

The Athenian Mercury.

Gentlemen,

Quest. 1. **B**eing a Man living in the Royal Exchange, and my Employ chiefly relating to the Female Sex, and perhaps as much taken notice of, and as much esteem'd as any in this place, in so much that I have many Visitants purely to view my Person, with the pretence of buying some trifle: viz. Patches, &c. And am not only become the wonder of the soft Sex in general, but more particularly by two Ladies, each in Degree beyond mine: One of which is so plain in all her Actions, that every of them pleads a passionate Love, which I have passed by for some Years, without taking more than a common notice. Therefore my Request is, being a Bachelor, whether I should compassionately consider her, and marry: Or my Trade, which by that means would be much abated, believing by my fair and impartial Behaviour, most have deem'd themselves the absolute Mistress of my Affections, which after this visible disappointment will in revenge not only themselves desist, but will endeavour with Argument, and Interest, dissuade, and wean, as many from it as possible.

Ans. Sweet Sir, The Character you have given of your Self, denotes your great Humility and low Esteem you have of your self, But Poor Ladies! what will become of them that can't all enjoy their Adonis? Poor Visitants! that are tortur'd with the fears of enjoying no more than a sight of your charming Phiz: To be sincere with you Sir; We much doubt but that all this is a May-game upon you, and you are blinded with your own fancy. 'Tis no little Argument, next after your Character, to ask, Whether you shou'd compassionately consider a Lady that loves you in, is beyond your deserts? Really Sir, it would have been a more natural Query to have ask'd, Whether you shou'd compassionately consider your Self, and Marry to mend your Fortunes? Sir, We never advise impossibilities, but if you please to make a tryal of your Interest, and if it lies in your Power to marry happily, we think you ought to act sincerely in the affair, and pretend no more than you design.

Quest. 2. Whether a Man ought to refrain the Company, and allow'd Friendship of anothers Wife (giving no offence to his own Wife, nor her Husband) Because the mistakes of some People make severe Reflections upon their Conversation.

Quest. 3. Whether a Man having by mistake Married his own Daughter, coming afterward to know it, is oblig'd to acquaint her with it if he believe the Knowledge would occasion her Death. And how, otherwise he ought to demean himself in that unhappy Condition, having Children by her; upon whom the reproach of being such an Issue may bring great Affliction.

Ans. 1. Yes, you ought to refrain; those that will live unblamable, must avoid all ap-

pearance of Evil, as well as Evil it self, for if such Conversation is not immediately criminal to your selves, (as it's very hard to escape it) yet since it's the unavoidable occasion of others sinning by Scandal, Censure, &c. you ought to forbear; Christians ought not to give offences to one another.

Ans. 2. 'Tis a very hard Case, we believe it shou'd be discover'd, if it be a real Case, take the Advice of our Bishops; we dare not meddle in it.

Quest. 4. There is a certain Village in Bedfordshire, in which there is but one considerable Man, a Farmer, when there is a Brief read, the Church-warden carries it to him, he gives, and thinks that the Minister gives nothing afterwards, therefore refuses to give before the Minister, nor will the Minister give before him, so nothing hath been given for a great while.

Query. Which of these ought to give first.

Ans. We are not to direct, but certainly it's reasonable, that he whose Office it is to preach up Charity, shou'd also shew the first Example.

Quest. It has been my Fortune to fall in Love with a Lady, into whose Company by chance I was introduc'd: She seem'd by all outward appearance to be as willing for a meeting as well as my Self. I have been once or twice in her Company, but propos'd nothing to her about my kindness for her: The last time I went, I was told by one, who had some dependance upon her, that if my design was so. I must think of leaving off my coming. You may very well guess how great my concern was, when I heard my Doom, and how dejected I went away, and have been ever since. Not long after hapning to be at a certain place where she was, methoughts she gave me some very kind looks, and some amorous glances; from whence I presently gather'd that what I was told, did either not come from my Mistress her Self, or if it did, that her Mind is now alter'd, and she willing to receive my Courtship. Now I desire to know your Sentiments of the matter, and whether or no I ought not to proceed. I stand upon thorns every moment till I receive an Answer from you to my Query, and you can't oblige me more than by returning a quick one. Your Servant. Phylogenes.

Ans. Poor Phylogenes, what a Coward are you in Love, there's but a very few Conquests in this Nature, that meet not with several repulses before the Castle is storm'd. Courage Man, and try your Fortune; Fortune helps the bold! and if you're a true Lover you can't Despair at a little hardship, tho' probably you may with an Enemy that has a deal of Goodness, and knows how to treat you well.

Quest. 6. I Love a Young Lady so much, that tho' I frequent the Park and Play-house, I cannot meet there one whom I can think handsome, her

her charms having absolutely possess'd my Heart, I cannot begin to Love another, for 'tis necessary that a Woman be (at least thought) beautiful to create Love at first, tho' she must have other good Qualities, as Wit, and good Humour, to maintain her, being always loved. My Friends won't let me Marry her, what shall I do to divert my self, and make the time seem shorter, till I may Marry her, I would go to the Campaign, but my Relations deny me that too. If you will Gentlemen Instruct me, by a speedy Answer, you will much oblige a Melancholy Lover.

