

# The Athenian Mercury.

Friday, March 4. 1692.

Quest. 1. **H**aving weighed a Body in one Liquor, to find the weight of it in another, the absolute gravity of the Body, and specifick gravities of the two Liquors, being given.

Ans<sup>r</sup>. Suppose a Cube of Water whose Side is one Inch and half, and whose weight is two Ounces; suppose a Cube of *Lignum Vitæ*, whose Side is one Inch and a half, and whose weight is three Ounces; suppose also that this Wood Cube weighs one Ounce in that Water: Suppose again other Water strengthned by Salt, so that a Cube of it whose Side is one Inch and half, weighs two Ounces and half; the Question what is the weight of the first Wooden Cube in the last Water: Answer, the eighth or tenth part of an Ounce.

Quest. 2. Your Opinion of the Book, Intituled, The Frauds of Romish Monks and Priests, there being so many ridiculous and foolish things charged upon them.

Ans<sup>r</sup>. If the most ridiculous Passages are true, 'tis very probable the least may; but we are satisfied by other credible hands, besides the Author, that the Story of Hagar, and the Monks Preaching so merrily upon Easter-days, are, (though the most suspicious) very certain Truths, the last taking his Origine from a false Interpretation of those words in the Psalmist, *This is the day of the Lord, we will rejoice and be glad in it.* Because every Person hath not read the Book, we will here give the Relation; Being once on an Easter-day in Bononia, I went to St. Peter's Church, the Preacher was one of the Fathers Soccocauti; after he had ridicul'd other Texts he quoted Mark 2. 16. *The Maries came to the Sepulcher, orto jam sole, after Sun-rising*; he opposed to this John 21. 1. *They came very early before it was yet light: To reconcile which, he said, That, for his part, he believed that the Maries did not rise till long after the Sun was risen, and indeed till it was near Noon, for we see, (says he) that this goes for very early rising with our Italian Ladies, who do not come to Mass on Sundays till it be half an hour after Eleven or Twelve of the Clock; and hereupon he began in a Comical manner to represent a Woman waking out of her sleep, the time she takes to rub her Eyes, to stretch her Arms, and an hundred other impertinent Follies, which put all the Church into a loud Laughter. Then he proceeded and said, That indeed the Maries were risen very early in the Morning, but that they needed so much time to dress and trick up themselves, that it was very late before they could get out of Doors, which was the reason they could not reach the Sepulcher till after the Sun was risen, Orto jam sole: Here he represented Women dressing themselves, the time they spend in dressing their Head, laying on of Paint, fixing their Patches, and making an hundred Faces before the Looking-Glasses, and exprest all these Particulars admirably well with his mimical Gestures; this curious Thought he immediately back'd with another, I cry Mercy, said he, the Maries were not such vain Women as I have been just now describing, but they were Gossiping Housewives, they rose and went abroad indeed betimes in the Morning, but before they could take their leaves of their Neighbours, much time was spent so that they could not come to the Sepulcher till it was too late. Orto jam sole. He enlarged himself upon the Tattling and Gossiping Discourse of Women, and mentioned such ridiculous stuff amongst it, that the Cardinal Archbishop who was there burst out into a Laughter. Their Processions are not less ridiculously Wicked; the Author quotes many Instances on this Subject, as well as several other Writers, particularly Monsieur Misson in his Voyage into Italy, has an odd Description of a*

Company of Beggars, who represented the History of our Saviour's Temptation. 'Tis too long to insert here, so that we refer the Inquisitive to P. 90. Tom. 1. of the same Voyage.

Quest. 3. What was the Thule of the Ancients?

Ans<sup>r</sup>. Both our Ancient and Modern Geographical Historians have disagreed upon this Point, so that it would be a great Folly for us to pretend a decision of the Question; indeed a late Author has offered to determine the Case, but he has been pleas'd to keep his Reasons to himself: the Phenicians, to obscure their Discoveries in this Island, gave out it was a Land of Darknes. However we will tell you what has been writ of it, and leave it to the Querist's Judgment to decide as he thinks fit; Ortellius supposes it to be a part of Norway call'd *Tilemark*, Camden thinks it is the *Scheland Islands* in the *Caledonian Ocean*, now call'd *Thylausel*, others suppose it to be *Iceland*. *Rudbeckius Olavius* speaks of the Voyages of the Tyrians in the Island of *Thule*, as if it were *Sweedland*. *Antonius Diogenes* compos'd Twenty four Books of this Island, relating in them many strange and incredible things, (a little after the death of *Alexander the Great*; which according to *Photius* he boasted to have read amongst the ruin'd Monuments of *Cyprus*. The Learned *Dane*, *Isaccius Pontanus*, believes it to be the *Tyleses*, and he backs his Opinion with the authority of many Greek and Latin Authors, as from the History of *Adam de Brema*, Written in Anno 1067, of *Saxon the Grammarian*, and of *Andrew Velleius*. But *Arngrimus Fenas*, who was well skill'd in the Collection of Islands gives it to his Country; for innumerable more such Opinions, see *Chrymogæa seu rerum Islandicarum libri tres*. Hamburg 1630. In quarto, and *Specimen Islandiæ Historicum, & magna ex parte Chorographium*, at Amsterdam, 1643. In quarto. *Anatome Blefkeniana*. Hamburg, 1618. In quarto.

