

The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, December 19. 1691.

Quest. 1. **A** Young Man that was an Apprentice in the Parish of St. Giles Cripplegate, London, his Master and he had some difference, whereupon he went away from him; his Master sent to this Young mans Mother, and told her that he would throw up her Sons Indenture, for he could not rule him; she came to him and told him, If he could not rule him, she could not. (she being a Widow:) Hereupon they went to drink together, and sent to see if they could light of him any where, which they could not do for some time, but at last they heard where he was, and his Mother sent to him to come to her and his Master, but he swore bitterly he would not; his Mother went to him to perswade him, but he swore, God Rot his Soul and Body, he would not; nevertheless after much perswasions of his Mother, he yielded to go along with her; so soon as he came to the door of the House where his Master was, his Tongue began to swell, so that he could not speak, and when he came into the House, his Eyes rou'd about in a very strange manner, and immediately he fell down on the ground, and soon after dyed: Your Thoughts are desired upon this sad Providence?

Ans. We are very well assur'd of the truth of this Relation, the Young Man being yet unburied at the sending of this Relation to us: we cou'd give many such Instances, but we shall only mention one. At Friburg a Town of Misnia, are yet the footsteps to be seen of a Stubborn Son who cou'd not be remov'd from the place where he stood all his Life long, till he dyed of the Plague, with whose Disobedience his Father being one time exceedingly provok'd, had prayed God he might never stir from that place he was then in whilst he lived, Camer. p. 400. We cou'd mention others who have wisht heavy Imprecations which happen'd to 'em. Our remark upon the whole is this, That our Modern Atheists who attribute all things to a Regular Mechanism of Nature, may plainly see the Finger of God in such Instances, since the ordinary Course of Nature is thus inverted, and that at such Critical moments when the Sin calls for immediate Vengeance; and by the by, we may observe, that Disobedience to Parents, and false Imprecations bear the greatest share of such immediate Judgments of God Almighty.

Quest. 2. What is the Cause of the Flux and Reflux of the Sea?

Ans. Read the 23d. Dialogue of the Visions of the Soul before it comes into the Body: Written by a Member of the Athenian Society, and there you'll find a full Answer to this Question.

Quest. 3. I have sent you this true Relation, which I had from two Gentlewomen Lodgers in the house of one who keeps a Chandlers shop in Berry-street, St. James, as followeth: About the 25th. of the Last month, about break of day Mrs. E--- went to open the street door, which she did, and just without it found a tallow Candle (as fair as a wax one) burning, the end turn'd up very finely some 6 or 7 inches long, which she put out, and laid by. The next night when her Husband and she went to Bed, she lighted this Candle, she was no sooner in Bed but she fell into a violent burning kind of a Fever, and continued so as long as the Candle lasted; four of the Lodgers found 4 Candles more, which was not every morning successively, but every other morning, or every 3d morning, that I did not ask exactly, nor do I suppose it material, each one being some half an inch less and less, but none durst burn theirs, Mrs. E--- found a second but did not use it; and this morning a Youth found another at the foresaid time about day, which he carried up to one of the Gentlewomen whom I had it from, who threw it out of the Window, saying, As the Devil brought it let him take it; this may be had upon Oath if desired: Your Opinion of this Matter is requested in your next?

Ans. Some Authers tell us, that Candles compounded of Humane Fat are reported to have great Operation on People, the Devil by this gratifying the de-

fires of profligate Wretches, to believe its in the Nature of the Candle asolutely, that if it be set up lighted in any part of the House, it will keep them sleeping that are asleep. A famous instance of this was printed of a Thief who practised this Art, but being deceived by one that was out of the House, who came home, he and his Confederates were seized, and they discovered their practice, and their many Murders and Robberies, and he that was the most notorious of 'em was drawn in a Cart throughout the chiefest City in Norway, and at the corner of every street had his Flesh tore with red hot pincers till he was Dead, to deterr others from this Magical practice. We are not able to dive into the Relation contain'd in the Letter, but believe all to be a trick, and that the Feavour would have happen'd without the Candle. *Albertus Magnus*, and many Authers, speak of strange effects of Candles, and Lamps to make Sport, as to make people seem without heads, or as if the room was full of Snakes.

Quest. 4. I am no stranger to our common practice of using Equivocations in Oaths; but however, since you are so generous to allow Vol. 5. N. 4. Q. 1. the Gentleman to forfeit his Honour for the lucre of 5 Guinea's, I shall use no other argument than only to beg a solution of this Query: What favour the Gentleman must expect, (or indeed deserve) should he ever fall into those Highway-mens hands again?

Ans. The Querist wants a true Notion of the word Honour, or he would not have charg'd us as Patrons of an ill thing. Honour and Honesty are both one, and come from the same Radix; but we beg the Gentlemans pardon, if he be the person that is like to lose the five Guinea's by our Answer, since we advis'd no such thing; we only told him how far his Conscience was oblig'd, and if after all he has a mind to be Generous, he is at his Liberty, and we have nothing to do as to that.

But to answer the Question fully, we say, that he wou'd deserve very well at their hands, because he acted reasonably, and if they treated him otherwise, 'twas their fault and ignorance, not his.

