

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, June 28. 1692.

Quest. 1. **O**f what Antiquity be Epitaphs and Elegies?

Ans. Many Instances of Epitaphs in Prose and in Verse may be collected from the old Greek Poets and Historians, who yet were but Children compared to the Chaldeans and Egyptians: But the Antientest president of Epitaphs must be that recorded in the Ancientest History, viz. the Old Testament, 1 Sam. 6. 18. where it is recorded, that the Great Stone erected as a Memorial unto Abel, by his Father Adam, remained unto that day in being, and its name was called the Stone of Abel, and its Elegy was, *Here was shed the Blood of Righteous Abel*, as it is also called 4000 years after, Math. 23. 35. and this is the Original of Monumental Memorials and Elegies.

Quest. 2. Pray what's your Notion of Moderation in respect to the present Constitution of the Church of England?

Ans. We have made all the World our Confessors in this point in answer to a former Question, and have only this to add, that we don't love either a Bigot or a Mongrel: That we think a Man may be moderate without betraying the Church he professes to be a Member of, and yet zealous, without persecuting all others.

Quest. 3. How does a Nettle sting? whether by leaving part in the Flesh, as a Bee its sting, or by what other means?

Ans. That Lanugo, or soft down which covers the Leaves thereof, is in all probability the substance, which being darted into the small pores of the Flesh, and by reason of its peculiar configuration sticking fast therein, gives such torment to the part affected, much after the same manner as Gowitch, tho' more pungent and violent. Now this Configuration suppose hamated or aculeated, when the Nettle is violently and suddenly press'd, seems to be lost and destroy'd, the little Stings being broke off, or blunted one against another, which is the reason a Nettle never stings when we press it hard between our Fingers, tho' there may be also something in the hardness or callous Substance, which the ends of the fore-finger and Thumb may have contracted by often using.

Quest. 4. Whether it be possible to cure the French Pox without Mercury, as our Quacks pretend now adays to do, (tho' at the same time it is prov'd that there is Mercury in their Physick) and after all their fair promises, great pretensions, and long endeavours, to the knowledge of many Artists, their Patients have gone away unsatisfied, and as far from being cured as they were the first day they went to them: Be pleased to give the World your Approbation.

Ans. Those that doubt the possibility of Curing this Distemper without Mercury, may consult a late Author in Latin, (no Quack) if that will be satisfactory; the Book is mentioned in the Young Students Library, it's *Tuta luis Venerea sepe absque Mercurio ac semper absque Salivatione*, David Abercromby, M. D. Printed by S. Smith, Lond. and for the Miscarriages of Artists, Empericks or Quacks, there may be many Causes, too many to be enumerated there.

Quest. 5. What's your Opinion of men that have good Estates, and also Sons and Daughters, who keep no Will by them, tho' they can't be ignorant of the various accidents and mischances which may befall 'em, and suddenly put it out of their power to dispose of what they have, according to their Intentions and desires, and then they very well know that the eldest Son comes in for all, who perhaps may wish for such an Opportunity, and the rest of the Children get little or nothing out of the Estate: The Query is, Whether such as these wou'd not do well to keep their Wills always by 'em to prevent any such mischief?

Ans. This Case needs little more than stating to decide it. Those who have any thing considerable to dispose, whether Young or Old, can never excuse themselves of an almost unpardonable folly, if they are one

moment without a Will by them, for the Reasons the Question mentions, and one more, namely, because they have a Soul to dispose of, which *pro forma*, uses indeed to take up the first part of the Will, but if there be too many particulars follow after, and these not provided for till Death is just approaching, the last may at least endanger the first; or however, 'twill certainly trouble men about many things, when one only is needful: The mind ought then to be entirely employ'd in contemplating the great Change 'tis going to make, that huge leap into an unknown somewhere, for which Journey, if 'tis not then provided, 'tis in vain to expect any Accommodations upon the Road, and very unfit it then to be cumber'd with all the Impedimenta or Luggage of this World. The only reason, or prejudice rather which we can conceive hinders men from this necessary work, is that foolish whimsical Fancy, That if they once make their Wills they shall hasten their Deaths: There might be something in't should they make make a Cut-throat their Heir, and let him know they had done so, who wou'd be ready enough to kill them while they were in so good a Mind: But for any other way of hastning their Deaths by making their Wills, it can't be suppos'd; for have we not seen Instances enough of those who have had their Wills 20, 30, 40 years by them, and liv'd to change 'em almost as many times over? nay, we have known several, who being very weak before, after they have settled their Thoughts, and made their Wills, have unexpectedly recover'd.

