

The Athenian Mercury.

Quest. 1. **V**V Hether 'tis possible for any person to die of Conceit?

Ans. Fancy is very strong in some persons, especially, such as are of a *Melancholy Disposition*; the Relation of the Doctor in the *Reign of K. James the First*, who undertook either to Kill or Cure by Fancy, is no foreign Answer to the Question: The Doctor begg'd some condemned Persons to make the tryal, and choosing one amongst the rest, whose *Constitution* he thought might be most proper to work upon, he preserv'd him till the last, setting the rest, one after another, up to the Chin in warm Water, afterwards breath'd a Vein, and let them bleed to death; using to those that stood by such Remarks as, *now such and such Veins are exhausted, now so so*, till they expir'd; and coming to the last person, he was accordingly stript, and placed like the rest, when the Doctor made a *false Orifice* that would not bleed, using the same Remarks of him, to the By-standers, as he did of the rest; and when he was going to make the last Remark he made for the rest, the Person Swouned away and dyed without loss of Blood, purely by Fancy.

Quest. 2. *Are uneasy, painful, and unreasonable thoughts which incessantly start up in the Mind at Devotion, Business, or Divertisement, the natural effects of a Melancholy Habit or Constitution, or the Suggestions of the Wicked Spirit, or what else—And if so, how shall a person that hath a long time lain under this sad and heavy pressure, be restored to a Sedateness and Vivacity of thoughts, to a clear Judgment, and an undisturb'd Imagination?*

Ans. We are strangers to the Querist's Life and Actions, and therefore cannot be positive in the Cause of such an unhappiness, but let the Cause be what it will, there's a certain Remedy, a particular Repentance of what he knows he is guilty of, and a general one for his forgot Impieties. No Counsel, Advise, Enjoyment, or Preferment whatever, in this World, are comparable to the Pleasures resulting from Penitence and a Holy Life, this calms and makes all easie; let the disturbance proceed from what Cause soever, 'tis lasting, and not to be pall'd when the pleasures of Sense are quickly over, and leave a dissatisfaction behind 'em.

Quest. 3. *What are we to think of the Mandrake, whether Fictitious? Or if real, whether the ordinary Virtues ascribed to it, are to be credited?*

Ans. To the former part of the Question, about *Fictitiousness*, we answer, That there have been counterfeited ones, and may be yet. An Italian Mountebank (as *Mathiolus* relates) made of 'em out of the Root of Peony, or of a great Reed in the shape of a

Man, and sticking Millet or Flax Seed where Hair should grow, bury'd the same for twenty days, at the end whereof, fine small threds appear'd in those places, and a Skin over all the rest, which represented and passed for a true *Mandrake*: But that there are real ones, we our selves are certain, having seen and examined 'em with great Curiosity—The word probably may be derived from *Mandragen* the German Apellation, Man signifying in that language the same with ours, and *Dragen* is to bear or carry, or something that resembles the *Humane Nature*. *Pythagoras* calls it, an *Anthropomorphite-plant*, where he endeavours to prove his *Metempsychosis*, because 'tis related, that they have been sometimes found where dead People have been Gibbeted; but we may let *Pythagoras* alone in Ravings, who taught the same of Beans, and had them in such Reverence, that he suffered himself to be killed in a Field of Beans rather than run the hazard of trampling upon some of his Friends, whose Soul might be got into such and such a Bean; not but at the same time we allow, that the Juice of Humane Bodies may be productive of some particular Weeds, &c. since of the Urine of a Dog is produced the Herb *Orrach*, and as some say, the Seed of Stags produces the Mushrooms, called *Boleti Cervini*. There are several kinds of *Mandrakes*, one is called *Mandragoras*, or the white *Mandrake*, which is productive of Sleep; the other, *Mandragoras Niger*, the Female; these two have Leaves broad and long as a Lettuce, something shining, and bear Apples about as big as a Lemmon; 'tis probable *Leah* hired *Rachel* with one of these to sleep with *Jacob*. The third sort is called *Morion*, or *Mandrake of Theophrastus*, higher Stalk, lesser Leaves, and with a Fruit not bigger than a Lemmon. They are all Somniferous according to *Galen*, &c. Naturalists. *Columella* speaking of the Soil where they grow, says,

*Quamvis semihominis vesano gramine fata
Mandragoræ pariat flores—*

There's many vain idle Stories reported of 'em, as when they are taken out of the Ground, they emit such a skreech, that the Dog which finds 'em out dies immediately: Others say, that the Root cannot be found except a little before the rising of the *Pleiades*, which is about the beginning of September; others, that by the help of them, Thieves may safely steal Goods out of Houses, or Children from their Mothers Breast, those that behold them being unable to defend themselves, because that Plant stupifies their Hand: Some, that 'tis apply'd with great Effect in Philtres and amorous Potions: Read *Henry Bouquet*, and *Levinus Lemnius*, the only certain Vertue that they have, is *Opiatism*, and that they provoke Sleep.

Quest.

