

The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, April 2. 1692.

Gentlemen,

Quest. 1. **Y**our Answers to several of late has given so general a satisfaction, which is the reason I give you this trouble, viz. Three Merchants here in Town, suppose A, B, and C, some time ago agreed to Trade with a Joyn-stock, and accordingly they all wrote to their particular Correspondents in Cadiz to pay in what Effects lay in their hands unto a certain Person whom they agreed upon to be the Common Factor for them all. A's Correspondent paid in to the common Factor 4000 l. B's Correspondent was super-expended 1550 l. and accordingly was reimburs'd by the common Factor. C's Correspondents Accounts were exactly ballanced, and so had nothing either to pay or receive. Now the Accounts are made up, and there is 2250 l. lost: The Gentlemen are not like to agree how it shall be paid; your Advice may hinder a Law-suit, as it may otherwise be very obliging?

Ans. The Gentleman that sent this Question, was pleas'd to give us his own thoughts upon it; which are as contradictory as the Question it self, which mentions a Joyn-stock of A, B, and C, and then denies C any thing to do with it. Thus also in the Answer he tells us that A is not only to pay the 2250 l. but also 1423 3/4 l. more to B; and a little after peremptorily affirms, That A only loses proportionably to his own Stock. The Gentleman had been very kind if he had been pleas'd to express his Thoughts a little more intelligibly, as whether the Common Factor reimburs'd the super-expended 1550 l. out of the 4000 l. which according to the stating of the Question, looks the most likely, or where else the Money was procured, it appears to us that B being worse than nothing, was accommodated by the Common Factor with 1550 l. out of the first Summ 4000 l. which 1550 l. is to be repaid upon demand with Interest, as a Summ absolutely foreign to the Joyn-stock. So that

		} A's Stock	A's Los
W. Stock.	W. Los.		
4000 l.	2250 l.	} B's Stock	B's Los
To which add the borrow'd Summ		1550	
To which the Int. of 1550 if for one Year		2421,875	
		93,000	
The Total that B must pay.		2514,875	

Quest. 2. A Gentleman used daily at a certain place to meet some particular Acquaintance, where one Night fancying himself deny'd something which really was not in the house, tho' he believ'd it to be, he wish'd that God would curse his Wife and Children, if he ever came into the House again; and accordingly hath forborn for ten weeks. Query, If this Oath, grounded on a mistake, and made both in Passion and Drink, be binding?

Ans. This Question has been somewhere answer'd by a late Author to this Effect, "That the matter of the Oath being lawful and possible, and it being in every Mans power to bind himself in things lawful and possible, wherein he is not under any preingagement, we question not but the Oath ought to be kept; which is the most egregious prevarication of the matter of fact that could possibly be, for there's no Oath at all but an Imprecation in the business, and if the Ignorance of the Querist calls such a matter of Fact an Oath, its but a mean Authority for a pretended Casuist to do so too. The matter of an Oath ought to be lawful, and yet in that Case when the condition or ground of the Oath ceases, than the Oath ceases: But this Oath was not lawful in its matter, nor possible, nor could he bind his Wife and Children by his Oath,

it not being possible for him to expect that God would inflict his Curse upon Wife and Children for an idle Drunken Hobbist; if he had curs'd and imprecated on himself, there had been more to fear, as in the late instance of the Young Mans Tongue, &c. tho' after all we think it very unsafe for him to go into the house, and incur the penalties he has imprecated, since we have known several Instances of Parents Imprecations upon their Children which have hapned, tho' not one upon the Wife.

Quest. 3. Whether, tho' God hath allowed us to take away the lives of his Creatures for our Food, it be not sinful in Christians to torture them; and if so, Whether Cock-fighting, Bull-baiting, &c. be not unlawful for Christians?

Ans. We have already answer'd this Question.

Quest. 4. Whether there be any such thing as Equivocal Generation?

Ans. If by Equivocal Generation, is here meant a Procreation of Animals by any other way than that of the Coition of Male and Female, we answer, Yes, to pass over that of the Galla, which conceives and brings forth of its self; there's the Plant Animal, whose Wood is so great a Commodity for Caps amongst the Indians; besides, several Insects which are first bred of putrefaction, and can be so produced by several persons, notwithstanding all that Monsieur Redi has observ'd against it.

Quest. 5. By what means was it, that the Sepulchral Lamps of the Ancients did some of them burn 1000, others 1500 years?

