

The Athenian Mercury :

Tuesday, September 15. 1691.

Quest. 1. **VV** *Hether it be good Conduct in a General to sit down before a Town, before he has beaten the Enemy out of the Field?*

Ans. The Circumstances must decide it, since in some Cases it's good Conduct, in others quite contrary: For Example; When the Enemy is the stronger, it's madness to sit down before a City, where the Garrison is of any Strength, and so to have one Enemy before, and another behind—which was the ruine of the *Turkish* Army at the last Siege of *Vienna*; tho' the quite contrary happen'd afterwards to the *Christians* in another Siege, when they took the Town in the Face of the whole Body of the *Turkish* Army, after they had soundly beaten 'em in their attempting to relieve it. Whence it's plain enough, that 'tis no ill Policy, where a General has a mind to draw an Enemy to a Battel, to sit down before some considerable Town, if his Troops are hearty and numerous, and sufficient at once to secure his Works against the Town, and draw out and engage the Enemy—In which Case one of these two things must happen—either he takes the Town in their fight, or else has his desire in fighting 'em when they come to relieve it. But in these Cases the Season of the Year and the Strength of the Town deserve also his consideration.

Quest. 2. *Since there are so many new ways of Murdering lately invented, that were unknown to the Ancients, and their defensive and heavy Armour generally neglected, how comes it to pass that there are yet fewer kill'd in a Battel now than were then?*

Ans. As there are new ways of Murdering invented, unknown to the Ancients, so there are many of their old ways forgotten, and unknown to us; for the World was always ingenious enough in Mischief, as we find in the Siege of *Jerusalem* by the *Romans*, some of the Cities of the *Gauls* by *Cæsar*, but especially in the Siege and Defence of *Syracuse* by *Marcellus* and *Archimedes*: Tho' these, it must be own'd, were rather used among 'em in Sieges than Field-fights. Their Ancient Darts, it's true, were almost as deadly as our small Guns, and as inevitable—But their Piles were a very heavy sort of a business, tho' strong and able where they took: Of their Swords, Slings, and other Weapons, read *Lipſius*. Their Horse were generally weak and few, vastly unproportionable to their Foot, and good for little but Fiequeering at one another: Their Chariots were dreadful, as described by Ancient Writers, arm'd with Scythes and Death: Their Elephants were rather troublesome than serviceable: Their Foot was their greatest Force, unless among the *Persians*, whereof consisted the *Macedonian* Phalanx, and greatest part of the invincible *Roman* Legions. Now the Reason why we have fewer kill'd in our Fights than they in theirs, is no better nor worse than because we run away sooner: They then stood it out, Foot to Foot, and hackt one another for a whole Day; nay, sometimes several Days together—But now a great part of the boasted Art of War is the Art of running away, dodging about, keeping as long from Fighting as they can, and then Fighting as little as possible, unless one side vastly outnumber, or has otherway the Advantage of the other. Another Reason may be, they then commonly met in vast numbers, a Hundred thousand, Three hundred, nay, sometimes Five hundred thousand or more of a side; and out of more there must be more kill'd, tho' one would think it impossible for 'em all, or one half of 'em to engage—whereas the greatest Armies of this side *Europe* seldom amount to above 50000; and tho' the *Moscovites* talk of Hundreds of thousands in the Field against the *Tartars*, yet they are so wise as seldom or never to come to a Battel with 'em. The *Turks* indeed have generally great Armies, having vast Territories to raise 'em, and so have the Eastern Nations, especially the *Chinese*: but then when they meet, we find propor-

tionable Slaughter made among 'em, and many times more kill'd than would compose one or two whole *European* Armies. As for the heavy Armour of the Ancients, our Modern Warriours have wisely thrown it off, because it hinders 'em both from fighting and running away—But in the old Battels they were ty'd to't by such a deal of Luggage as they had about 'em, and cou'd hardly stir, at least but very gravely, if they had ne're so much mind to't. This after all must be acknowledged in Defence of the present Age, that, as one of the *Irish* Prisoners told our Men, a strong Artillery is a thing not to be fought with, they are a terrible and irresistible Enemy, and must break in pieces any thing that stands against 'em, where they come to bear; nor is it easie for a confused Body of Men to rally again, when once thus disanimated and broken, and turn'd into a Rout instead of an Army.

Quest. 3. *One that keeps a Publick House desires to know what Rules to follow, that he may not displease God, nor offend his Guests, as to the Season of Time, and Quantity of Liquors?*

Ans. 'Tis an unanswerable Question; for 'tis impossible for a Person that keeps a Publick House to carry himself so, (under the forementioned Circumstances) that he shou'd not offend God, and yet gratifie his Guests, (generally speaking) but thus far may be done, which is the most that can be expected, viz. That no just Cause of Offence may be given; and for such People as think they have Cause, when they have not, you have this satisfaction, that you do 'em a Friendship, and such as all honest Men must applaud, nay, themselves when they come to be Sober. The Method to be taken in such a Management (we conceive) is this. As to the Quantity of Liquors to be vended to particular Persons, no Limits can be assign'd, since Persons are of so different Constitutions, that what is necessary to the refreshment of Nature in some Persons, may be Intemperance in others; so that the Rule here, is, You may let all Persons call on, 'till you find they begin to exceed their due Limits, and when you perceive 'em entring the Confines of Drunkenness, 'tis Wickedness in you to let 'em proceed any further, since thereby you become accessory to all the Irregularities they shall commit in their Drunken Humours; and how great ones some have been guilty of then, is Argument enough to deter all thinking Persons. As to the Time, you may (as near as you can) safely observe the Custom of your Civiliz'd Neighbours; to exceed may be scandalous, and bring an ill Repute upon you, and to do less may be against an honest Interest.

