

# The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, October 4. 1692. Licens'd, E. B.

Quest. 1. **I** Find in the Book entituled, The Post-Boy Robb'd of his Mail: Or the Pacquet broke open, A Letter of Platonick Love, it gives me so fair an Idea of that Romantick Fancy, that I could almost wish there were such a thing; if there be not, I desire your Opinion whether there be or no, and also your Judgment of that Book, and whether you think it a Fiction or not?

Ans. Since you are not satisfied with what the Gentleman concern'd in that Frolick have said on that point, our Opinion is, That 'tis not impossible there should be some that may have so refin'd a Passion for each other, at least 'tis obvious there are Pretenders to it. As for the Book it self, the Compleat Library for the Month of July has given a very true Character of it, which tho' it seem'd something extravagant in the Praise, yet upon view of the Performance we acquit him of a false Judgment in what he has said upon it. It contains both Pleasure and Profit; and Horace, as good a Judge of Wit as any, tells us, *Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci*: He has hit all Points that has mingled the Profitable with the Pleasant. In this Book you may find the several Passions that Influence all the Life and Actions of Mankind, the softnesses and the wrecks of Lovers, the Intreagues and Extravagancies of Lust, the blind Inveteracy of Hate and Indignation, the Pretences of the Debauches and Atheists, the Voraciousness and restless desire of Wealth and Honour, the Vanities that Pride betrays us to, the Effect of Fear and Hope, the subtle windings of Self-Interest, how it reigns in all our Actions in Religion as well as Temporal Concerns. Here you'll find the general Hypocrisies of Mankind unmasked, and in short, all that may any way contribute to the Pleasure or Advantage of the Reader; the Letters are so Natural, that nothing we've seen publish'd of late (we'll scarce except the Turkish Spy) equals them; the Comments are always both Pleasant and Witty, never tedious, but full of various and surprizing Observations. In short, if it be not Truth as to matter of Fact, (tho' we are apt to believe 'tis) yet 'tis so like Truth, that it satisfies the Mind as well as Nature in 'em, being so well drawn, that it seems not an Imitation of Nature, but Nature it self.

Quest. 2. I have heard a young Lady make such Lamentation for want of a Husband, that 'twould grieve a Heart of Marble — She has neither Father nor Mother, but lives with an old miserly Uncle, who will not permit any to Court the poor Creature, hoping in a little time to make himself Master of her Fortune, which is very considerable, she being to be disposed of as her Uncle thinks fit, or else not to have one Farthing. This poor Husbandless young Creature, would be extremely oblig'd to you for your Advice and Direction?

Ans. Either this poor Compassionable Lady must try if she can find out any Romantick Knight of a good Fortune, who meerly out of Devotion to her Sex, or compassion for the miserable, will take her in good earnest for better for worse, without the Encumbrance of a Fortune; or else they must try if they can be too cunning for the old Fellow, and trick him into a Consent, or she must e'ne patiently stand to't, live as merry as she can in her sad Circumstances, that if possible she may outwile her good Uncle, and possess his Estate instead of his swallowing hers: — This is all the help we can give, unless the Querist had been more particular in Place, Name, &c. whereas had those been added, we might perhaps have serv'd her further, by an Advertisement to all valiant Knights and Gentle Squires, where they might come to make tryal of this honourable Adventure.

Quest. 3. There are two Gentewomen who have made an

ingenious Confession to a Friend of mine of a Passion they have for him, which is so violent that it overcomes their Reason. The Law of the Land makes it unlawful to have any more than one Wife, and shou'd he marry either of these, he doubts the other would take some desperate Course, and therefore earnestly desires your Direction in this intricate Affair?

