Mark Scaliot* made a Lock, consisting of eleven pieces of Iron, Steel, and Brass, all which, together with a Pipe Key to it, weighed but one Grain of Gold; he made also a Chain consisting of forty three Links, whereunto having fastened the Lock and Key before mentioned, he put the Chain about a Fleas Neck, which drew them all with ease. See the Inventions and Experiments of the Royal Society, which will abundantly convince the Querist, that our Age has as active and busie Spirits for Invention as any former Age in the World.

Quest. 3. In what Posture and Order did our Saviour eat the Passover and his last Supper with his Disciples?

Ans. 'Twas Accubation, or a lying down upon the left side with the Head born up by the Elbow, they lay upon three Beds, placed at a convenient height, round about a Table, four upon a Bed; the Head of the second leaning upon or against the Bosom of the first, and the third against the second. The Order was thus, the Third Bed was for the Master and whom he pleased, the First and Middle were for the Guests; but here they were all Guests, and our Saviour eat only with his Disciples; so that supposing them to be in Preheminence as they are named, *Matth. &c.* they were placed as in the Figure annexed;

<p>Third Bed.</p> <p><i>Jesus. John. Thad. Sam. Jud.</i></p>	<p>The Table.</p>	<p>Second Bed.</p> <p><i>Peter. Jam. Matth. To.</i></p>
<p>First Bed.</p> <p><i>Andr. James. Philip. Bartbo.</i></p>		

for though the first place in the First and Third Bed was most honourable, it was not so in the Second; but the last place in the Second Bed, which was nearest to the Master of the House, or in this Figure to our Saviour, where *Peter* lay — This was not only the Custom of the Jews, but of the Parthians, Persians, Greeks and Romans. According to the Description of *Salustius*, *Sertorius* who lay in the place of *Peter* (as in the Figure) was slain at Dinner by *Perpenna*, the Master of the Feast, (who lay where our Saviour did.) For the above Triclineal Description read *Ben-maimon*, that great Rabbi,

as also *Sophocle*, *Euripides*, *Athenueus Mercurialis*, *Lip-
sius*, &c. *Juvenal* and *Aristotle*, say something of it. The
Learned conclude the first Original of Leaning and Accu-
bation at Meals was taken from the *Gymnasticks*, who af-
ter their Bathing retired to Bed, where they took some-
thing to refresh them.

Quest. 4. *What's the reason that our Breath coming from
Ore contracto, doth blow Cold, but coming from Ore dila-
to, doth blow warm?*

Ans. The Reason of either explains both. When we
breath with an open Mouth, immediately from our Lungs
there is a great deal of Breath respired at once; and
therefore being much, the external Air, has not power to
cool it immediately; but by blowing when the Lips are
almost contracted, the little Breath that is emitted, is im-
mediately cool'd by the External Air; besides, it comes
rather from the Mouth than the Lungs, which is not so
hot a place. That the reason of this Change is by the
outward Air, is evident, for from the same blast you'll
find the nearer your Mouth, the warmer it feels.

Quest. 5. *What is the Reason of those Blasts, or Trade
Winds in the Indies, which blow one half the Year one way,
and the other half the other?*

Ans. We look upon this Question to be as difficult as any
yet sent us, and the reason why we answer'd it not before
now, was, that we might make our Inquiries into the
Nature and Scituation of those places, and other things,
which consider'd, we now answer, — That the Sun
is so strong and violent in the *Indies*, especially for half
the Year, that if Nature by means of such heat did not
procure a Remedy, the Place would be uninhabitable: The
Remedy is this, that the heat of the Earth, and rarefaction
of the Air, draw Rain from the Neighbouring Seas, as
the Sun does, and also condens'd and gross Air filled with
Clouds, which the Winds agitate about, are more easily
discharg'd, when they find a Climate where the Air is so
rarified, that it is not able to bear them up.

This perhaps may be the natural Reason, that in the
Month of *July*, when the heat is most violent there, the
Rain does certainly begin to fall, continuing six Months
together, and as we are inform'd, in the hottest places
they begin the soonest, as along the Coast of *Coromandel*,
the Isle of *Ceylan*, which begin a Month sooner than
those at *Malabar*, by reason the Summer begins the soon-
er there.

Also we are informed, that the Sea and Wind, go al-
ways the same way, the Sea flowing back again South-
ward about *October*, at which time the Northern Winds
begins to blow.

Now this being premis'd, that heat produceth Rain,
every one knows that Rain produces Winds, and then it fol-
lows, That the Winds must continue to blow one way,
being compress'd by the Rain, which also continues for such
a time, being for that time also drawn by Heat, which is
most easily discharg'd in rarified Air.

But perhaps this may be a better reason: The Sun going
towards one of the Poles, causes a Change in the direction of
the Earths Axis, and a depression in the Pole on that side,
then the other Pole must needs be rais'd, and consequently
the Sea and Air being two fluid Bodies, are affected with
this Inclination, which also recline when the Sun returns
towards the other Pole.

