

# The Athenian Mercury.

Quest. 1. **W**Hether the Marriage of  
Cousin Germans be lawful?

Ans. We have already answer'd this  
Question in the Negative. See Vol. N.

Quest. 2. Whether in point of Conscience as  
well as Law, upon my Presentation of a Clerk to  
a Living, I may require of him a Bond to resign  
the Living at my Pleasure, and upon my De-  
mand: And whether there be any thing in the  
Oath of Simony, or in the Authority of the Bi-  
shop over his Clergy, or otherwise, that should  
disable the Clerk from giving such Bonds; and  
whether I may be in danger of Forfeiture by tak-  
ing it?

Ans. If the Gentleman deserves the Liv-  
ing as well as any other, you can't repent  
giving it him absolutely, since there's no  
felling it; if you are not satisfied in him  
you may let him officiate till you and the  
Congregation can be better accommodated,  
only this in the mean time that he Offici-  
ates let not the least part of the Rights of  
proper Incumbent be detained from him; in  
so doing we think you act safely, and are at  
your freedom, but for taking Bonds, &c.  
we know no Presidents for it, and therefore  
'tis impracticable.

Quest. 3. A Gentleman tho' Married makes  
his Addresses to a young Lady, concealing his  
Marriage, not designing any thing dishonourable  
by her, but purely out of a desire to gain her Ac-  
quaintance, being Charmed by her Conversation.  
His Wife is since some considerable time Dead,  
and he extreemly Melancholy, which was im-  
puted to the memory of his Loss: But being pri-  
vately watched he has been heard to repeat se-  
veral Sentences relating to Love, which are sup-  
posed to be express'd in his Letters formerly writ-  
ten to the Lady, and with a great deal of Pas-  
sion when in private, sighing, abruptly calls upon  
her Name, using several other Expressions of  
Love, even almost to Madness. But being Cen-  
sured by her Relations for his former Intrigue  
during his Marriage; and dissuaded by his own  
Friends from entertaining any Thoughts of Love  
now, 'tis feared by his Actions that he will  
make some desperate attempt upon himself, if not  
by continual watching, or other means preven-  
ted. Your Advice therefore Gentlemen, is speedi-  
ly desired, and what you think may be the readi-  
est way to divert his Malady: And whether the  
young Lady may not without any cause of reflecti-  
on upon her Honour entertain him, notwith-  
standing his former fault (as they are pleas'd to  
term it) provided his Person, Fortune, &c. be  
not disagreeable?

Ans. This is a very uncommon Relation,  
but if it is the utmost that has pass'd, we  
think both the Querist and the Lady may  
proceed honourably enough to the highest  
Bond of Friendship: For things are, as  
they are in their own Nature, and not what  
prejudices of Custom, and the groundless  
Opinions of the Age represent 'em.

Quest. 4. Can they who Study the Black  
Art, otherwise called Conjurers, or in a word  
any who deal with the Devil tell any Person the  
Event of his Life absolutely, that is, without the  
Maxim held by all Astrologers, (viz.) *Astra*  
*regunt Homines, sed regit Astra Deus.* And  
further, I desire your Thoughts upon the heinous-  
ness of the Sin, particularly in order to deter a  
Friend of mine from committing it, but more  
especially the whole Kingdom, a great part of  
which do too often use it, your Answer speedily  
lest it comes too late, as to my part.

Ans. 'Tis the incommunicable Attribute  
of God to know things to come, all know-  
ledge that Men or the Devil himself has of  
Futurities are owing to the Prophecies in  
Sacred Writ, or else the Quick Correspon-  
dence that Devils keep, they can give no-  
tice a Week, a Fortnight, nay many Weeks  
(if the Voyage is long enough) before any  
ordinary Post or Message can, or else the De-  
vil knows from Natural Causes as thus, such  
and such Causes have always produc'd such  
and such Effects, and must do it again; but  
for Men, Devils, Spirits, Angels, &c. to  
know Futurities from an immediate Princi-  
ple of Fore-knowledge in themselves is an  
impossibility, and those persons that sup-  
pose it, and practise either by themselves  
or others are abus'd, and know not what an  
impious folly they are guilty of.

Quest. 5. An old Countrey Gentleman of a-  
bout Sixty, upon the sight of a Gay Lady above  
Twenty, whether it was by Sympathy or other-  
wise, found such Locomotive Faculties perplex  
him in some peculiar parts that nothing could sa-  
tisfie his Appetite but Enjoyment, for the obtain-  
ing of which, he Caress'd, Vow'd, Sung, Dan-  
ced, Treated, and what was still more Efficaci-  
ous, he presented to the highest degree, Gold  
Watches, Pearls, Guinies, and all things that  
might win the Charming Fort, which had so  
powerful an Operation, that after having view'd  
the pleasing Fort, &c. he was promised by the  
Governess a Surrender in a short time. Now in  
the Interim he finds his former Passions to be  
but empty, and he wants the power to become  
Victorious, desires your Opinion which way he  
may best serve the Lady, hide his own Inability,  
preserve his Honour, and yet not beg the help of  
any Neighbouring Garrison.

