

# The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, April 19. 1692.

perfection of its natural Species, for we speak not here of Children and Fools) is only a Rational Creature, and all other Beings are irrational: Let not the Reader mistake us, for we make use of the term *Rational*, to comply with the Querist, or else we wou'd have said *humane*, for we look upon all Animals to be Rational in a proper and genuine Sence, though not in the same dignity and order as that of Man, but we have not room to treat of this here.

We might add, That 'tis more than probable from Gen. 6. 11. that promiscuous Venery was a great, (if not the chief) cause of the drowning of the old World.

The third Question is fully answered in the two preceding ones, and wants only this distinction, that an Ape is more rational than a Changeling in its sort of reason, which as we hinted above, is of another nature than that which properly and only belongs to humanity.

Quest. 5. *A Young man that is to be made Free very speedily, desires to know how far the Law of God obligeth him to keep the Oath of a Freeman: Pray be pleased to be as speedy in your Answer as may be, and you will oblige your unknown Servant, &c.*

Ans. He is to take the Oath in the Sence it is given, and not in any Equivocal reservations of his own: And then he is obliged to be observant of whatever he swears to; but if he thinks he can't do that with safety, he ought to get his Judgment truly inform'd, and if afterwards he can't be satisfied, let him not swear at all.

Quest. 6. *A Gentleman married unto a Young Woman, supposing her to be a Widow, but it proved she had another Husband alive, who came and took her by Force from the last: The Question is, whether or no this last Husband may safely marry again unto another, and whether another young Gentlewoman may with safety take him for a Husband?*

Ans. The first was no Marriage, and then 'tis plain that the Answer will bear an Affirmative.

Quest. 7. *There is a knot of Apprentices dwelling near London Bridge, which have got a haunt of keeping Company with a Wench, or Wenches of no very good Repute, to that degree as to stay with her all Night where she is a Servant, unknown to their Masters, which practice, if not soon regulated, I fear will prove their utter Ruine: Now I desire to know if I ought to make it known to their Masters, or to conceal it, by reason it will breed great disturbances of all sides?*

Ans. If you dare not venture upon such a necessary Duty as to discover such Practices, send but to us the Names of their Masters, and the Name of the Maid-servants Master, and we'll take the Charge off you by our own private Letters.

Quest. 8. *I have this three or four Years been grievously afflicted with a Rheumatism, and continually labour under the uneasiness of its pains, which so depresses my Spirits, that I find little Enjoyment in Life. A Physicians Advice I've had, but with little success; I'm a Young Fellow that have liv'd very Temperately, and ever till this Fit very Healthful, which gives me great hopes of Relief, were I but so happy to hit on the right way of applying my self?*

Ans. If the meaning be, that the first Fit was nothing else but a Rheumatism, which began three or four Years ago, and has continued to this day with little success of Medicines, and the Person be Young, our Bookseller has a Remedy to sell, which we believe may be used with success, be the pains never so violent, if you apply your self to him.

Thus much if the Querist be in earnest, but if otherwise, let him take the following Receipt. Ride Pegasus every day in the Elizium Fields, and take one of the best Planets Houses to dwell in; take a turn or two every Night in *Via lactea*, and when you are weary rest in *Cassiopeia*.

1. **D**R. Lock in his Ingenious Treatise concerning Humane Understanding, tells us of a Monster in France from the shoulders upward a perfect Woman, and from the waist downward a perfect Swine: A Gentleman of my Acquaintance tells me he hath seen another Monster from the Shoulders upward a perfect Beav, and from thence downward perfect Woman; of the same sort is that Monster in Solyman the Magnificents Army, taken Prisoner by the Imperialists, from the Shoulders upward a perfect strong man, but with a Neck and Head of an Horse, who shot very exactly with a Bow, was under Martial Discipline, but never spake: Quere, Whether these can be esteemed Rational Creatures? and have had Rational or Immortal Souls? and whether to be Baptized?