From this reason, (because we have had many more
Questions sent us about the flux and reflux of the Sea) we
shall take notice, that perhaps naturally there ought to be
but two opposite fluxes of the Sea, one from the side of
the Pole Arctick, the other from that of the Antartique;
and if there was but one continued Sea from Pole to Pole,
the Fluxes would be regular as they are in the *Indies*, but
such regularity is now hindred by interception of Land,
which impede, break and vary their Course; but as these
Remarks are partly groundd upon some Observations
made in a Voyage to *Indostan*, so we leave them to be im-
proved or censured by the Ingenious.

Quest. 6. *Is the Earth or Water the colder Element?*

Ans. The Earth and Water make up but one Globe, and
therefore Naturally would be all of a Coldness. The Que-
stion is too general to have a particular Solution: Some
parts of the Earth and Waters are more subject to the
Power of the Sun than others, and some parts of the Earth
more than others. If the Querist means here nearer home,

as the River *Thames* at *Greenwich*, and the Meadows about
it; (for we can't suppose it in *London*, because that Trade
and Houses have alter'd the Nature of the Earth:) In
this last supposition we must also suppose a Foot depth at
least from the Surface of both, to be free from the Effects
of the Air, and then we see no absurdity in affirming an
Equality of Temperament, although we grant that we
shall be more sensible of the Waters cold, but that is from
its fluidity and rarity, being thereby qualified to make an
easier penetration into the Pores of our Bodies.

Quest. 7. *Where is the Original of the River Nile, and
through what places does it pass to come into Egypt?*

Ans. All our Maps with *Ptolomy* place it a good way
beyond the *Aequinoctial*, but erroneously, if we may be-
lieve the Ingenious *Monsieur Tavernier*, who as his Curiosi-
ty was great in this particular, so his Aids, and the Ad-
vantages he had of satisfaction were extraordinary; his
his very Words (as Translated) are these — I have al-
ready said in another place, that at the time when the two
Embassadors of *Aethiopia* were at *Dehli*, my *Aga Danech-
mend-han*, who is extraordinarily Curious, sent often for
them, to inform himself in my Presence of the Condition and
Government of their Country; and one day amongst other
things we occasioned them to Discourse of the Source of the
Nile, which they call *Abbabile*, whereof they spake to us as
a thing so known, that no body doubt of it, and where one of
these Embassadors and a *Mogolian* that was return'd with
him out of *Aethiopia* had been in Person; they told, that it
takes its Origin in the Country of the *Agans*, and issueth out
of the Earth at big bubbling Springs near one another, which
form a small Lake of about 30 or 40 Paces long; that at the
coming out of this Lake it is then already a pretty River,
and from place to place receiveth other Rivers which enlarge
it: They added, that it runs bending, and forming a great
Penninsule, and that after several *Cassala's* from steep Rocks,
it falls into a great Lake, which is not above 4 or 5 days
Journey from its Source in the Country of *Dumbia* or *Dem-
bia*, 3 little days Journey from *Gonder*, the Metropolis from
Aethiopia, thot having traversed that Lake, it issueth thence
swell'd with all the Waters that fall there — passeth thro
Sonnar, the principal City of the King of of *Funges* or *Ba-
baris*, Tributary to the King of *Aethiopia*, running on and
making the Cataracts, and so entring into the Plains of
Messer, which is *Egypt* —

Advertisements.

THE Supplement to the First Volume of the *Athenian Gazette*
(is just now publish'd) containing the Transactions and
Experiments of the Foreign Vertuos's: As also their In-
genious Conferences upon many Nice and Curious Questions. To
which is added an Account of the Design and Scope of most of the
considerable Books Printed all Languages, and of the Quality of the
Author, if known. The whole being a Translation of what is most rare
and valuable, in the *Paris Journal des Savants*, the *Acta Eruditorum
Lipsie*, the *Universal Historical Bibliothek*, and in the New Book,
Entituled, *En Treiziens Serienes & Galantes*, &c. publish'd for the
improving of Natural, Moral, and Divine Knowledge, as is specified
in the Preface to these Papers, and use of these Foreign Vertuos's,
which said Preface gives the Reader a full Account of this Design, —
Price 1 s. Sold at the Raven in the *Poultry*, where is to be had the
First Volume of the *Athenian Gazette*, beginning *March* 17th. and
ending *May* 30th. 1691. (or single ones to this time.)

We design to add the Contents of each Supplement to that Alpha-
betical Table we have promised at the end of every Year, that so by
the help of this General Table our Querists may presently find any
Question or Subject they have a mind to consult, either in our Week-
ly Mercuries, or Supplemental Volumes; and therefore to render our
Undertaking thus serviceable to the Reader, we shall print the Supple-
ment to each Volume of our *Athenian Gazette* on the same Paper
with our Weekly Mercuries; that so they may bind up with 'em.

In this Supplemental Volume we have Printed that full Account of
our *Athenian Project* which we have so often promised to the World:
And that no Man may be ignorant of what our whole Undertaking is,
we shall again Print the same Account in our next *Saturday's Mer-
cury*.

We have received several Questions last Week that are already an-
swer'd in our First Volume.

Many of the Ingenious Questions which we have receiv'd this
Week, are answer'd in this Supplement now recited, and some of 'em
are also answer'd in our First Volume.