Quest. 5. A certain Old Woman pretending her self to be a Fortune-teller came the last week into a certain house at Bristol, and having some discourse with the Mistress of the house, told her of many Truths concerning the Family, which was impossible for the Old Woman to know, had she not been a Witch. The Discourse being ended, and the Old Woman gone, the Mistress of the House found that she had lost all the money out of her pocket, tho she is certain that she had it at the time of her discoursing with the Old Woman, and yet the Witch never touched the Mistress, nor came near her: The Query therefore is, Whether it be possible for a Witch to bewitch the money out of any ones pocket, without touching the party in whose pocket the money is?

Ans. The Substance of this Query is already resolv'd, in our former Volumes.

Quest. 6. You affirm Vol. 1. N. 8. Q. 3. That a Rational Soul is distinguishable by its actions, and if a Monster can Number, Discourse in Questions and Answers, that such a Monster hath a rational Soul, and shall be accountable in the Day of Judgment for its Actions: Query, Whether the Merwoman you give an account of Vol. 1. N. 11. Q. 2. may be included in that Rank?

Ans. She cou'd never be taught to speak or discourse rationally, therefore she cou'd not be rank'd in the Classis of Rational Creatures: Her docility which was very uncommon, exceeded not that of other Creatures; the strange Relations of Dogs and Elephants exceed this, especially the latter of which some have learn'd so far as to make Letters in Sand with their feet, which bids fairer for pretensions to Rationality. But we need not go out of the Watry Element for more intelligent Creatures, witness that of the Dolphin, who to

the exceeding love he bears to Mankind, leaves us Examples of the preservation of some that have been cast overboard; amongst the rest History informs us of one which us'd to keep near the shore where Boys were wont to play; and were so familiar with one of 'em, as to carry him up and down, and bring him to shore again, till one day by some unlucky motion the sharp fin upon his back run into the Boys Belly, which the Dolphin perceiving, made what haste he cou'd to Land, and threw himself and the Boy out of the Water, and dy'd with him. But to be short, we are not so much to judge of Shape, as Accomplishments, for an Index of Rationality, since we find many mishapen wretches, and humane Monsters, that have not so much of humane Figure, as some Creatures we meet with in Authentick History.

Quest. 7. Page 247. in Howels Letters, we have an account that in Valentia in Spain, a proper Young Man under 20 was executed there for a Crime, and before he was taken down from off the Tree, there were many gray and white hairs had budded out of his Chin as if he had been 60: I desire your Thoughts what might cause this?

Ans. We have a parallel Relation in Vesalius, the Reason we conceive is this. Hair is hollow like a Tube, or a Vein, and therefore we may safely affirm, that it has its Circulation as well as any part of the Body: But the oppression of the Heart by the extraordinary concern, caus'd the Spirits and Blood to retire thither for its Succour, and so by an extraordinary coldness, and a precipitation of the oily and salt Humour, which by cold was clos'd up in the Hair, the Hair it self became ting'd, or had the effect in a few hours, which it wou'd have had by a regular Method in many years; for 'tis manifest 'tis a deficiency of heat that is a Cause of this Change, as may be seen by the Example of Old Age, which loses its Vigour and Warmth as it begins to grow hoary.

Quest. 8. Whether three Suns really appeared ever at once?

Ans. We are assur'd there has been an Appearance of three Suns at once, but we believe there was never any more than really one, since the Appearances of more Suns than one may be solv'd by Phenomena's of Refractions, &c.

Quest. 9. In Page 71. Dallison's Aphorisms, he affirms, That while the Crocodile sleeps with open mouth, the Indian Ratt shoots himself into his Belly, and gnaws his Guts asunder: Your thoughts whether there be any thing of reality in it?

Ans. Matter of Fact determines the Question, but we meet with no Ocular Experiences, but 'tis said, they say, and such like proofs.

Quest. 10. A certain Virtuoso affirms, that in Rain is contained Salt, and that if the unprofitable parts by which it is involv'd be taken away by distillation, a salt as white as Sugar may be found: Your Thoughts whether it is so or no?

Ans. Chymists have made a great noise about the *Salmundi*, or Salt of the World, which is caus'd by a fermentation of the Elements, and the Operation of the Mechanism of Nature; and as to this mentioned in the Question, they pretend to a great use of it as to Cures. Certain it is, that upon the Evaporation of all Liquids, nay in Blood it self, there is Salt, which answers the Question.

Quest. 11. In Dallison's Aphorisms, page 277. He affirms, Lightning ne're hurts the Laurel: Your Opinion of this, which if you assent to, then the Cause of it, why that more preserv'd than other Trees?

Ans. 'Tis a very weak Argument, Because 'tis a Laurel, therefore not to be touch'd by Thunder; if it has always escap'd, which is questionable; we believe it is from the scarcity of the Tree; if it was common, no doubt but it wou'd have the same fate as others.

Quest. 12. I had the Fortune to be joyned in Matrimony to a Man who had another Wife and Children by her, which I discovering, brought an Indictment against him, and cast him at the Old-Baily for his Life, after which I begg'd he might be transported, which was granted: Some time after Advice was brought me that he was dead, and I having no Children by him, after 2 Years, as I thought, Widdowhood, was married to another, and liv'd about 3 years with him, when I had advice that my first Husband was still alive in a

Foreign Countrey, and desires my Company, &c. which of the 2 (for they are both alive) is my real Husband, and which of them ought I to follow? or ought I to follow both?

Ans. See Vol. 4 N. 20. Q.

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