Ans. There are several Inventions that are absolutely lost, and of which we can meet with no more but the Name; and for any persons to say there are nothing but what they know or have heard of, is a ridiculous Folly. All that we can say is, That 'tis not impossible but the Romans had this Art, and perhaps that of Tulliola's Tomb is a very fair Instance. Besides, we have had several such things found here in England, which the Romans left behind 'em in their Urn-burials. We are only certain that the Phosphorus, a preparation now known by almost every little Chymist, may be made to take fire by Air, or Motion, and therefore might be us'd in Sepulchers with this Effect, upon the admittance of Air into 'em; but however we are not sure that the Romans Invention was the same with ours, or that theirs did not burn all the time.

Quest. 6. What was the Patavinitas imputed by Livie to Pollio?

Ans. Patavinity is called by Quintillian an Affectation of words that were not Original Roman; which perhaps might arise from this, the Paduans adher'd to the Roman Interest, and this correspondence might very well cause such of the Romans as Negotiated betwixt 'em to mix with your Language some Idioms of Padua or Patavinity, which was therefore so call'd out of Contempt, as if the Romans look'd upon the least imitation of any other propriety in Speech than their own, to be a disgrace to 'em.

Quest. 7. Whether Mr. Cowleys Complement to the Spring in his 2d. Book of Plants, O Florum Xerxes innumerabilium; that is, in plain English, O Spring thou Great Mogul or Grand Seignior of Flowers, is any more excusable than that strange Metaphor of Gongora a Spanish Poet, who calls the Girasole the Methusalah of Flowers?

Ans. The Phrase was not altogether so despicable as some believe it, for as Xerxes brought an innumerable Army into the Field, and more than ever any other General whatever, so the Spring produces an innumerable variety of Flowers; &c. more than any other Season of the Year.

Girasole, or Turnsole, if it be a long-lived Plant, may be called the Methusalah of Flowers with as much Reason as a Pear, because it rots not at Heart first, is called

led a *bone Christian*, or Good Christian. Thus the same Poet elsewhere calls a small River near *Madrid* the *Duke of Rivers*, and *Viscount of Brooks*; which shews that River was in place of a better, as poor Knights near the Court; and in *Spain* there are poor *Dukes* and *Viscounts*, a man might dine six of them at some Seasons for a penny Ordinary; and therefore these expressions were excellent according to the Genius of that Nation, who understood what they said, and in their way of speaking made not such monstrous Metaphors as *Father Bouhours* wou'd pretend.

Quest. Gentlemen, I have long made my Application to a certain Lady, yet after many Years Services cannot arrive to that slight inconsiderable favour call'd a Kiss, is not the party now severe, not to say cruel?

Ans. If instead of the words slight inconsiderable Favour you had inserted the word Nothing, this Epigram in *Martial* had been a proper Answer,

*Esse nihil dicis, quicquid petis, improbe Cinna;
Si nil Cinna petis, nil tibi Cinna Nego.*

Which may be thus Englished.

If *Cinna* Nothing asks, for so he rates
Whate're he begs, whate're he deprecates,
Then why is he importunate, or why
Am I unkind, if Nothing I deny.

Quest. 9. Whether things indifferent in themselves become unlawful when imposed?

Ans. This Question is grounded upon *Bp. Sandersons* distinction, who says, indifferent things in Nature do cease to be such when commanded by lawful Authority; but this is defective, for indifferent matters are naturally lawful, they being left unto all Men to do or not to do, yet in Civil Affairs these indifferent things, when imposed or Commanded by the Magistrates for promotion of Peace and Unity, cease to be indifferent then, and become obligatory upon the Conscience, because commanded by lawful Authority, the Magistrates province being to Command indifferent matters for that end, or repeal them when they prove inconvenient, but in Religious Affairs, indifferent things imposed or commanded, can never become absolutely necessary, because they always remain indifferent in their own Nature, so as never to be changed from indifferent into Religious matters, by all the Commands of Men: So that where they are enjoyn'd, they do not become a Duty to be observ'd, beyond that Divine Apostolick Rule, *1 Cor. 14. 40. Of Natural decency and Order.*

Quest. 5. What think you of the sign of the Cross that is reported to have appeared to the Emperour *Constantine*, and to have been the cause of his Conversion?