Ans. 'Tis not only the Law of the Land, but the Christian Religion too, which makes Poligamy unlawful. As to the present Case then, we see but two ways, and whether of the two ought to be taken the Circumstances must direct: If its only the absolute losing their Hopes, which wou'd make either of the poor Ladies desperate, we think the Gentleman is bound in Complaisance to marry neither, unless one of 'em dyes or releases him, if he does not himself incur any very notable Inconvenience by remaining single; if he does, and finds it necessary, or very expedient for him to marry, and both the Rivals equally amiable for Beauty, Virtue, Fortune, &c. we think they must e'ne cast Lots for him, and so he saves two, only by hazarding the ruine of her whose good or ill Fortune it may be to miss him.

Quest. 4. I had the bad Fortune to have a Wife that made me a Cuckold, but had lately the good Fortune to bury her, and have since marry'd a very Vertuous honest Woman: My Question on the Case is, whether or no I still continue to be a Cuckold?

Ans. Once an Alderman and ever an Alderman, is a common saying indeed: But what's that to Cuckolds? So far from it, that we can give the Querist more than a good many deep reasons, fetch'd from the very Center of Metaphysicks, that he's now no Cuckold, no more than we our selves, or to put the Matter beyond dispute, then the Child unborn. For thus says Suarez, Smiglecius, Scheiblor, and a great many more of 'em — *Posita causa ponitur effectus, & sublata, tollitur*: And agen, *Relata sunt simul Natura, & se mutuo ponunt & tollunt*. And to be particular, *Posito patre qua pater est, ponitur filius, sublato tollitur, & vice versa*. — Nor need the Ladies be afraid of all this Latin, which we can assure 'em has no harm in't, the meaning on't being little else than this, That the Whore being dead, which made the poor Querist a Cuckold, he ceases to bear that opprobrious name, and becomes as Honourable a Citizen agen as any in all the World he lives in.

Quest. 5. Being some time since an Apprentice in the City, I discover'd my Mistress entertain'd an unlawful Amour, with a Gentleman who lodg'd in our house, and having my self once surpriz'd 'em in Bed together, the Gentleman clapt a Guinea into my hand, desiring me to conceal the thing, which I then did, but know not whether I ought to do it any longer, and whether I am not bound in Conscience to give him his money agen, and divulge the matter?

Ans. 'T had been convenient to have express'd whether the Woman were Maid, Wife, or Widow, which wou'd have something alter'd the Case. On the whole, as 'tis represented to us, if he has reason to think the persons concern'd still continue in their Wickedness, he ought to advertize 'em of their Duty, advising 'em if Single to marry; if either otherwise, to forbear their Criminal Converse, which if they refuse, he ought to make it known to some Magistrate, that they may be punish'd as the Law in that Case provides, and bear that Infamy which their Crimes deserve, restoring that dishonourable Reward which he receiv'd for being in one sort a Partner in their wickedness, by keeping it conceal'd from all others.

Quest. 6. A Gentleman having courted a Young Lady with all the demonstrations of a real Passion, obtains at length a Promise from her never to marry any other without his Consent: Since this he has left her, having never made any



any engagement on his side, yet threatening to keep her unmarried by Virtue of that Promise she formerly made him — Query, Whether she is oblig'd to stand to her Promise, since not mutual, and he now apparently slights her, or whether she's now at liberty to marry any other?

Ans. The Lady seems to have been a little over good, to Promise the Spark without any Obligation on his side, tho' there's no doubt but such Obligation was taken for granted, and the real Foundation of her Promise; her Lover therefore since slighting her, it being impossible for her to marry him against his Will, we think the Obligation is void, and if so, there's no doubt but she may enter into new, (but let the Man be sure now to begin) and marry when she pleases.

Quest. 7. Some time since I fell in Love with a Lady whose Virtues made her admir'd by all that knew her — I never declar'd my Passion to her but once, before I reveal'd it to my Parents, and she to hers — they were all very well pleas'd with it, but our circumstances were so that we could not conveniently marry for two or three Years; they sought all ways to make us sure to one another, but none being found feasible, she and I have done it by a solemn Promise: I desire therefore to know, Whether if our Parents shou'd afterwards differ about Portion, &c. and so endeavour to break off our Passion, we, who are fully resolv'd to obey our Parents in all that's just and honest, are bound either in Duty, Conscience, Prudence or Justice, against our Wills to do so? To this we desire a speedy Answer.