Quest. 4. *What is the manner of the Popes Election.*

Ans. 'Tis to be supposed, that a turn of the Fate of Christendom, which is yet depending, has made such an extraordinary delay in the late Conclave, for they ought not to exceed thirty days in choosing a new Pope. this delay only excepted, the manner is as follows, (*Heyl. Cosm. p. 112. 113.*) In the Popes Palace, on the Hill *Vatican* are, amongst other Buildings, five Halls, two Chappels, and a Gallery seventy foot long: the Gallery is appointed for Conference, one Chappel for the Mass and for the Election, the other with the Halls are for the Cardinals Lodgings: every Hall hath two rows of Chambers, which are purposely for the time, made of green or Violet Cloth. To each Cardinal is allowed four Servants to lie in his Chamber. They that are once within are compelled, unless they be sick, still to continue there; and such as are once out, are no more permitted to go in, lest by that means the Cardinals should maintain Intelligence with any foreign Princes. To this Conclave (for by this name the place of the Election is called) is but one door, to which belongeth four Locks and as many Keys: one Key is in the keeping of the Cardinals, one of the City-Bishops, one of the *Roman Nobility*, and one of the Master of the Ceremonies. There is in this Door a Wicket or Hatch, which is opened only at Dinners and Suppers, whereof the Master of the Ceremonies keepeth the Key. At this Hole the Cardinals Servants receive their Meat, every Dish being first diligently searched, lest any Letters should be conveyed in them. As for the Lodgings, they have neither holes nor windows to give light, so that there they make day of Wax candles. And lest the Pope should be made by force, both the City and Conclave are strongly guarded. When the Cardinals are going to Election, the Privileges of the Cardinals are recited, which every one sweareth to observe, in case he be chosen Pope. Then the Master of the Ceremonies ringing a Bell, calleth them to Mass: which ended, there is brought to every Cardinal a Chair, and therein a Scroll of all the Cardinals names. Before the Altar it self is set a Table covered with a Purple Cloth whereupon is set a Chalice and a Silver Bell, and about it six Stools, on which sit two Cardinal-Bishops, two Cardinal-Priests, and two Cardinal-Deacons. Every Cardinal writeth his Voice in a piece of Paper, goeth to the Altar, prayeth God to guide him in the Election, putteth his Voice into the Chalice, and departeth to his Seat. The first Bishop taketh out all the Papers, and delivereth them to the first Deacon, who unfoldeth each of them, readeth (without mentioning the name of the Elector) the name of the Elected; and every Cardinal in his particular Scroll noteth how many Voices every one hath. The Account being

made, the first Priest having the like Scroll, pronounceth who hath most Voices: which done, the Priest ringeth a Silver Bell, at which call the Master of the Ceremonies bringeth in a Pan of Coals, and burneth all the little Papers, wherein the names of the Elected were written. He that hath the most Voices (so that his Voices exceed the proportion of two parts of three) is acknowledged Pope, and adored by the rest of the Cardinals: but if they exceed not this number, they must begin all anew. If in the space of thirty days the Election be not fully ended, then must the Cardinals be kept from Fire, Light, and Victuals till they are fully agreed. The Wicket which we before mentioned, is called the golden Gate, at which stand an infinite number of poor people, on whom the new Pope having opened that Gate, bestoweth his fatherly Benediction, and remitteth to them all their Sins. Then striketh he continually on the same Door with a golden Mallet, which whilst he is doing, Workmen without break it open. The Chips, stones, Dust, and Dirt, which fall from the Gate, while it is opening, are gathered and preserved as choicest Reliques, and the golden Mallet is usually given to that Cardinal who is in most Grace with the new Pope.

Quest. 5. *When a Man is Marrying, and says, with this Ring I thee wed, why does he also say, with my Body I thee worship, and with all my worldly Goods I thee endow, when as soon as they are married, he becomes the Head, and what was hers is his, and not his hers?*

Ans. 'Tis a mistake, his worldly Goods are as much hers after the Marriage, as her own were before Marriage, and 'tis no more on his part, only Marriage makes this difference, whereas before they might each dispose of their own without rendring any account to each other, now in justice they are obliged to each other to dispose, &c. by a joynt consent, for they being one, their Wills ought to be so too, not but at the same time they have power to assign over such strictness, and to rest satisfy'd with each others managements in all trifling concerns; nay, the greatest, when there's reason for't; and as for becoming the Head it may very well agree with his Promise of Worship. Worship had anciently a larger signification than it now commonly has, and signified any high respect paid or due to God or Man. Thus in the History of *David*, and the Peoples offering for the Temple, *1 Chron. 29. 20.* after the Solemnity was over, 'tis said of the People—*They worship the Lord and the King.* To this day we use the Title of your Worship and Right Worshipful; and in a Sence not unlike, 'tis taken in the Form of Matrimony, being equivalent to a Promise of great care and high Respect, which the Bridegroom promises his Bride, whom he is to regard and cherish as his own Flesh.