Quest. 6. What was the first Offence committed in the World?

Ans. If the Angels fell before the World was made, as most are of Opinion they did, then the first Offence committed in the World, must be that of the Devils tempting Eve to eat the forbidden Fruit; the next was her criminal desire after it, (if her forsaking Adam, and wandering by her self were not also faulty, for if 'twas not good ever for Man to be alone, much less was it so for Woman.) Then her hearkning to the Serpent so far as to believe him before God, and then the fatal eating which ruin'd us all.

Quest. 7. Are the waters of the Bath hot from any subterraneous hidden Quality that we know not, or were they made so by Art, since Carpenter in his Chronicle tells us, that at the time when Athens was in its Glory, Bladud the Son of King Lud went thither, where he learn'd many Curious Arts, and amongst others, that of a Composition to continue a perpetual Fire, and that when he return'd to England, about 800 years before our Saviours time, he caus'd several Chests to be fill'd with that Composition, and to be put into the ground near those Springs, which is the cause they keep hot till this time.

Ans. Art's a fine thing, and who knows but this Experiment might do, as well as that of the Abbots, mention'd in the Acts of the Royal Society, who pretended this way to procure a perpetual heat — "He thrust a Pike into a soft Earth, and by it ten pounds of Quick Silver, which sinking down to the subterraneous Furnaces, a warmth comes up by the hole: See Transactions of the Royal Society, Vol. the 3d. p. 783.

And who knows but the other Story of Bladud's flying in the Air might be another Virtuoso Experiment, since 'tis also reported by the Welsh Bards, Geoffry of Monmouth, and other such credible Writers. But to leave jesting and Fables, there's little doubt to be made but that the Bath-waters are made hot by Natural Subterranean Fires, as those at Baire, and other places: And tho' we can give no great Faith either to the Asserters of Bladud's Miracles, nor the Chronology of the same Writers, who make their Virtues found out 800 years before our Saviour, yet 'tis granted on all hands that they

they are indeed very ancient, probably the Romans might first discover 'em; however, they were well known to the Saxons, who either call'd the Town it self which now remains, or one very near it, by the significant Name of *Akemanchester*; and there have been within these few Years, great Ruines and entire Pavements dug up at a vast distance under the present Foundations.

Quest. 8. *How will you get off with the old Question concerning the growing of Beans with the Eye sometimes upwards, and other Tears downward — since what you talk of making the Experiment, seems plainly a Shift, and no better — for if you question the truth of it, there shall be some of each sort sent 'ye?*

Ans. That won't do neither, unless you also send Affidavits with 'em, (for once Certificates may do) that one sort were produced one Year, and only that sort, all others being for that Year of the same Form, and so on the contrary, which if we understood you, was asserted in the first Question; and after that too, we know not how to help it, but you must still think us Ignorant, as if 'twill please you, we'll Confess we are in this Matter, both of Fact and Reason, and are like to be so, 'till you've the Patience to let us our selves make the Experiment, as we Promise to do this Year and the next, both for our own and your satisfaction.

Quest. 9. *Why are not the Jewish Women suffer'd to enter into their Synagogues in time of Divine Service, but oblig'd all the while to sit without in the Galleries?*

Ans. Either because of that silly Opinion, that the Sex have no Souls, or else to prevent their Eyes from wandering, (for which Job made a Covenant with his) while they are about Religious Duties.

Quest. 10. *Whether any Credit may be given to the Story of Hamelen in Germany, which Howel quotes in his Letters, p. 272?*

Ans. 'Tis that of the Piper (unless we are mistaken) which is related by other Authors, besides Howel — and 'tis so very strange that it seems to require more Proof than Tradition, yet one can't easily conceive what was a meer Forgery shou'd give rise to an *Aera*, which it seems remains in use among 'em to this day.

