

# The Athenian Mercury.

Qu. 1. **W**Hat Description do ye meet with in History about Pilate's Lake?

Ans. There's a Lake so called in Suisse, near a Town named *Lucerna*, in a Plain environ'd with high Mountains; from the highest of which (as some Authors wou'd make us believe) *Pilate* cast himself into the Water, and the common Report is that every Year he shews himself there in his Judges habit, and whosoever it be that by chance happens to see him (whether Man or Woman) Dies within the Year, *Joachin Vadian* the Expositor of *Pomponius Mela* writes another notable thing of this Lake, it hath (saith he) such a Property, that if any one cast a Bone, a piece of Wood, or any thing else into it, this Lake swells and grows into such a boisterous Tempest, that it runs beyond its Bounds in great Fury, in such sort, that it sometimes Drowns a great part of the Country, from whence proceeds great Loss and Damage as well to Trees and Plants as to Beasts, and if these things are not cast in, it swells not at all. This *Joachin* further saith, That there are Edicts that forbid upon pain of Life, for any one to cast any thing into this Lake, and that divers that have transgressed this Edict have been Executed — *Pliny* has a Relation much like this, of a deep Pit in *Dalmatia*, into which, if one cast a Stone or other heavy thing, there arises such a boisterous and furious Air out of it, that it breeds a dangerous Tempest to the Neighbours thereabout; the *Querist* is at his Liberty to believe what he pleases of both.

Qu. 2. What Countryman was *Pilate*?

Ans. Some say, he was Born at Lyons in France; others, that this Name *Pontius* comes from a Family in Italy, viz. *Pontius Ireneas* Captain of the Samnites, which vanquished the Romans: But be it how it will, this *Pilate* (either in respect to his Person or his Parentage) came to be of great note in Rome, and being known to *Tiberius*, Successor to *Octavius* (according to *Josephus* and *Eusebius*) was sent by him in the Twelfth Year of his Empire to Govern *Jerusalem*, and stiled him Proctor of the Empire; whereupon *Pilate* governed the Holy City, and all the Province of *Judea* which is called *Palestina*, and he he held that Office 10 Years, in the Seventh of which, and the Eighteenth of the Emperor *Tiberius*, he gave Sentence of Death upon our Saviour *Jesus Christ*. It's also said, That when *Pilate* came to Rome, he was Accused before *Caius Caligula*, Successor to *Tiberius*, to have Prophaned the Temple by putting in Statues, Images, &c. and Robbing the Common Treasury, and other grievous Crimes, for which he was Banished to Lyons, where he killed himself with his own hands, Eight

Years after the Death of our Saviour, according to *Eusebius*, which seems to contradict the Relation of the Lake above said.

Qu. 3. Is there Thinking in Dreaming?

Ans. Thinking is an act of the Intellect, but the intellect acts not but by means of the Senses, immediately, the Phantasms or Representations of material objects, or else by a recollection of the Ideas of such objects have been formerly represented, the first of these can't be in a Dream, because all the Senses are bound up by sleep from their proper and distinct actions, as to the last, we see no more reason to believe it, because the Animal Body cannot at all attend the Intellect, a Soul which never sleeps, being it self bound up from performing its Offices, indeed we meet with some Ingenious Authors, particularly Dr. *Brown* in his *Religio Medici*, who tells us of choosing a quiet Dream for his Devotions, giving this reason, that the Soul at that time is in a manner freed from its Clog of Flesh, and acts much after the nature of unbodied Spirits. We allow the Animal Soul in Man to retain some impressions of acts formerly done, because push'd on by the constitution, and to prove that Dreams belong to the Animal, and not the rational part of Man, we can bring daily instances of Dogs, Horses, &c. Dreaming, and if so we see no absolute necessity for thought in our Dreams. — There was another question sent by the same hand, which shall be answer'd when foreign pieces come to our hands, which we daily expect.

Qu. 4. Whether a Lady having a Man to her Husband that keeps ill company, and debauches himself with common Whores, whether (I say) may not she break the bond of Marriage, by separating her self from him, and marrying again, or by repaying him in his own Coin?

Ans. — Upon proof of Adultery, she may sue out a Divorce from Bed and Board, and one Third of the Estate for maintenance, but the Law allows not a second Marriage whilst he is living, as for falseness to him in revenge, 'tis very wicked and ridiculous, because the person that transgresses injures him (or her) self more than the other.

Quest. 5. Which is the greatest sin Pride or Passion?

Ans. Passion is only an Effect of Pride, therefore less by far than the Cause it self.

Quest. 6. Having lately bought an Horse vouch'd to me for a sound one, and upon tryal find him otherwise, — Query, whether I am obliged to discover his faults unask'd to him that shall buy him of me?

Ans. No, we suppose not, the buyers prudence and skill are to be employ'd in that, but if he leaves it to you to describe the Qualities



*Qualities* of your Horse, you ought to tell him the truth, and not be so ungenerous as to deceive him.