Ans. Poor Man, will no new Face work a cure? Well, get but the Ladies esteem, and I'll warrant you'll soon find it to her cost, for you sparks generally spend all your Love in the Chase, and if Nature has endowed you with a *boon Mien* and pretty Face, so that you chance to smite the Innocent Maid, she's no sooner taken, but her Captivity sets you at Liberty. But if you've really so much thought, as to be willing to follow the Wise Advice of your Friends (for they know the World better than you) and will endeavour to disengage your self from so cruel a Tyrant, Travel, if that is permitted by your Relations, and observe all the Curiosities you meet with; but if your Affairs won't permit that, Study at first History, which is diverting, and then as your Genius and Post directs you, by all means avoid Idleness, and the sight of the Lady, or any thing that may put you in Mind of her; get some agreeable ingenious acquaintance that have conquer'd Cupid, and know how to value their Freedom, follow this Method, and a little time will infallibly recover you.

Quest. 7. A Friend of mine being a Quaker is prosecuted in the Court of Chancery, upon a malicious Suit, thinking he will not give in his Answer upon Oath; and is like to be Ruined thereby, pray your Opinion, if it be Lawful for him to take the Oath, it being so expressly forbid in *Matth. 5. 33.* and *James 5. 12.* I am yours.

Ans. The meaning of *St. James*, is the same with that in *St. Matthew*, which is plainly resolv'd by the following Verse, *But let your Communion, be Yea, yea, Nay, nay.* The Particle, *But* is a Conjunction, and makes this have a natural Dependence on the preceding Verse, so that they must both go together, and then the sense is, *Swear not in your common Discourse, or Communication; but this forbids not to swear in Righteousness and Judgment, and in the Case of deciding any matter of great Moment.* *St. Paul* says, *Men verily swear or do swear by the greater, &c.* He speaks of a Custom then in use, and says not, *Men have sworn, &c.* If swearing had been a Moral evil, God Almighty wou'd never have Sworn by Himself, as the Scripture mentions.

Gentlemen, I, though lately, observing the Nice and Curious Resolutions of sundry Questions, have bought, and do intend to continue in buying all your Volumes, which at first I must confess, I read for my Pleasure at idle hours, till at last guided by the same star that luckily makes a Convert of a wild Debauchee, when Poor Wretch, he is smitten by

the Powerful Rays of a She Saint, and he who at first went to Church only to adore or rather Ogle his dear Angel, now by constant coming, makes it habitual, till at last his Eyes are open, and he then comes for the sake of his own Soul, though at first little thought of that so great (though then in his Judgment so little) advantage, thus I at first read your Books for diversion, not for profit, till by constant reading, I found that no small advancement in several matters of which I then knew nothing, and for which I now thank you. The intent therefore of this my Letter, is, besides, my thanks to acquaint you, that in reading some of the Questions and Answers, divers Queries will start in my Fancy, which I hope, if I send, you will be so kind as to Answer, in doing which, you will most infinitely oblige me.

Quest. 9. Vol. Numb. The Reason being asked why, when a Ship was under Sail a Bullet held five Nails over the top of the main Mast, being dropped will light just so many Nails from the Bottom, as it was held over, it was answer'd satisfactory. Now I desire to know, if it would do the same, if the Ship stood still at the time of the delivery of the Bullet, and did sail some space before the Bullet came to the Bottom.

Quest. 10. Vol. 3. Numb. 8. What's the Reason of Fly-blows, &c. In the Summer time I put an Oxes Heart, that hath been locked up in a Box, and when it came out was all over Fly-blows, as it is termed. I desire to know how the Flies could do it, and whether that the Corruption within the Meat did not breed them.

Quest. 10. Is it safe for any Young Man to play at the Royal Oak Lottery upon any account, and is not that as well as all other Games the Devils best Benefactor, if made use of to excess? Pray do not think I have lost all my Money at the Royal Oak, and now send this out of Revenge, nor that I cry Whore first, but out of pure kindness to them that know it not.

Ans. 1. To the first Question, A Ship is but one Body and moves all together, or rests all together, and if so, there's no Motion either Retrogressive, or Progressive within the Ship. The Case is not in the least alter'd by the Supposition in the Question.

Ans. 2. Fly-blows, as we take it are a sort of Eggs, which a Fly lays as naturally as a Bird does, or else they are produc'd by the Fermentation of corruptible Bodies, and hatch by the Native heat, that first produc'd them, of this last sort, may be the Instance in the Question, but we shall shortly be fuller on this Subject, and some others, that we have already selected for Microscopical Experiments this Summer; in which we hope to satisfy the Ingenious.

Ans. 3. Gaming for Money, or any Gain, can very hardly be Innocent, indeed there may be such tempers that can sometimes be proof against Passion, Covetousness and Quarrelling, but they are uncommon: A Wise Man can find a nobler Recreation when his Mind wants it. But the Negative of the Question, can have but very few rational Opposers.