

# The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, October 20. 1691.

Quest. 1. **G**entlemen, For the sake of a disconsolate Gentleman, I presume to desire you to Answer the few following particulars, who walking about Seven or Eight of the Clock at Night, saw, or thought he saw an Apparition in the likeness of a Man walking near him, which pursuing him three times about a Close, at the fourth time spake to him many weighty words; among which he warned him to Repent of a Crime which he had Committed, mentioning the Time and Place, and the Person who only was privy to it, who is gone a Year since to Ireland as an Officer: The young Gentleman being very much Troubled about it, desires to know whether this be a good or bad Spirit? or, what it may be? and whether it is necessary for him to mind his sayings? and whether it is better for him to discover the Crime or no, which to conceal, he bound himself with an Oath? and whether this might be the Spirit of that Person which was privy to it, (which the young Gentleman is persuaded that it is) if by Chance dead in War? Pray be as particular as you can, for the satisfaction of the Person.

Ans. That Spirits have sometimes really appear'd to Mortals in the World, is amongst all sober Men beyond Controversie, and were of old taken Notice of; as may be rationally concluded from that Scripture, Luke 24. 37. where 'tis said, the Disciples were afraid, and supposed they had seen a spirit. If our Querist would have been satisfy'd, he shou'd have felt whether it had been a Substance, or only a Body of Air, as was advis'd Mr. Earl of Colchester about 37 Years since, who once try'd, but his Arms met as if he had grasp'd at Air. We know not what our Querist's Crime may be, but we think he ought to make what Restitution he is able in Case of Injury: If he's depriv'd of that Opportunity, let him make his Confessions to God; if it be a Case of Murder, we don't find that he is Obliged to deliver up himself to the Law, but to spend his Life in a continu'd Act of Repentance. If we knew the particular sin, we cou'd be fuller in our Advice; but sure we are, his binding himself by Oath is not Obligatory, if the Mischief of Concealing be greater than that of Confessing; and 'tis almost impossible, let the Sin be what it will but it must be so. 'Tis very probable, if the Person be not Melancholly, but 'twas the Spirit of his Friend; For we read of some that have been so Desperate as to make Solemn Covenants with their living Friends, to appear unto them after their Death, of which we have an instance in one Mr. Watkinson, who formerly lived in Smithfield, who told his Daughter, (taking her leave of him, and expressing her fears that she should never see him more) that should he dye, if ever God did permit the Dead to see the Living, he would see her again: Now after he had been dead about half a Year, on a Night when she was in Bed, but could not sleep, she heard Musick, and the Chamber grew lighter and lighter, she then saw her Father by the Bed-side, who said, *MAL*, Did not I tell thee I wou'd see thee agen? and so discours'd with her upon several weighty Matters, and vanisht. But we shall not enlarge here, A Member of our Society having almost finish'd a Treatise of Unbodied Spirits, which will be publish'd in three Weeks at the furthest. But as to this present Relation, it looks so dark, that our whole Society has thought fit to Advertize the Party concern'd, that if he pleases to send two or three Lines by the Penny-Post, directed to Mr. Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry, and therein to signifie the Time and Place where he will be, the Society will appoint some one of their Members to meet him with further Instructions what to do --- and one who will also go with him, if possible, to see and speak with this Spirit. And they do hereby promise him all the Friendship and Secrecy he can expect at their hands: But the Letter so directed must be Writ in the same Hand as this that gives the Account, thereby to prevent Mistakes or Abuses, which may otherwise be put upon either Party by any other

Person. Let the Querist send as soon as he pleases, and mention the Time and Place a day before-hand, that he mayn't be disappointed of his Expectations.

Quest. 2. It was Observed in this City, upon the Night for the Publick Rejoycing about the Surrendring of Lymrick, (which was October the 13th.) that there was a Bonfire kindled after Twelve a Clock, and Persons very merry thereat --- the Query is --- Whether it was for the Surrendring of Lymrick, or for the Anniversary Birth of the late King James the second, he being born also about the same hour, as is supposed.

Ans. 'Tis an unpardonable Folly to believe that any one can Rejoyce for the beginning of Unhappiness, or the Commencement of such a Life as was unhappily byas'd into Misery, and by such Persons too as by their Principles were accessary to it. But if after all, such Monsters can pretend to be Merry, 'tis but as unaccountable as their Sorrow, for living under the Protection of such a Crown as wou'd render 'em more happy than their Wishes. But their Zeal (if so) has made 'em mistake a day, the late King being Born on the 14th. of October, about Twelve at Night. --- Lymrick is Surrendred! and to the Happiness too both of its Friends and Enemies, if every thing be impartially consider'd; and every Englishman has Cause to rejoyce, unless a few ridling Gamesters that value no Publick Loss like that of their private *Lou-d'ores* about the Surrender.

