

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, January 5. 1691.

Quest. 1. **E**xempt from drowsie Prose, I speak in measure,
And love proportions both in pain and pleasure:

My Parents in Poetick raptures lay,
And nickt the Muses. ———
As soon as born I wept an Elegy,
And deaf my Nurse with peevish Harmony.
And thus I led my Life, too long to tell ye
Only in Rhimes I eat, drink, fill my Belly;
Nor do I e're converse, (perhaps you know it)
With Flesh and Blood, unless I meet a Poet:
Now having seen in your Athenian Sheet
That Oracles still use Poetick Wit,
Pray tell me what unlucky Star, d'ye mind it,
Could influence my Temper as you find it?

Ans. Thou Man of Porch, as long as the Piræum, (a)
Were all like thee we could not halt survey 'um.
Least thy strong lines shou'd our weak Ears rebang, (b)
Take this short answer to thy long Harangue:
Twas Venus with Sir Phebus in conjunction
That rul'd thy Birth, and markt out poor function.
And hence, unless the Planets Gypsies prove,
Thou'lt a new Song, and a new Woman love.

Notes on Quest. 1.

(a) [as long as the Pyreum] we desire Mr. Readers
gentle thoughts concerning this word, and that hee'd not be-
lieve we lugg'd it in merely for Rhymes-sake, since 'tis near-
er a-kin to us than every body knows, being the name of the
long Haven at Athens, for which reason we take our selves to
have more right to borrow a small Simile from it than any
other Authors.

(b) [rebang] We must not suppose our Reader so ill ac-
quainted with Philosophical writings, as not to know that
tis very usual and allowable for those who deal much in 'em
to start a new hard word or two of their own now and then;
for which we shall the easier find pardon because 'tis the first
we ever ventur'd upon, and besides, not half so long or loud as
its fellows use to be, (tho' pretty well of its inches) the signi-
fication whereof is no more than a second banging.

Quest. 2. Why is't that Musick, Rhymes and Dances
Have such Effects upon our Fancies?

Ans. If Rhymes are numbers ty'd to Chimes,
Nothing but what has Reason rhymes.

And Reason must to this agree,
Which says the Soul's all Harmonie:
Musick is Rhyme tho' stript from words
But such as Nature's self affords;
A Dance is Musick without noise,
The silent Foot supplies the voice:
And when some Orpheus sweeps the Strings
With mighty Numbers, mighty things,
The soft note Dances through the Ear,
And meets and clasps its Fellow there:
Then round the Heart they gently play,
And through the Brains soft mazes stray,
Backning the wandering Soul away.

Quest. 3. What think you of that Doggrel Prater
That steals the name of Observator, (a)

And aims at Wit, but comes not at her?

Ans. We think that Spark the Mean has hit
Alike in Malice and in Wit.

His Satyr very mild, and he
A very moderate Enemy;
For bating Vanders Golls and Phyz,
(Where all Mankind so Witty is)

He's e'ne as tame as Heart can wish.
But what could be expected quicker
from muddy Beer (b) his humble Liquor?

Then prithee Nobbs be kind! write on
Till all thy Hellicon be gone.

The greatest Danger we can fear
Is least th' unlucky World shou'd swear:

We hld' thy dullness to promote our Fame,
Whil'st thou hast Booty play'd, and lost the Game.
A killing Beau as e're was seen
For Humour, Manners, Face and Meen:

Nature's and Fortune's Ball and Sport,
Who missing Bedlam roll'd to Court,
Where else shou'd men of parts resort?

But to's'd from thence, his Fate so hard
(Merit not always finds regard)
He next rebounds to Georges yard;

Where he, when all refus'd to use him,
(c) When even Vander did refuse him
Thought he might lawfully abuse him.

But though he says a thousand paw-things,
And crys our Works are crude and raw things
'Tis nothing to the Fate of Athens.

So have I seen in stinking Cafe
A Foot-ball kickt from place to place,
Dasht up in some Athenians Face:

Sober and grave, he wipes it o're,
Then trudges on and says no more,
For 'tis as clean as 'twas before.

Notes on Quest. 3.

(a) That Spark of eternal Doggrel that call'd himself Mer-
curius Deformatus, or the True Observator.

(b) [From muddy Beer his humble Liquor] see the
same famous Author p. 1. v. 9. Thro' muddy Beer in rhiming
vain.

1.

Quest. 4. The greatest Blessing that mankind can know
Is met with in a sweet and pleasing rest:
The strongest Curse ill Fortune can bestow,
Is still to be with mighty pains oppress'd;
Man never finds the former till he dyes,
The latter flows from beauteous Womens Eyes?

2.

In all things else the choice does plain appear,
And common Sense but seldom goes astray,
Why then are mortals so misguided here,
So blind, or so mistaken in their way;
To long for quiet, yet from Death to run,
And Fly to Love while they wou'd Torment shun?

1.

Ans. Hail Bard Divine! unknown, we must adore,
Thy Eagle-pitch out-towrs our haggard flight,
Our glimmering Lamp within will flame no more,
Quench't by too unsupportable a Light.
Else wou'd we mingle with thy sacred Fire
As Sister-strings tun'd by some Neighb'ring Lyre.

