

The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, July 25. 1691.

Quest. 1. **I**N your Answer to that Question, Numb. 15. Vol. 1st. Whether a Friendship contracted between single Persons, may continue with the same Zeal and Innocency if either marry, hinting, that if it do so, viz. the same Zeal, it is unjust: I demand then, that considering Friendship is the Marriage of Souls, which is a much stronger tie than that of Bodies, whether Persons so united ought not to continue single rather than break so Sacred a League, and make the deserted party so unhappy as such a Divorce will certainly do?

Ans. We think they ought, if they have no prior Obligation to the contrary, tho there are very few whose Interest in this case will not prove too hard for their Generosity; and tho still even here, a high stroke of the latter, which obliges one Friend to die for another, may perhaps oblige him to do more, that is, part with a Friend rather than hinder his happiness. But to be ingenuous, the Union of Souls is a pretty thing to talk of, tho so very fine, that 'tis near a-kin to the Musick of the Spheres, too exquisite for our dull Senses. However, we have granted there may be in some few, very few Instances, such a thing, and that it does not all depend on Fancy, but has a real Being: Yet still the Union of Hands is the surest Hold-fast, as the World goes. The Body is very near a-kin to the Soul, and whatever Persons flatter themselves, will take it unkindly if it mayn't come in for a share. Why then may not both be joined, and the Friends be better acquainted with one another than any besides, since in this case the Sacred League has one Article more added, which will be sure to make it last — till Death them do part.

Quest. 2. Which is the best way for one who is willing to serve their Majesties, when a gentle Post is vacant to obtain it?

Ans. The honest Gentleman who sends this Question, seems very much in earnest int: For we have two Letters on the same Subject, in the last of which he's a little angry we have so long neglected an Answer, which that he may be sure not to miss, he has directed us where to send to him (his Name and all) at his Lodgings, near the Peacock in Kings-street, nigh St. James's-Square. Well, 'tis pity to disappoint him, and therefore we'll put him on the very nearest cut to Glory, and show him a path, which if he'll but follow, will make him as great as he wishes. — Let him go find out a Gold-mine, take Limerick, rout Luxemburg, or which is all one, make him fight, or sink all the French Fleet, or take and brink 'em into our own Harbours. Let him chuse any of these Enterprizes, and if he accomplishes them happily, he's certainly a made Man. But to be graver, the way now to be prefer'd, is, ('tis hoped) to be brave and honest: To loves one Country, and King William, hate the French, and despise them and all their Luydors. To be no Bigot, nor Debauchee, neither Superstitious nor Profane, but to love Religion, and Vertue, and Honour, not to be forward or hasty, to be modest and patient, obsequious and industrious and humble. If all this fails, there is still a last reserve, which will do better: Live contented in your own low Sphere, and thank God that Their Majesties can find so many better Men to prefer before you.

Quest. 3. What Matter is the Sun made of, and whether or no is it a Flame?

Ans. Take the newest and best Account those Modern Astronomers give us, who have for many Years considered this glorious Star by the help of the Telescope: And they tell us, That 'tis a Body of Fire, unequal in its Surface, and composed of several parts of a different Nature, some fluid, others solid; that it appears, his Disque is a Sea of Fire, wherein is perceiv'd a perpetual agitation of waves of Flame: That in some parts may be seen as it were burnings, in others spots like thick Smoke, neither without the Sun, but seeming to proceed from his Disque, appearing

and disappearing, encreasing and decreasing, the Fire showing it self casually among those black Smoke, which are the Spots we perceive in this great Luminary. Father Kircher thinks they are the Foams, or Froth of the Fire, which the Sun exhales and evaporates out of its Body; but Mr. AZOUT and Mr. HUGENS rather think that they are only appearances occasioned by the Undulation, or waving of the Air. One of these spots was, as Chronicles tell us, visible to the naked Eye in the time of Charlemaign: And this in all probability is the Reason why it has at other times appear'd not in its perfect brightness, as for a whole Year when Caesar was murdered, of which the Poet;

—Impiaque Aeternam timuerunt secula Noctem,
—And guilty Nations fear'd Eternal Night;

and thus it also appear'd for four days together in the Month of August, in the Year, 1547. dusky and reddish, and not so bright as the Moon in her total Eclipse.

Quest. 4. Which is the best way to come into the Converse and Acquaintance of the Noble Athenian Society?

Ans. Noble Sir, by reading our Mercuries, which well gratifie your civil Request with ease, without putting you to the trouble of first walking to Smith's Coffee-house, and thence no Body knows whither.