Ans. Since we have no other way to determine of things past, but by comparing such Authors as have writ of 'em; 'tis a much fairer way to relate what they give us, than positively to affirm any thing without discovering our Authorities; none of the heathen Writers give any account of it, *Publius Optatianus*, *Porphyrius*, nor even *Eusebius* himself. Those that mention this Story, are the Author of *Constantines* Life, *Ruffinus* lib. 9. Cap. 9. *Socrates* lib. 1. Cap. 1. *Sozomen* lib. 1. Cap. 3. the *Politia Auctor apud Photium*. Num. 256. pag. 1408. The Author of the *Chronicon Alexandrinum*, *Cedrenus*, *Philostorgius*, and some few others. *Gelasius Cyzicenus* lib. Hist. Council *Nic.* cap. 4. enumerates the disagreements of Authors about this matter, as *Socrates*, that it appeared at Noon-day near the Sun, writ in Greek Letters, *ΤΕΤΩ ΒΙΧΕ*. *Ruffinus* that 'twas in a Dream, presented by a Vision of Angels, that others, as *Cedrenus*, *Zonarus*, &c. tell us, that 'twas in Roman Letters. *Philostorgius* reckons up many Crosses that appear'd to *Constantine*, one at the Battle of *Magnentius*, encompass'd with a Rainbow like a Crown: Another after the Victory over *Maximus*, where the words were made up of Stars. *Nicephorus* says, another appear'd after his Victory over *Licinius*, and there was another in the *Scythick* War. We can't question but that there was some such appearance or appearan-

ces, but that they were the Cause of his Conversion are not certain, nor is it much material whether they were so or no.

Quest. 11. Gentlemen, according to your desire and my own, I send you the Questions which you tell me you have not receiv'd.

1. To demonstrate this Theorem for the Measuring of a plain Triangle, having the 3 sides given, viz. from $\frac{1}{2}$ the sum of the three sides Subtract each of the three sides severally, then multiply the said half Summ, and those three Remainders, &c.

2. To find the rising and setting of the Moon.

3. To prove that the Moon is farther from the Earth when she is in the Sign *Cancer*, than when she is in the Sign *Capricorn*.

Ans. To the first part, if the Gentleman will look in *Clavii Geometriæ practica*, he will find too long a Synthetick Demonstration for us to fill our Paper with.

To the second, We have not leisure to calculate Tables, since there's scarce an Almanack but answers this Question; if the Moons place be found in the Tables, her rising and setting is easily found by the Common Doctrine of the *Primum Mobile*.

To the third, We answer that 'tis an Error, and therefore no demonstration can be made of it.

The Questions concerning Long-hair, first preacher of the Gospel, Surplice, two husbandless young Creatures, mortgaged ground, cause of the Rainbow, *Fus Nigrum* mentioned by *Plutarch*, the 175. Ver. in *Juvenal*, &c. will be all answered next Saturday.

We have in this Paper, according to our Promise, answer'd all the Questions mention'd in our two last Mercuries, and resolve to continue answering all Questions whatever, that so we may render our Undertaking perfect. Continue sending in your Questions to *Smiths* Coffee-house in *Stocks* Market, or to the *Roterdam* Coffee-house in *Finch-lane*, till we give notice to the contrary.

The Gentleman that sent to us a second time about the lawfulness of his Marriage after his Vow to the contrary, is desired to send in a particular Account of the Motives that induc'd him to make it, and to be as full in it as he can possibly be, we hereby promising him not to mention any thing in our Answer to his prejudice; for possibly it might be the Effects of Weakness, and Circumstances do so much alter the Nature of things, that 'tis impossible for us to give a positive Answer before such an Information.

The Gentleman that sent to us concerning the Boats, &c. is desired to send us that account he mentions concerning *Capt. Nicholas T*— and the other things he mentions.

The full draught of the Rarities of *England*, will be in next *Tuesdays* Mercury.

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The Supplement to the Fifth Volume of the *Athenian Mercury*, (is now publisht) resolving all the most Nice and Curious Questions proposed by the Ingenious of either Sex. To which is prefixt, the New Project concerning the Natural and Artificial Rarities of *England*: As also an Ode to the *Athenian Society*. Printed for *John Dunton* at the *Raven* in the *Poultry*, where is to be had the First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth Volumes of the *Athenian Mercury*, (and the Supplements to 'em;) compleating the entire Set for the Year 1691. (or single ones to this time.)—We have in this Fifth Supplement inserted an account of our whole *Athenian Project*, that so none might be ignorant of what our Undertaking is, or of the promises we have formerly made.