Quest. 11. *What is your Opinion of the Magick Glass? whether there be any such thing possible, as representing Actions, or showing the Face of any Person desired in it, as is usually reported?*

Ans. We shall readily grant, that most Instances of that Nature may be meer Cheats, as well as that strange and almost prodigious things may be perform'd by the help of Optick-Glasses, tho' we can hardly swallow what is related in Povel's Opticks, of a certain Italian in the last Age here in England, who pretended to show Persons in a Glass he had, their Friends walking in the Streets of Paris and Madrid, and all by the Natural Power of Opticks: However, tho' as is said, many things of this Nature may be Cheats, it does not follow that all are so; nay, we are sure of the contrary — And that the Devil has actually represented things very distant to the Eyes of Spectators; for which we not only have much Moral Evidence, but even Infallible; for there's no doubt but he us'd this Art, when he shou'd our Saviour all the Kingdoms of the World in a Moment of time.

Quest. 12. *Whether Magicians or Conjurers can cause or force Stolen Goods, Living Creatures, &c. to be brought to their Owners again, tho' many Miles distant, in a short time; and also cause a Man to be carry'd thro' the Air, as some report, two or three hundred Miles an hour?*

Ans. Undoubtedly the Devil has Power, by God's permission, himself to perform all this — and may do it at the desire of his Slaves, in order to enslave others, and take 'em the more off from their dependance on the Divine Being. That he has Power to remove Persons and Things from one place to another, we learn from his doing as much even by our Saviour, whom he set upon a Pinnacle of the Temple, and carry'd backwards and forwards to several Stations: And if by him, certainly by any other, and that almost in an instant, for weight is nothing at all to a Spirit, and therefore he may Travel as fast as he please, without fear of being tired or overladen — tho' we suppose there are few who wou'd not in this Case be of the Fools mind, (in another) That a Man were better go afoot than be thus mounted.

Quest. 13. *What's the best way to strengthen my Memory especially in relation to Religious Matters? and what Method shou'd I take to be free from Vain Thoughts in time of Divine Service?*

Ans. For the first, Prayer and Practice — For the latter, the First, repeated constantly with Resolutions to guard your Thoughts immediately as you enter into God's House: Keep your Eyes intent on the Book, when at Prayers, as well as your Thoughts on the sense: Learn by serious Application to it, Delight in God's Service, consider the Holiness of the Place where you are, whenever you approach it — but more of that God whom you serve; that he sees you, is present with you, and knows how either to Reward or Punish.

Quest. 14. *This Question was sent to you, and we have had no Answer, whether it be miscarry'd or no we cannot tell, Pray now let us see an Answer to it: It is this: Robert C. Cuts off the Intail of a Parcel of Land, and gives it by Will to his Eldest Son John C. for the Term of his Natural Life, and after his decease in these very Words, The Reversion and Reversions thereof after his Decease to my Grandchildren, John, James, Robert, Joseph, Ann and Mary C. the Children of my said Eldest Son John C. and their Heirs and Assigns for ever, equally. Now, Sirs, they are all dead but James and Ann, now James and Ann are going to Law upon this word equally; because Ann supposes that the Will of the Testator was, that they should have equal shares still, and so Ann thinks if there had been but 5, or 4, or 3, or 2 Children, their Grandfathers full Intent was to have made them equal still?*

Ans. The Word equally may have many Interpretations, but it can properly relate to nothing but to the Words ever, division my and their; and its meaning then and intent is, that it should be equally divided among my Grandchildren, and then those shares to remain for ever to them and their Heirs and Assigns, (not to his, or any of them) and Ann and James can have no more than their first Shares, unless they be Heirs or Assigns of any of the Deceased; but if any one of them will go to Law upon very doubtfull Interpretations upon this Word, they are left to their liberty.

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* That on the Morrow being the 29th. of June, 1692. betwixt 3 and 4 in the Afternoon, will be sold by Auction Mr. Barham's Library, consisting of excellent Latin and English Books in Divinity, History, &c. in all Volumes, at the Black Lyon in Pauls-Church-Yard, amongst the Woollen-Drapers. Gentlemen may be accomodated with Catalogues at the Widdows Coffee-house, in an Alley adjoining to the Place of Sale, at Mr. VVeld's betwixt the two Temple-gates in Fleetstreet, and at Mr. Mansuip's, the Black Bull against the Royal Exchange in Cornhill.

L O N D O N, Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry, 1692.