Quest. 5. Whether so small a Creature as a Fly has a Heart, and if it has, who hath the greatest Heart, the Fly or a Late King, because a Fly when taken, if you pluck off a Leg or a Wing will struggle and strive, and as much as is possible fight for its Life, have nothing else to lose, whereas that Prince lost neither Leg nor Arm in the Defence of his Three Kingdoms?

Ans. In Answer to this merry Question, tho the World han't had the Happiness to see any Dissection of that Creature by the Virtuosi made publick, yet we may safely conclude a Fly has a Heart, for the Circulation of that Liquor, whatever 'tis, which serves it instead of Blood, for proper Blood we doubt that and other Insects can't be said to have, since none such can be found nor discovered by a Microscope, or otherwise, in dismembering or killing them, unless in such as are used to feed upon Blood, which only seem to contain it like ordinary Food in their Bodies, without any peculiar receptacles for the same. But to the Question, about its Heart, and the bigness of it, we acknowledge, as the Rehearsal, that there is more Shape and Beauty in a Fly than in a Whale; but whether there's more Courage in that Insect than in the Survivor of the two Kings of Brentford, that Author saith not, nor dare we in so weighty a Cause, venture to determine. But here may come in one Observation relating to the Hearts of Animals, which mayn't be unacceptable. The Heart of a Lioness we learn from one dissected at Paris, is proportionably larger than any Animals, six Inches long, and four large towards the Basis, terminating in a sharp point: But whether or no the Fly or the Prince last mentioned may be thought to have the larger Heart, we are sure we have now a King, who as well as our famous Richard, deserves the Title of Coeur-de-Lyon.

Quest. 6. Does the World hang upon nothing, and how can you prove plainly that it does so?

Ans. It does so, which will appear by proof, and that the surest, namely, our own Senses. All grant that there's no proper upper or lower side in the Earth, nay, no Zenith or Nadir in the Heavens, any more than right or left here. Hence it follows, that we are as much Antipodes to those below us, as they again are to us, and that the weight of the Earth leans or bears as much one way as t'other. Now 'tis evident to any who will but put forth his Hands, or believe his Eyes, that there's nothing, or no solid Body above it, for the

Earth

Earth to rest upon, nor is there any more below it; which two *Points or Positions* for distinctions sake we conceive: It moves round upon its own Center, as all the rest of the Planets upon theirs, according to that sort and regular Order wherein they were first disposed by their All-wise Maker.

Quest. 7. *In what Quarter of the Year began the World in, whether in Spring, Summer, Autumn, or Winter?*

Ans. We wonder any Ingenious Men should have troubled themselves about this Question, when its as plain as different Climates can make it, that it begun in all four Quarters together, as it still continues, it being Spring time in one place when 'tis Summer in another, Autumn in a third, and Winter in the last. Nay even in England, and at little more than a hundred Miles distance, we see the Harvest is two Months later than here about London.

Quest. 8. *Whereas some Persons esteem that Insect called a Cricket lucky and fortunate to their Families, others deadly and ominous: Query, Whether there is any Reason for either?*

Ans. Much alike, for if there were, the Bakers would certainly be all a very lucky, or else very unlucky sort of People: But they every day hear thousands of them making Melody, and yet neither fear the Pillory, nor hope to fine for Alderman; and if so many of them signify nothing, 'tis unaccountable that one alone should do so.

Quest. 9. *Whether it is better to lose the Sight or Hearing?*

Ans. Seeing is the more pleasant, Hearing the more useful Sense. Without hearing, if born deaf, or so from Infancy, its not easie to conceive how any can be taught so much as the Principles of Religion, or any useful Knowledge, both which are commonly enough found to great perfection in the blind, they being generally Masters of vast Memories, as having none of those Objects which so frequently distract our Thoughts, by employing our Eyes. Not but that there have been some few who having been Deaf from their Nativity, or Infancy, have strangely, and almost unaccountably, attained to the Knowledge of many useful Truths, and understanding what is said, by observing the Motion of the Speakers Lips, nay sometimes only by feeling them speak, or laying their hands on their Mouths while they do it; whereof see a remarkable Story in the Reverend Bishop of Sarum's Letters, Let. 4. p. 248.

Quest. 10. *Whence proceeds the Speech and Voice, and that no two Faces are exact alike?*

Ans. These are absolutely different Questions, and as such we shall give 'em distinct Answers: For the first, Whence proceeds the Speech and Voice of Man? We answer, they proceed primarily and radically from Reason, which is the Foundation and Principle of Speech, which Speech is an essential property of Man, flowing necessarily and immediately from his Reason, and as such, incommunicable to any other Creature. But instrumentally the Speech proceeds from those Organs by which its form'd and brought forth to the hearing, the principal whereof the Tongue, tho' not without the assistance of the Palate, the Lips, the Teeth, and other parts, concerning which, consult either the Anatomists or Grammarians.