2.

Can one that writes like thee complain for Rest,
Or any Heart to thee obdurate prove?
Canst thou e're want a Song to charm thy Breast?
Or canst thou be unhappy in thy Love?
That Grief that shows so well, is sure sincere,
Nor can Ill Fortune better Mourning wear.

3.

Nor need'st thou any longer search in vain
For what so much thy busie thought confounds:
Love's a delicious plague, a pleasing pain,
Smiles when it stabs, and tickles when it wounds;
Mad to the Hive we run, and if we bring
The Honey thence, with ease despise the Sting.

4. We

We fain wou'd Land, but hear the Billows roar,
The dashing waves and hollow whistling wind:
'Tis a wide Leap to that dark dreadful shore,
And none come back to tell us what they find.
'Tis well great Jove some further Bounds did give,
If Death were all, ah who wou'd longer live.

Quest. 5. The different accident of Colour shows
That different matter doth the Clouds compose.
Well-nam'd Athenians! Pray be pleas'd to show
What vapours to the composition go
Of black and brown, of gilded, gay and white,
Which oft are mingled in their common flight!

Ans. Of Natures works, and Natures self I sing
Muse! tune thy Lyre, and touch thy sounding string,
The wondrous hidden seeds of Colour show,
Which none but Boyl himself and Phæbus know
What Beauties on the gentle dew-drops born,
What purple blushes dress the rising Morn?

Whence chearful green or gray, or lovely bright,
And all the various Births of shades and Light?

Thee, reverend Black, for all things first were thine,
Let's trace, and own thy Origen Divine.
Old Chaos knew thee, and thy sober Face,
Spread wide around through all th' unbounded space;
Before fair Phosphor ever wak'd the morn,
Before the Stars or Sun it self was born;
But when th' All-wise did thy dark Realms display
And brought from his own Heav'n the cheerful day
Thy Horrors smiled, struck with so sweet a sight,
And greedily drunk in the Genial Rays of Night.

Another by the same Author.

Quest. 6. Since all our Doctors of Astro nomie
Maintain the Sun the only Spring to be
Whence Heat and Light, those welcome goods do flow,
Ingenious Casuists! I fain wou'd know,
Why when in Summer time Heav'n's journeying Light,
Whose sad departure brings the mournful Night
The Western Borders of this Hemisphere
Being left, our Antipodes go to cheer
The midnight then, or light expecting morn,
Although the Air (that doth like all things scorn)
To bear its contrary, hath long oppos'd
The Air by Sols prevailing force enclos'd
Exceeds in Heat some Winters Days wherein
Tho distant fair Hypercons to be seen?

Ans. Indifferent Sir! your Planet doth foretell
In Verse a moderate Stile, in Prose as well:
But ah! what's that to th' Sun, whose bright abode is
By day with us by Night with th' Antipodes?
Then to your doubt, which much perplex you may,
(Very egregious Querist thus we say)
The Cause wherefore the heav'nly Carman does
In Summers night with warmth more comfort us
Than in the Winters Day, in brief is thus:
Have you not seen a Loaf expecting Oven,
Which long with Vulcans fiery streams have strown;
At length red hot become, which Heat will stay
When you have swept the flagrant coals away,
And also then abide more hot than those,
Whose Fire just at the mouth, not inward glows,
Fire, scarce enough to warm or burn my Nose:
For one word why shou'd I make use of twenty,
If this you have but seen — Sat Sapienti?

Quest. 7. Say Learn'd Athenians! how I may improve
Or else secure the Extasies of Love?
One of the softer Sex is mine, and I
Am hers, just now 's the Nuptial Foy.
Guess at the rest, your Condescension can
Congratulate my Bliss, and paint the happy Man.

Epithalamium.

Ans. All that's sweet and soft attend
All that's calm, serene, and bright,
That can please, or pleasure mend,
Or secure, or cause delight.

Little Cupids come and move
Round the Bridegrooms greedy Eyes,
Whilst the stately Queen of Love
Round the Bride her Cestus ties.

Golden Hymen bring thy Robe,
Bring thy Torch, that still inspires
Round the stately amorous Globe
Vigorous flames, and gay desires.

Sister Graces all appear,
Sister Graces come away,
Let the Heavens be bright and clear,
Let the Earth keep Holyday.

Jocund Nature does prepare
To salute the Charming Bräme,
And with Odours fills the Air
Snatch't from all the World beside.

Virtue, Wit and Beauty may
For a time refuse to yield,
But at length they must obey,
And with Honour quit the Field.

Their efforts in vain will prove
To defend their Free-born State,
When attack't by mighty Love
They must all Capitulate.

Marble-hearted Virgins, who
Rail at Love to show your Wits,
So did once Eliza too,
Yet with Pleasure now submits.

You too envious Swains, who wou'd
Follow Cupid if you might,
Like the Fox that gaping stood
Discommend the Grapes for spight.

Since Experience teacheth best
Ask if mutual Love has Charms,
When the Bride and Bridegroom rest
Lockt in one another's Arms.

When we have receiv'd Questions enough for another
Poetical Mercury, the World may expect such another En-
tertainment.

M. A. I. 2, 3.

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