Quest. 4. *If between two Persons, one rich, the other poor, there is contracted a real Friendship, may he that is Poor, without any Breach to that sacred Bond, seek to better his Fortunes by marrying with his Rich Friends near Relation without his knowledge?*

Ans. If the Lady has sufficient to maintain a Family—if the rich Friend is so unjust to oppose his poor Friend's happiness merely because he's Poor—if things are in those Circumstances, we answer the Question in the Affirmative.

Quest. 5. *Whether it's possible for a Girl of seven Years old to be in Love, the Querist having an Instance of one who has all the most violent Symptoms of that Passion at that Age?*

Ans. It's not impossible but *Cupid* may have been in the mind to get himself a Play-fellow of his own Age, and having often before made old People Children, be now resolv'd to make a child Old before its time. That Children Love we are sure, as well as Hate, Fear, are Angry, Rejoice, and are subject to all the other Passions. But all these Passions being for the most part short and fleeting, not steady or resolv'd, it's seldom or never there can be any such thing found amongst 'em as may properly be call'd Love. But if there be any thing of it, in the Party mention'd, it must certainly be very innocent; and if the Person belov'd can but love the pretty Play-thing again, he need not, at least for some Years, be under any Apprehensions

tensions either from her Fallhood, or the Addressess of a Rival.

Quest. 6. Is the marriage of a young Man with an old Woman destructive to youth?

Ans. Yes undoubtedly, if she's very old, and requires him to lye very close — In which Case his best way to accost her wou'd be with Horace's Compliment — *Quid tibi vis Mulier, &c.*

Quest. 7. Suppose a young Man, not concern'd therein, shou'd out of Curiosity show his Mistress the third Query in your Athenian Mercury, Vol. 3 Numb 4. and she thereupon reject him — Whether in this Case wou'd be the greater, his Folly or her Severity?

Ans. We shou'd be heartily sorry if our Mercury shou'd be so much as the innocent Cause of any Man's misfortune, and if the Case were more than a Supposition, wou'd really lament his loss, and endeavour as far as we can, if 'tis worth the while, to regain it. Accordingly we must here be forc'd to give the Cause against the Lady, to whom the Gentleman might with the greatest Innocence in the World show that or any other Question, and desire her Opinion thereof — And if she does not again Entertain him, we pronounce her in the Name of all our Society, Faithless and Foolish, and unworthy the Honour and Happiness of a constant Lover.

Quest. 8. How do we call to mind those things we had forgotten?

Ans. Mr. Hobbs has a very pleasant way of explaining this in his *Tripes* or *Discourse of Humane Nature*, where he defines Remembrance by Forgetfulness. But tho' he assumes never so dictatorial an Air, he must not expect to make us take Contradiction for Oracles. But we must not quarrel at what others advance, without bringing something of our own, and allowing the World the same Liberty to Censure ours. We must then make a difference between recollecting and remembering, (tho' in common Speech they are taken for the same) the latter whereof is as it were the Effect of the former. When we wou'd remember any thing more distinctly whereof we had before a confused Idea, we first recollect or gather together in our Minds the Circumstances thereof, and so climb from one thing to the other, (as when we have lost any thing about the House, we tumble over our Goods to find it, 'till by the Relations and Dependencies there are between all things, we at length arrive at what we desire. To illustrate it in Travelling — When I have been such or such a Road before, I have a sort of Picture or a Map thereof, at least of some principal Places therein inscribed on my Mind: Now when I return hither agen, I see such a Tree or such a Stone, which I remarkt when I went the same way last — this brings to mind such another which lyes further, or such a turning either of this side or beyond it, by which I know I am in the right.

Quest. 9. How comes a Fright to bring a drunken Man to his Senses agen?

Ans. We question whether it will do so, they having seldom Wit enough to be afraid: But if it does, this may be assign'd as a probable Reason thereof; The Vapours which fly to the Head from the Stomach, (as the Spirits in Bottled Ale) in a continued Stream, are by such a Fright checkt in their Motion, and return agen together with the Spirits and Blood towards the Heart, which leaving the Head freer than before, may bring 'em a little to their Senses.

Quest. 10. Whence proceeds that glimmering Light which we see in the Body of the Moon, when totally Eclips'd?

Ans. It proceeds from those refracted Rayes which from the ambient Air strike upon the Body of the Moon, tho' the Sun shines not immediately upon it — as when we hold our Hand or any other Object before a Candle, especially if at some distance from it, tho' it darkens the opposite Wall comparatively to what it was before, yet 'tis still much lighter than if there were no Candle at all in the room.

Quest. 11. What Causes the Union of Soul and Body, of such different Natures, one an active immaterial Substance, the other unactive lumpish Clay?

Ans. Nothing but that Divine Power who made both; nor perhaps does any one else certainly know the manner of this miraculous Union, he having left some things in Nature beyond the reach of humane Curiosity, on purpose to point out a superiour Agent and first Being, as necessary in Philosophy as in Divinity or Policy either.

The Gentlemen that sent in several Ingenious Questions, amongst which was one relating to the Antiquity of Tyburn, and the Prototrator that suffer'd there: Moses Sight of Canaan, Summer Lightning, &c. shall have 'em all Answer'd together in the first Paper of the fourth Volume.

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