Qu. 7. *What account can you give us of the Bezoar?*

Ans. It comes from the Province of the Kingdom of \* *Golsonda* toward the North-east, it is found amongst the Ordure in the *Paunch* of a *Wild Goat*, that browses upon a certain Tree, which bears little buds, round about which and the *Tops of the Boughs*, the *Bezoar* Engenders in the Maw of the Goat it is shap'd according to the form of the Buds or Tops of the Branches which the Goat eats, which is the reason there are so many *shapes of Bezoar Stones*, about as big as half an *Hazel Nut*, the Natives by feeling the Belly of the Goat know how many Stones she has within, and sell the Stones according to the Quantity, — some say that in the *East and West*, of the same Province, that *Bezoars* are bred in the same manner in Cows, to the weight of seventeen or eighteen *Ounces* apiece, but these are of little value, six Grains of the other working more powerfully than thirty of this; — as for the *Bezoar* which breeds in Apes (as some believe) it is so strong that two Grains work as effectually as six of Goats *Bezoar*, but 'tis very scarce as being only found in those Apes that breed in the Island of *Marassar*, this sort of *Bezoar* is round, a peice of it as big as a Nut, being sometimes worth 25 *l. Sterling*, — Portugals make a great account of this *Bezoar*, standing always upon their Guard, for fear of being Poisoned.

Qu. 8. *Where, and how are yellow Ambergrise, and Musk produced?*

Ans. Amber is nothing but a certain *Congellation* made in the Sea like Gum; for you shall find sometimes Flies, Gnatts, and other Insects congeal'd in't. It's only found upon the *Coast of Prussia in the Baltick Sea*, where the Sea throws it upon the Sand when such and such Winds blow. The *Electör of Brandenburg*, who is Sovereign of that Coast, farms it out for 20000 *Crowns* a year, and the Farmers keep Guards on both sides of the Shore in regard the Sea casts it up sometimes upon one side, and sometimes upon the other, to prevent the stealing.

As for *Ambergrise*, it is mostly found in the *Eastern Sea*, though some parcels have been found upon the *Coasts of England*, and in some other parts of Europe, the greatest quantity is found upon the *Coast of Melinda*, but more especially in the mouth of a River called *Rio de Sona*, the Governour of *Mozambick* gets much by it.

All the *Musk* that comes from *Persia*, comes first out of the Kingdom of *Boutan*, from whence 'tis brought to *Palna*, the chief City of *Bengala*, to truck it away for other Commodities. It grows in the bladder of a certain Beast much like a Goat, under the belly, as big as an Egg, nearer to the

*Genital parts* than the *Navil*; when 'tis taken first out of the bladder, it looks like clotted Blood: There was one of these Beasts lately brought to *Paris*, but the scent of it was so strong, that it made all Peoples heads to ache, that came near it: These sort of Creatures are in vast numbers in 65 and 60 Degrees, and in the Months of *February* and *March*, when they have endured a sharp hunger by reason of the great Snows that fall: where they breed they will come to 44 or 45 Degrees, to fill themselves with Corn and new Rice, and then it is that the Natives lay Gins and Snares for to catch them as they go back, shooting some with Bows, and knocking others o'th' head.

Qu. 9. *What's the reason of the Petrefaction of Coral, when it comes into the Air, being soft under the Water?*

Ans. 'Tis a vulgar error, and as such taken notice of, by the Ingenious *Monsieur Tavernier*, who has describ'd the nature of its production, where 'tis to be found, and how 'tis fish'd for, — the places he mentions are the *Coasts of Sardigna, Arquerrel, Boza, Sicily, Catalogna, Island of Majorque*: It grows under hollow Rocks where the Sea is deep. The Fishers fix two spars of wood a cross, fastning a great piece of lead in the middle to make it sink, after that they wind carelessly about the Spar good store of *Tufted Hemp*, and fasten the Wood to two Cords, one end whereof hangs at the Poop, and the other at the Prow of the Vessel; then letting go the Wood with the Stream or Current by the sides of the Rock, the Hemp twists it self among the Coral, so that sometimes they stand in need of five or six Boats, to pull up the Wood again, and if one of the Cables should chance to break with the streis, all the *Romers* are in danger to be lost: while they tear up the Coral thus by force, there tumbles as much into the Sea as they fetch up, and the bottom of the Sea being generally very *ouzy*, the Coral will be eaten as our fruits are by the Worms, so that the sooner they get it out of the Mud, among some branches of Coral, there Engenders a kind of spongy Matter, like our *Honey Combs*; in some certain Months of the Year, you may squeeze out of the end of the Branch a kind of *Milky Substance*, which falling upon any thing that it meets first in the Sea, as if it light upon a *Dead Skull, the Blade of a Sword, or a Pomegranate*, produce another Branch of Coral. And I have seen a *Pomegranate*, and had it in my Hand, that fallen into the Sea, about which the Coral had twin'd at least half a foot high.

Qu. 10. *It is a great hinderance in my daily Devotion, to pray that which I don't understand, therefore pray resolve me the true meaning and exposition of the Pronoun; It, as 'tis mention'd in the response in the Gloria Patri?*

Ans. *Glory, -- Glory be to the Father, &c.* As *Glory* was to him in the Beginning, let it be now, and ever.