Quest. 3. One of a Sanguine Complexion being married to a Husband, who soon after went upon a Trading Voyage for Virginia, intending to return back in a Years time, but hath been absent from her for above these Eight Years; neither hath she received any Letter from him in all the time, and not knowing whether he be dead or alive, but by uncertain reports, she desires to be inform'd whether she may lawfully marry another Man?

Ans. The Law provided formerly seven Years, after which it suppos'd the Man dead, but since Navigation and Commerce are so well settled, a less time is requir'd, because Advices arrive much sooner and more certain than formerly; if she means by lawfully, according to our Law, she may Marry another, but we can't Promise her Free by the Law of God, which no where makes such an Exception. We have several Instances of this Nature, as the Husbands distance and silence for above the time the Law has prescrib'd, and of the Womans marrying another, after which her first Husband came home, and Sued the other for his Wife, and upon Tryal, the Judges gave her the Liberty of taking which she wou'd; and of some that have had their Wife again, and turn'd the second Husband off. Thus the Law has done, we can say no more, but desire her to secure the Quiet of her Conscience, and advise with the Ecclesiastick Authority, since the other gives her the Liberty she wants.

Quest. 4. An homunculus, &c? the Querist knows the rest.

Ans. Nequaquam.

Quest. 5. I want to be resolv'd what kind of Creature that is which the Scripture calls a Dragon, for I cou'd never yet be satisfy'd about it?

Ans. Dragons are of divers sorts, scald and unscald, of divers Colours, grey, reddish, and variegated; and of Natures Poysonous and not Poysonous, Terrene and Marine. Lucan in his *Pharsalia* has a Curious Enumeration of 'em; where he gives Account of the great Annoyance they gave the Roman Army, as they pass'd through the Desarts: Some are of prodigious magnitude and length, witness the Skin of one now in the Tower of London: I my self saw the Skin of one, call'd an *Amphisbana*, about five Foot long, with short Leggs, and the Skin about three Foot over, it was shap'd almost like an Oval Table, with a Head at either end, pretty large, and shap'd like the Head of ordinary Snakes or Adders. Some Heathen Authors mention very strange Accounts



counts of such as have been kill'd, and hang'd up in publick Places: History speaks of one that had devour'd a whole Stag, Horns and all. — In the Life of *Attilus* the Roman General is describ'd a prodigious Dragon or Serpent, which by its very Breath infected the Air, and destroyed the Circumjacent Inhabitants, several Devices were used to destroy it, but in vain, till they had invented Engines to cast great Stones at it, by which it was destroyed; and so great was the Deliverance, that an Ovation or small Triumph was made for it. In *Baker's Chronicle*, in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, there's mention made of a small Wing'd Dragon. The Dragons in the Waters, mention'd in Sacred Writ, is believ'd to be Crocodiles and Aliigators: As for the Land-Dragons mention'd there, we refer our Querist to the Description and manner of Annoyance of those Dragons mention'd in *Lucan's Pharsalia*, which compar'd with the terrible Effects of the other, will give the best light into the Question we can meet with. The Devil is call'd a Serpent and a Dragon in Scripture, perhaps not so much because he ruin'd Mankind in the shape of a Serpent, as for the pernicious Qualifications of such Creatures, which are now destroy'd every where but in the vast Deserts of Arabia, and a few more places; and perhaps it may be question'd within these two or three hundred Years, whether there ever was such a Creature as a Wolf, because they are also mostly destroy'd by reason of their Mischiefs in all Countreys.

Quest. 6. Upon my Wifes Conception I am immediately sick, and so continue every Morning till she is quick, and bear equal Pains with her whilst in Labour: This is matter of fact, pray your Opinion of the Reason thereof?

Ans. Agues and several Diseases the Learned say, are cured by Transplantation, of which divers Authors have writ; and some wou'd from hence infer a Reason for such Instances as this in the Question, but we think it foreign to the Matter. Sir *Kenelm Digby* has very learnedly treated on the Nature of Sympathy betwixt the particulars of one and the same Principle, which comes very near the Question, and to which we refer our Querist. — Our Thoughts upon it are these, That the Semen has potentially an Idea of every particular part of Humanity, and the Imagination in the Generative Crisis may be so great as to fix the Idea a great deal stronger than Naturally it is, even so far as to retain a sensible Communication to or from the whole Mass from whence it is seperated, so that whether the whole or the part suffers, the same is Communicated to the other by the aforesaid sense of the imaginary Impression.

Quest. 7. There being a strange Story of an Apparition to some Souldiers in Scotland, mention'd in several News-Letters, you are desired to give your Opinion of it?