Quest. 4. What is your Opinion of that famous Passage in Josephus in the 4th Chap. of the 18th Book of his Antiquities that relates to Jesus Christ, &c.

Ans<sup>r</sup>. We have reason to doubt that the Author of this Query is rather a Deist than a Christian: By the word Opinion is cunningly insinuated a Dilemma, viz. either the Passage is true or false, if true, why so many good Testimonies against it as we meet with of late? if false, why is it brought to prove there was such a Person as our Saviour, who liv'd at such a time, work'd Miracles, was Crucify'd, &c. We would not have medled with this passage in Josephus, had not a late Author determin'd it false, perhaps to the prejudice of some weak inquisitive Christians. But this Author, who by the by must be very narrow sighted, or see that an Engagement in this Question would be but little Service to any Persons but such as lay hold of every opportunity, that may scandalize Christianity; but we have to tell that Author, and all others that are inquisitive about the Truth of Christianity, that we may safely grant that Passage to be fictitious, since we have enough more to our purpose, from the Testimony of the greatest Enemies of Christianity, as *Celsus*, *Julian*, *Apollonius*, *Thyaneus*, *African*, *Lucian*, *Porphius*, and *Pilate* himself who Crucified him sent to *Tiberius* a full Account of our Saviour and his Miracles, which were Registred in the publick Annals at Rome, whence we find the Primitive Fathers, as *Tertullian*, *Apol. Chap. 21.* and *Justin Martyr*, in second Apology, refer so often to the Records in the Registry for an Evidence of the Origine and Truth of the Christian Religion; but we have a Cloud of Witnesses to confirm what Josephus's passage fails to do with some Persons, as *Paul Horatius*, *Eutropius*, *Pliny*, *Suetonius*, *Dion*, *Tranquillus*, *Cornelius Tacitus*, *Ælius Lampridius*,



*Lampadius, Saturninus, &c.* all which sufficiently Evidence the matter of Fact, if *Josephus* had never been.

Quest. 5. Gentlemen, I desire you would Answer the following Question in your next Mercury if possible, because there is a Wager depends upon the Answer, and 'tis to be decided by you; the Question is this, viz. What Land is that now that is called the Land of Uz, and in what Year Job lived in?

Ans. Uz or Aus, was named from Uz the eldest Son of Abraham's Brother's Son Buz, and unto this Aus or Uz Abraham sent the Sons of his Wife Keturah from whom Job descended. — Elibu the Buzite was of Buz, and in *Jeremiah* the 25. 20. 23. Aus or Uz, and Buz and Tema, Saba, Median, Chaldea, Minnai are adjacent, and from hence comes the *Ausite* *Ptolom.* Tabl. 4. — *Dionysius* the Greek Cosmographer was born at Teredon on the Persian Gulph, which was near Job's Country. — The *Ishmaelites* were his Neighbours, the Wild *Arabians*, the *Caldeans* and *Sabeans* were also near; but by reason of the Vicissitudes of Kingdoms, Languages and Succession of Ages, we are at a loss, many Towns and places in *England* in Ancient Histories and Chronicles are named, but none can tell which were the places at this day, much more in places so remote, in Languages so unknown, in Nations so Barbarous. So it was not Uz, of the Race of Esau, that is mentioned. The Discourse he had with his Relations that came to visit him, was about the time of *Moses* Birth.

Quest. 6. What is the reason why a Chequer is placed at Ale-house Doors?