Ans. You had long since had it, but for that Accident which every one knows — We now reply, That you ought not to have made at first any positive Declaration without the Consent of your Parents — but that it seems is past, and besides almost made up by their after-leave, and yet one wou'd think were they really willing to make you sure to each other, ways might be easily found to do it, as a Contract before Witnesses: However, if they don't think this convenient, neither ought you to have done so, nor dispose of your selves without their express approbation, tho' here too the Crime is lessen'd by their imply'd Consent, and actual desire to have some such thing done between you: If therefore they shou'd now attempt to break that League whereof they have formerly been the Mediators, you are not, we think, oblig'd to obey them, if your affections are so deeply engag'd that you find it really and absolutely impossible to get clear or live happy without each other — tho' on the other side, 'tis our Opinion you'd do very well, if out of an Heroical piece of Piety to your Parents you cou'd sacrifice your most tender Inclinations to their Desires, tho' they might do better to gratify yours, and that if they do absolutely refuse their Consent, you ought not to marry each other, tho' never to marry any else, while your Parents are living, tho' in the mean time they'd be extremely severe and unjust too, as circumstances are, if they shou'd ever require of you so severe a Tryal of your Obedience.

Quest. 8. A Gentlewoman having lately marry'd one whom she knew to be already marry'd to another Woman yet alive, and having just before on pretence of Virtue and Reputation refused to comply with a Person of Quality who was mightily in Love with her, and had made her very advantageous Offers — Query, Which was the greatest sin, marrying as she did, or complying with the desires of her Lover?

Ans. If the thing be fairly represented, it seems a clear Case that she has chosen the greater Crime, and avoided the less; for supposing her Wou'd-be-Whore-master of Quality (we beg his Honour's Pardon for speaking such plain English) not already marry'd, which had he been, 't had been just the same Case as 'tis now, she is now guilty of a double Crime, by wronging the Wife of him to whom she seems to be marry'd, but is really no better than his Whore, she's an Adulteress now, whereas in the former Case she had only been guilty of single Fornication.

Quest. 9. To find two Square Numbers whose difference is 90?

Ans. 1. For diff. 90 put . . . . . 2  
2 For a N°. whose Square is less than the given diff. } . . . . . m  
put — — — — — }  
3 For the side of the lesser Square sought after, put } . . . . . r  
4 For the side of the greater put . . . . . m + r  
5 Then the lesser Square is . . . . . rr  
6 And the greater Square is mm + 2mr + rr  
7 Their diff. is . . . . . mm + 2mr  
8 Which must be equal to the given difference g } mm + 2mr = g  
9 Which equation reduc'd gives the side of the lesser Square }  $r = \frac{g - mm}{2m}$   
10 From the 4th. and 9th. steps the side of the greater Square is found out — }  $m + r = \frac{g + mm}{2m}$   
Which two last steps give this following CANNON:

Take any Square Number less than the given difference, and subtract it from the said difference, then divide the remainder by the double of (or twice) the side of the Square first taken, and the Quotient shall be the side of the lesser of the two Squares sought: Lastly, this side added to the side of the Square first taken, gives the side of the other Square sought.

Example. The diff. of the Squares desired is 90. I take 36 (a Square less than 90) out of 90, there remains 54, which divided by 12 (the double of the Square taken) gives for the Quotient  $\frac{54}{12} = 4\frac{1}{2}$  the side of the lesser Square sought, to which I add 6 (the square root taken) makes  $\frac{54}{12} + 6 = 9$  the side of the greater Square, the difference of which two Squares is 90, which was to be done.

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