Quest. 2. *Whether the prevailing form in any Monster ought to determine its place among the species of Animals? or if the species be not to be determined by the external proportion of the Body, what are those Ideas that go to make up a Rational, and what are those that go to make up an Irrational Creature?*

Quest. 3. *Why an Ape may not more properly be called a Rational Creature than a Changeling, which is almost as rational as an Ape, can speak no more than an Ape, and is a thousand times more dull, and stupid, and indocile?*

Quest. 4. *How comes it to pass that the gelding of a Calf makes the Horns of it to grow so very large, even much larger than the horns of a Bull, when as the gelding or cutting of a Lamb makes its horns grow so very scanty, even much smaller than the Horns of a Ram?*

Ans. We thought fit to propose all the Letter and Questions together, since they have a natural dependence upon one another, except the last, which we have formerly answer'd, we shall here pass over.

To the first part of the first Query, *Whether these are Rational Creatures?* We answer, that since the shape is only describ'd to us to judge of their reason, we are as much in the dark, as if you had ask'd nothing at all; for the External Form is not the certain Index for us to judge by: If so, we shou'd conclude that a Man, a Satyr, a Mereman, &c. were endued with rational immortal Souls, which no one has ever been so ridiculous to believe. — But supposing that we shou'd have given our Answer in the Affirmative, and concluded that the Monsters above mentioned were rational Creatures, it wou'd not follow they were proper Subjects of Baptism, no more than *Turks*, *Indians*, *Arabs*, *Chinese*, &c. which have all Rational Souls, for none have a right to Christian Baptism, but such as are born of believing Parents, or are capable of making a true confession of all the necessary principles of the Christian Faith.

The second Question is divided into two parts. To the first, which asks, *Whether the prevailing Form ought to determine a Monsters place amongst the species of Animals?* We answer, 'tis no great matter whether, but our Judgment is, that it does not; Our Reason for it is this, that since such a Creature is produced out of the proper Classes and ranks of all Species, and since in this unnatural production, we have a universal intelligible Term to express the Idea we conceive of such a Creature, to wit, a *Monster*, we keep within the bounds of Truth in that Expression, and leave the Hearer at his Liberty, to ask of what the Monster was produced, which we may further inform him of; but if we restrictively say a *Horse*, when 'tis almost one half something else, then we injure the perception of the Hearer, who by that term conceives an Idea of a perfect Horse. — As to the latter part of this Question, We think that an intelligent Being that can discourse pertinently, and Number, (when 'tis at the



*Isopha's Chair*: As for your Diet, get your Mutton at *Aries*, your Beef at *Taurus*, your Fish at the *Pisces*, your Fruit from the *Hyperides*, no fowls except black Swans, *Manucodiatas* or *Paradise Birds*, and your Wine to be no other than what *Ganimede* fills the Gods, and not a drop in a morning of *Nectar* or *Ambrosia* without grated *Unicorns Horn*; and if any thing of an Egg be to be used, it must only be that of the *Phoenix*, use no Comb but a *Mermaids*, and constantly wear an Amulet made of the *Philosophers Stone*, or a *Talismanical Sigil* form'd under a happy Constellation for your particular grievance, and when you cover your self, it should be with a *Colchos mantle*, made of *Fafens Golden Fleece*. *probat. est.*

*Quest. 9.* Seeing you desire the Motives for my Vow, they are as near as I can remember, thus: "Some Years since I fell into the Acquaintance of a knot of good honest Fellows, as merry, witty, and agreeable Company (perhaps) as most in *England*, neither absolute Slaves to *Venus*, nor Idolaters of *Bacchus*, but yet loved both their Bottle and Mistress, and all avowed Batchelors, and used often in their Discourse to paint Marriage in the ugliest Dress that could be, with all the Art of Rhetorick imaginable, insomuch that I fancying Marriage to be slavish, troublesome and chargeable, the Conversation of Women dull and unedifying; and knowing the pleasure of good Company, and Charms of Wine, besides the easiness of a single Life, was resolved against taking that long Journey for Life on that Beast, which that witty Wagg *Hudibras* thus descants upon:

*Marriage is a Beast some say,  
That carries double in soul way.*

"These Considerations put me upon resolving against it, and to hinder my weakness (as I then thought it) from ever entering into a State of Life I fancied so uneasy, I vowed against it, not considering the inconveniencies such a Vow might bring upon me, nor that I should ever have so good an Opinion of Women as now I have?