Ans. This Question was sent us some Months since, and we then thought it not convenient to answer it, because it was of no more use to a Wise Man, than to know how Old *Prestor John's* Grandmother was; but because some Persons are resolv'd to be satisfied, tho at the Expence of Abuses, we desire the Thoughtful to pardon our Digression, whilst we thus answer in our own Defence. The most Ancient publick Houses were Inns, which had particular Licenses from the Barons of the Exchequer, and paid such a Tribute into the Kings Exchequer for such Licenses, and therefore were marked with a Chequer, as the only Sign then of publick Entertainment. Some have believed that Chess was all the Play used by our Ancestors in some publick Houses, which therefore had a Chequer for Distinction sake, as a Billiard-Table, &c. are now: But the Antiquity of Chequers (as being the first Signs, as also that for a great while after that Branch of the Revenue was Tributary to the Crown, no other Signs were used) shows this last Opinion to be False, unless they will have it, that no other Game was used by our Forefathers but Chess; as also that all Houses of publick Entertainment were Gaming-houses. We could find in our Hearts to be merry for once, and tell the World, that we have read of a Monkey in the King of Spains Court, who was very Skillful at Chess-play, (*Vide Belthazor Castilion de Aulico*) but that would be as Foreign to the Matter, as his Fancy was from Sense, that would needs tye a Raven and an Owl together, because they were Birds of a Feather.

Quest. 7. Of what Antiquity is Dancing upon the Ropes, and what may be supposed to give the first Rise to that Practice?

Ans. 'Tis too Ancient a Custom to determine its Original; *Terence* mentions it as a Practice in his days; see his Prologue to the *Hecyra*: And long before him we read of it practic'd amongst the Ancient *Grecians*, not only by Men but by Elephants themselves. *Scaliger* in his Exercitations 232. p. 728. speaks of Elephants dancing on Ropes. *Aristotle* speaks of walking upon Ropes; as also *Suetonius* lib. 7. cap. 6. and *Ælian* in lib. de Animal tells us, That Elephants were taught to walk upon Ropes in his time; and 'tis a fair Supposition that Men were not less Active in that Age, nor unacquainted with a Practice they would reach to other Creatures.

Quest. 8. Whether Dr. Chamberlain's Present State of England be the most pernicious vile Book that ever appeared in the World?

Ans. We hope we have already given a sufficient Answer to this Question in our last Mercury, Numb. 9. Quest. 2.

Gentlemen, I make bold to interrupt your more Serious Occupations with this pretty merry Story: I was th'other day in a Company of Ladies, one of them a brisk young Widow, told us of a She-friend of hers, a very handsome and lovely Creature, who, before her being married to her now Husband, had been courted six Years by a Gentleman as well accomplished as any Man. This late Wooer of hers, said she, is always with her at home, at Meals, at Walks, at Church, lieth at her House, sometimes whole Months together; her Husband seeth, and is privy to all this, yet finds no fault in it. I was asked, whether being married with such a Wife, I would approve of it, and be pleased at her carriage. I answered, No. Then she fell foul on me, and call'd me Jealous, adding, That if she had a Husband of my Humour, she would make him a Cuckold. A Gentleman married to a very handsome Woman, now beyond Sea, took part with the Widow, and said, That a Husband ought to have a blind Complaisance for his Wife, and approve of any thing she doth. I beg your Instructions and Answers.

Quest. 9. Whether I was in the right or no, and your reasons for it?

Quest. 10. Whether the Widows Virtue is Real and True, since she seems ready to part with it upon a Caprice or Chimera?

Quest. 11. Whether the Gentleman did not give good ground to suspect him to have been, or to be in the way to Horn-Fair?

Ans. To the first Question, The Querist might possibly be mistaken, since the Friendship might be very just and Honourable, both to the Lady and her Husband; and 'tis a very fair Argument it was so, since her Husband has by this time had Opportunities enough to experience his Merit or Demerit.

To the second we answer, That 'tis very probable that the Ladies Rallery was Innocent, and what she said was only for Arguments sake, and nothing farther really intended by it; but if she was in earnest (which we can't believe without knowing the contrary) she set her Vertue at a cheap Rate, by Bartering it away for Humour or Revenge.

To the third, The Gentleman's extent of Charity in approving every Action of a Wife, might be a great Prejudice to his Credit, if he pursu'd it; but 'tis very likely the Gentleman came in for a share of the Mirth, and out of pure Complaisance to the Lady, took her part in the Rallery.

Quest. 12. Some Philosophers say, That a Man weighs heavier before Dinner than after; Pray the reason of it?

Ans. There can be no reason given for that which is not, but we are experimentally assur'd the contrary is true, which is answer enough. There are a great many Vulgar Errors which Sir *Thomas Brown* has not taken notice of, that pass for Truth amongst some Persons who are not willing to be at the Expence of a little Examination.

Quest. 13. I desire to know whether 'tis possible there should be any Day-light without the Sun?

Ans. Light was created at first, and had its Circumrotation of Day and Night three days before the Sun was made: See *Gen.* 1.

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