For the second Question, How it comes to pass that no two Faces are exactly alike? we question the Truth of the Supposition, very Authentick Instances having been given us in History to the contrary, at least of those who have been so extremely alike, that even their own Sisters, Mothers, nay Wives, han't been able to discern one from another: But taking the Question with a grain of allowance, and granting that few Faces are thus resembling one another, the Reason whereof we conceive to be the almost infinite variety of the Parents Disposition one for another, nay, from themselves at their different times, the diversity of their Food, their Fancy, Sickness, Health, Motion, Posture, and a thousand other intervening Circumstances of the like Nature.

Quest. 11. *Why some Men are naturally more Confident than others?*

Ans. Confident is near a-kin to Courage, only one relates principally to Friends, as the other to our Enemies. Now as Courage is sometimes natural, so is confidence too, tho' both are much more frequently acquired: When Natural, it depends upon the particular

Frame or Crasis of the Body, some having more Blood or Spirits than others: But for the most part this assurance is the Effect of Converse and Education, as every days Experience informs us.

Quest. 12. *Whether Saturn be Noah, and what is meant by the Golden Ages?*

Ans. We have formerly had some occasion to discourse on the old Fables of Heathens, as corrupted from the History of Moses, or Tradition of their Fathers, which may give some Light into this Question. We further say, that the Notices they had of these Ancient Stories being so dark and confused, they oftentimes blend several of them in one, where they found any manner of likeness between 'em. Thus out of the Tradition or Story of the Rebellion and Defection of the Angels, the wicked Gyants before the Flood, and Nimrod and his Followers afterward who built the Tower of Babel, they have jumbled together their Story of the Gyants Wars, and their attempts to scale Heaven, &c. So here, in their Bacchus, Janus, and Saturn, we may plainly enough discern the Memory of Adam, Noah. Saturn is said to be the Father of the Gods, and that his Son Jupiter married his Sister: Adam was the Father of Men, and his Children could not chuse but thus intermarry. Saturn is said to have divided the World between his three Sons; Noah had three Sons, and according to the Names of his Sons was the Earth divided. Jupiter Hammon or Chamman was the Son of Saturn, as Ham or Cham one of the Sons of Noah, very probably worshipp'd by his Posterity in Lybia, as Belus in Babylon by his. Janus yet appears more clearly to have the Footsteps of Noah in his History — Noah saw two Worlds, Janus first planted Italy, is described, Bisrons, looking backward and forward into both Ages. Noah planted a Vine, Janus did so too, first in Italy, as their Stories tell us: Nay, Jain, as Sir Walter Rawleigh also tells us, signifies in the Hebrew, Wine: Noah first built Altars and Sacrificed, so says Pictor, did Janus. And lastly, why mayn't the Custom of Janus his shutting the Gates, or his Priests shutting 'em for him, in signification of Peace, relate either to Noahs shutting the Ark, or to the Covenant of Peace made with him when the Flood was over.

For the Golden Age, the Heathens here to seem to confound the time before the Flood, and Fall of Man: And for those who would see a fine Description on't, let them consult Ovid, or Mr. Burnet's most ingenious Theory of the Earth, which affords one much finer.

Quest. 13. *Is it Injustice to pay Counterfeit Money when I know it to be such?*

Ans. If it be mercy upon the Goldsmiths! nay all the Trades in London will have need on't. For those who buy such Money on purpose to put it away, there's hardly any will endeavour to excuse 'em: Nor seems that Person much less guilty, who in a small Parcel of Money will put off such as is before mention'd, to such as if it should lie upon their Hands, are ill able to bear it. But when it is unadvisedly taken, when those who have it cannot well bear the loss on't, and can put it off to those who can, nay still pass it further, we think the case is very much altered. Besides this, the frequency of such Money makes it more difficult to avoid the receiving it, and indeed, if we take things fairly, Clipt Money is Bad Money, since it wants of its real weight. But should we not pass that away, there would now be hardly any Trading: Nor is every Man in a Capacity to follow the Example of a late famous Lawyer, who when ever he received Ill Money, laid it in a heap together, and would never suffer it to pass any further.

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IN our next Tuesday's Mercury will be answer'd three weighty Questions, viz.

Quest. 1. *What an Habit is, whether to be overcome, and what are the Methods in order to it?*

Quest. 2. *What are the true Bounds of Honour as to Firsts and Seconds in Dueling? and how far may a Person of Honour refuse a Challenge?*

Quest. 3. *Whether the late Orders for suppressing of Prophaneness and Debauchery is like to be effectual? and what are the best Methods to detect the haunts and practices of those lewd women called Night-walkers.*