Ans. In the Essay of recording Memorable Providences, we have an Instance much like this: At *Meenen* there appear'd a Person all in white, with a Mitre on his Head, being follow'd with two more in black, after him came four or five Squadrons, who drew up as if they intended to storm the Town; the Souldiers there refused to stand their Centry, having been so affrighted that some of them fell down in their Posts; these Spectres appeared every Night in June, 1682. but as to the present Instance 'tis very probable that 'tis an idle Story, or at most a Confederacy, or an Assignment of Warlets, a kind of Wizards very frequent in that Countrey.

Quest. 8. It hath been my misfortune to be seduced into a very great sin, and not only so, but to make the most solemn Oaths and Promises to continue in it; if I break 'em, I'm Perjur'd, if I continue in't, I'm in as ill a Condition: Pray your Advice what way to take in it?

Ans. A Promise, Oath or Obligation, to do an ill thing, binds not at all; for 'tis not only false Words, but ill Actions that are Lyes, being Deviations from Truth or Equity: To Vow to do an ill thing, and perform it, is a greater Complication of Guilt, because by so doing you Patronize a Vow of Injustice, and at the same time break some other Command to keep your Promise, which was Null as soon as made; but by breaking such a wicked Oath, you honour the Truth, and show not only your abhorrence of prosecuting a wicked Vow, but do in some measure manifest a Repentance for a Breach of the Third Command, when you took the Name of God in Vain. By breaking your Oath you Commit no

Sin, because your Oath binds you not; but by keeping it you Commit many sins at once, and do as much as in you lyes to habituate it.

Quest. 4. What ought one rightly to think of such Dissenters as have freely Communicated with the Church of England, to keep the Places into which they were put by the late King James, who now will by no means hold Communion with the same Church?

Ans. We ought to think, 'tis possible the keeping their Places was not their only or great Reason for Communicating, but something else; 'tis better and safer to err upon the right hand than upon the left; 'tis the proper Office of a Christian not to Judge others but himself. There are so many Actions which appear ill that will one day be found good, and so many Actions which appear good that upon a just Tryal will be found otherwise, that 'tis impossible to Censure other Mens Actions now, without Condemning our own.

Quest. 9. Gentlemen, There's a young Woman has set her Affections upon a Young Man, and by means of some Friend of hers has made him acquainted therewith, which he embraces, but will not Marry her without the Consent of her Parents, which he's assured neither of 'em can obtain: Your Resolution is earnestly desired in this Case, whether he may lawfully in foro Conscientiae Marry her without such Consent? This solution will not admit of delays, so that you are desired to Answer it in next Tuesday's Mercury, by reason some of their Friends, whose Advice they crav'd in this difficulty, suspended their Judgment, and recommended it to your determination?

Ans. You'll find a full Answer to this Question in Vol. 3. Numb. 10. Quest. 3.

Several of those Instances and Questions lately sent us, are already Answer'd in those 12 Numbers now in the Press that Compleat our Third Volume; which said 12 Numbers, with a Preface and Index, will be Published next Thursday, where you'll also find those NEW PROPOSALS mentioned in Mercury 5. Vol. 4.

We having receiv'd several late and strange Instances about Apparitions, Spirits, and finding the Age full of Hobbism, Sadducism, or Disbelief of such things, have thought fit to reserve 'em all together for one Paper, which will come out very speedily.

The Question about Preaching without Notes, is fully Answer'd in the 12 Numbers that will be Publish'd next Thursday.

We cannot find those Questions about Religion, mention'd in a Letter sent us last Night; but if we cou'd, we suppose the Querist is already Answered in one of those Rules laid down in our 2d. Preface.

## Advertisements.

The History of the Jacobites of Egypt, Lybia, &c. their Origine, Religion, Ceremonies, Laws and Customs: With an Account of the Jacobites of England. Done by a Person of Quality. Printed for, and Sold by *Eliphal Faye* at the Bible on the North-side of the Royal Exchange, and *R. Baldwin* at the Oxford-Arms in Warwick-lane.

In Flow-yard, the third Door in Grays-Inn-lane, lives Dr. *Thomas Kirtens*, a Collegiate Physician, and Sworn Physician in Ordinary to King Charles the Second, until his death; who with a Drink and Pill (hindring no Business) undertakes to Cure any Ulcers, Sores, Swellings in the Nose, Face, or other parts; Scabs, Itch, Scurfs, Leprosies, and Venereal Disease, expecting nothing until the Cure be finished: Of the last he hath cured many hundreds in this City, many of them after fluxing, which carries the evil from the Lower Parts to the Head, and so destroys many. The Drink is 3 s. the Quart, the Pill 1 s. a Box, with Directions; a better Purger than which was never given, for they cleanse the Body of all Impurities, which are the causes of Dropsies, Gouts, Scurvies, Stone or Gravel, Pains in the Head, and other parts. With another Drink at 1 s. 6 d. a Quart. He cures all Fevers and hot Distempers without Bleeding, except in few Bodies. He gives his Opinion to all that writes or comes for nothing.