*Ans.* We promis'd the Gentleman not to make use of his discovery of the Motives of his Vow to his Injury, and having thoroughly weigh'd 'em, we find nothing in 'em (if publish'd) would break our promise, therefore we have thought fit to publish 'em. Our Opinion of the whole is this, That his Vow is not binding, being made upon false Suppositions, as that a Marriage State was such as was represented to him, when really it was not; therefore the Motives and Grounds of his Vow being false, or in other terms, (a privation, or *Nothing*, for a Lye is a Non-entity, or privation of Truth) it follows, that the Vow having nothing to support it, falls with the Error it was built upon. Indeed had the Querist had a true Idea of Marriage, and been acquainted with his own Constitution, and upon these grounds made the aforementioned Vow, it had certainly been binding: This is our Judgment, but we desire the Querist to be further satisfied by some Learned Casuistical Divine, and then take such measures as he shall judge fitting.

*Quest. 10.* You tell us somewhere of Female Circumcision, we desire to know where you read of such practices, and what your Authors are?

*Ans.* The *Creophagian Arabians*, some of the descendants of *Ishmael*, did judicially Circumcise not only their Males, but Females, the *Ethiopians*, especially in the dominions of *Prestor John*, circumcise their Females. Improper Circumcision of Females was by burning, or section, for some Deformity, Disease, or other Reasons. The method of these Operations are delivered by *Aetius* and *Agineta*: But who desires farther Information of these Customs, may have recourse to *Bartho. de Antiquit. Puerperi*, *Bellonius*, *Fovius*, *Caelius Rhodoginus*, and several other Historians and Authors.

We have receiv'd a very ingenious and pretty Essay for the Discovery of the *Beast of Babylon*, as also a Relation of the now drumming Well in *Oundle*, which we have here publish'd, not doubting the Curious will be pleas'd with 'em, especially the first.

L ---50  
U ---5  
D ---500  
O ---0  
V ---5  
I ---1  
C ---100  
U ---5  
S ---0  
666.

den Cup full of Abominations, make the word (P)

*Ans.* The Gentleman that sent this shall have his phabet confider'd.

*Relat.* As you desired an Account of our Drumming Well, I have endeavour'd to get the best Information I could. I have discours'd several, and amongst the rest with an Old man aged 87. This aged Man was a Boy, his Father was Tenant to part of the land where this Drumming Well is, and he says they used Water at all times, whether Drumming or not Drumming the water continues the same to be good; there are 4 Families this Well supplies for Water, one of which keeps a publick House, and makes very good Ale of the same Water, the old Man also saith he knew (at a drumming time) that the Well, (tho' it be deep) that all the Water has bin drawn out of it, to try if they could find any cause for that Drumming Noise, to which end he was let down to the bottom of the Well when the same noise still continues above, and the Man below in the Well had the same Noise, but apprehended the Noise to be above him; also he says when he was a Boy, that at times when the Well has Drumming there was great resort of both Gentlemen and Ladies who came in their Coaches to hear the Drumming, it was generally thought to be the forerunner of the Death of some great Person, for the noise of drumming is not at all times the same, sometimes it may be heard at 40 yards distance, some will say more, sometimes you must hold your head over the Well to hear it, but for the noise it does not much vary, it does not resemble the beating of a March, for the continuance of its noise is uncertain, sometimes a very short time, and other times a week or longer; and for the time of the Year, or the quickness or deadness of the Springs, I do not understand that it adds any thing to its drumming, for in many years together, it has not drummed, nor made any Noise, as has bin observed: What more to write of it I know not, for the cause or event of its drumming we must leave to him that knows all things.

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\* \* Medicinal Experiments; or a Collection of the Remedies, for the most part Simple, and easily prepar'd By the Honourable R. Boyle, Esq. late Fellow of the Royal Society. To which is annexed, a Catalogue of his Theological and Philosophical Books and Tracts; together with the Order of time, wherein each of them hath been Published respectively. Licensed Nov. 18. 1691. by Robert Southwell, President of the Royal Society. The major part was printed before the Authors Death who died Dec. 30. 1691. London Printed for Sam. Smith at the Prince's Arms in St. Pauls Church yard, 1692. Price one Shilling.

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