Ans. We know no better way for the  
Gentleman than to make as honourable a  
relinquishment of his pretences as he can,  
for Nature can't, won't—

Quest. 6. Two Gentlemen of the Protestant  
Church falling lately into Discourse. Among  
other things the One Asserted that there was a  
Motion before the Creation, the Other That  
there was not; your Opinion.

Ans. No; Creation supposes a making  
something out of nothing, and nothing could  
move or be moved before it had a Being.

Quest.



Quest. 7. *Why do Parrots, Magpies, &c. talk, when several other Birds cannot, if the same means be used?*

Ans. From a Natural Instinct of imitating Sounds, and not as some believe from a proper formation of their Tongue, for if it lay in the Tongue, then the likest to Mens were the most proper, as a Dog, Cat, and other Quadrupedes wou'd speak better than Parrots.

Quest. 8. *There is a certain thing in Wales, and I am told seen no where but in the Diocess of St. Davis, called in the Brittish Tongue Tan-Corph, English Fetch-Candle; 'tis a certain Fire that is seen before the death of any person, generally believed to proceed from the very Body it self, sometime before he dies, and often before he sickens, and observed to go all along the way the Corps is afterwards to be carried to the place of Burial, tho' it be through a River, and over the Grave seen to Vanish with a little rushing noise; it's bigger or lesser, redder or paler in proportion to the person to decease: There are many things said of it by the Natives, and such Circumstances as are very amazing, too long to insert, but that there is such a thing is past doubt, my self being once an Eye-witness of it: Now I would fain know your Sentiments concerning it, and as soon as conveniently you can.*

Ans. 'Tis possible this may be a Truth, but before we search for a reason, we desire to be satisfied from such Persons that are Inhabitants there, whose deceased Relations have been concerned in this Account, and who are themselves Persons of Credit and Judgment, and by consequence not apt either to impose, or be impos'd upon by prejudices a strength of fancy, if we get a subscription of such Persons, we'll give all the satisfaction we are able to our Querist.

Quest. 9. *Whether it is a Sin for a Surgeon to Cure the Venereal Disease? The occasion of the Question is this; The Querist is speedily design'd for some Employment; but amongst all that have been propos'd, that of a Chirurgeon pleases him best: But he knowing that Disease to be one of the chief Hinges on which that Profession depends, has deferr'd his Answer till he hears from you, whether it is lawful, without offending God, to Cure it, since it seems design'd by him, as a punishment for those Offenders.*

Ans. There's no Sicknes in the World but 'tis for the punishment of some Sin, now we are commanded, *To use the Physician for God hath Created him*: 'Tis true, some sort of Cures are esteem'd more honourable than others, because the Irregularities that caus'd'em may not be in so ill Reputation as others; as for instance, those that proceed from Drunkenness, Intemperance, &c. The Body is the Organ of the Soul, and (next to Gods Glory in the Workmanship of it,) is Created for the use of the Soul, so that 'tis suppos'd whatever kindness is offer'd to the Body to make it more apt to

discharge the Functions of the Soul, it is to be look'd upon as serviceable to the Soul, if the use of it is mis-mployed the Owners themselves are accountable for that, and not such as make'em able to continue in Wickedness, God himself does immediately give Life and Health to ill Men, and will exact an account of the disposing of it. Divines and Physicians are the great Imitators of God himself.

Quest. 10. *A Person about some Ten or Eleven years since walking in his Ground in the Country, heard the crying of a young Child, and drawing near to the noise, perceived it to be a young Infant naked; pity moved him to take it up, seeing no body near it, and carrying it home, Nursed it for about the space of six Months, one Morning the Child lying in the Cradle as they thought asleep, four or five people being near it, something rapped at the Window, the Child and the rest hearing of it, the Infant spoke, which it was never heard to do before, saying, My Daddy Calls, and immediately Vanishes out of the Cradle, and was never since seen or heard of; now pray Gentlemen give your Answer as full to the Point as may be resolving whether it was Flesh and Blood, or Indued with an Immortal Soul or not.*

Ans. Pray send to us the Name of the Place and Persons where this happened, for the Relation is too strange, especially since 'tis anonymous for us to give any Credit to it.

Quest. 11. *How our Blessed Saviour is said to be from David, there being no Genealogy of the Virgin Mary in Holy Writ, from whom in respect of the Flesh we are to reckon our Saviour?*

Ans. Tho' the Virgin Mary's Lineage is not exprest, yet it may by consequence be made out, that she also was the Daughter of David; for 'tis well known that the Jews always Married into their Own Tribe and Family; which consider'd, our Saviour being the Son of the Virgin Mary was also the Son of David.

Quest. 12. *I presume you have heard of (if not seen) that Noctelucient Insect call'd Λαμπρίς, or the Glow-worm; two of which I brought from the Hedges out of the Country to London with me, you'd very much oblige me, and doubtless (some) others with your Conjectures, concerning the Reason of that great Light that little part of the Tail gives? whether it is an igneous, or what substance, or no? [I'm for the Negative, because they feel so frigid in one's hand] or from whence they contract that splendor? I observe they can cease shining at pleasure, and that they shine more or less as they please, which for your better or speedier satisfaction, (if your Learned Society will be pleased to accept of one, it shall be sent in a Box with Grass, or how you please, unto you.)*

Ans. Your Opinion is exact; for further Experiments of this Nature we refer you to what Sir Tho. Brown has writ in his *Vulgar Errors*.