

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, November 1. 1692. Licens'd, E. B.

Quest. 1. **A** Gentleman has long convers'd with two Ladies, one of which he's resolv'd to make his Wife, tho both so equally deserving, he knows not which to pitch upon; only one is a Fair Woman, and the other black: What would you direct him to in this matter?

Ans. It's something strange that their Fortunes, their Tempers, their Wits and Beauties, and Ages, and all other Circumstances, shou'd be so critically equal, that none of 'em should preponderate, any of which would quickly turn the Scale. If the Fair be foolish, he were better take the Black, unless she's proud and ill-natur'd; but if both of 'em are, as Mistresses use to be, without any blemish, we know no remedy but their throwing up Cross or Pile for the Gentleman, and happy Woman be her Dole that has him.

Quest. 2. One that has a Rival receiv'd with equal Respect by the Lady he Addresses to, desires your Advice by what way he may handsomely get rid of him?

Ans. The Modish way is whipping him thro' the Lungs a little; But to say Truth, 'tis a hard Case for a poor Lover, that because Cupid's bloody Dart, and his Lady's more Cruel Eyes have made one Hole in his Car-kass, his Rivals Sword shou'd presently make the Sun shine thro' him at another. To come then to softer and handsomer Arguments: As to your Rival, look with a Rivals Eyes, (which are seldom purblind) on his Person, Body, Mind, Estate, Relations, &c. and he must be an Angel, if you don't find something in him justly blameable. Spare no cost to furnish your self with Intelligence of this Nature, and when you get any thing considerable, get some Friend of hers to drop it accidentally, not as from you, and others on occasion to confirm it; which may chance to give him a list, especially if you can truly represent him as a Coward, or a Niggard, or an Imperious, or a Fool, or weak, and diseased, (the last above all the rest) or else as a vicious Person, more effectual than any of the other, if the Lady her self be strictly virtuous. Nor is this any base or unchristian dealing, if you don't slander him, but only lay open his Vices for your own just Interest. As for your self, make the Lady's Friend your own, whatever charge 'tis, for then generally you've the better half of her. Study her Humour, and contrive all ways to please her. Study your Rivals greatest Excellency, and strive to excell him even in that. Manage things so, that you may be thought brave, liberal, generous and honest, without seeming to desire it. Be assiduous, and outwatch both your Mistress and Rival, yet know when to be absent. Lastly, without being little and sneaking, be submissive, modest and humble, which you may easily be before Marriage, for we have time enough to domineer afterward.

Quest. 3. What is to be judg'd of that Man, and what Obligation lyes upon him, who having prevail'd with a Woman to comply with his lewd and adulterous Desires, and she having a Child by him, forces her to drop it in the street, (which Child is near 4 years of Age, and is kept at the Charge of the Parish in which it was dropt) she being in very straits Circumstances, but he a Man of a very good Substance: — And likewise having enticed a Young Virgin to commit the like Folly with him, (endeavouring to convince her from Scripture that it was no Sin) instructs her how to take Potions to procure Abortion, which Experiment she hath try'd more than once with success; and whether this be not very near akin to the Crying Sin of Murder: — To which you are desir'd to return a clear and satisfactory Answer, it being put as a Case of Conscience?

Ans. She is obliged to inform the Officers of the Parish, who can make him repay them, and provide for the Child, her Crime being pardoned by General Pardons, but her Consent, or Compliance takes off her

own Damage. As to the other, it is as high a Crime as killing a born Infant, but we want a Law to punish it in the same manner.

Quest. 4. I have worn Ear-rings several Years, but I begin now to think them unlawful, and dare not any longer wear them: For first, I find, that these and Idolatry go together, and are to be abandoned together, Gen. 35. 4. Again, I see them particularly spoken against, Isa. 3. 20. Also, I find that they are the Attire of Pagans and Infidels all the World over, and are inseparable from them. Lastly, they are now grown into an universal Vanity in this Nation, and should not those who are sober of our Sex be distinguished from others, by leaving off this common badge of Pride and Vanity? I desire your Direction and Advice as to this, and as soon as you can?

Ans. A Jews Servant, who in kindness to the Family, desired to remain so for his Life, had his Ear publicly bored, and unquestionably the Master might cause a Ring to be hung therein, Deut. 15. 17. as we do Collars about Negro's, to signify whose Servant he was; the Arabians or Ishmaelites wore Ear-Rings to express they were not servile People, Judg. 8. 24. and other Nations might have other different Reasons, which still justifies their Civil Use; for were Ear-Rings, Jewels, Bracelets, Chains, and Perfumes, or Pomatums evil in themselves, and absolutely unlawful, then they would not be the Medium's of such Praises as are frequently mentioned in the Book of Canticles, which is the manner of the Eastern Countries expressing themselves at this day: But when Idolatrous Priests, to turn the Penny, consecrate Ear-Rings, with Characters of Idols thereon, to be worn in Religious Honour of such or such Idols, to denote the Person a Devotee to such a Saint, or strange God, then they are to be dealt with in some such way as Jacob did with his Servants Idolatrous Ear-Rings. The second Text discards not the Ladies of their Ornaments, (if they were as many as lately Printed in the Pop Dictionary) as sinful and unlawful, but upon mournful times, or Publick Fasts, they are to lay them aside. But here he charges them in the 16. Verse for walking with inticing Gestures, speaking Eyes and Feet, notoriously soliciting all Comers impunitely: And for this Impudence he threatens them with being reduced unto an infamous Poverty; and if Mercenary Prostitutes were distinguished by Habit, as some Statutes have done, and some Countrey's do, there might be no hurt in that.

Quest. 5. From whence comes the Custom of gathering of Christmas-Box-money? and how long since?

Ans. It is as Ancient as the word Mass, which the Romish Priests invented from the Latin word *Missa*, to send, by putting the People in Mind to send Gifts, Offerings, Oblations, to have Masses said for every thing almost, that a Ship goes not out to the Indies, but the Priests have a box in that Ship, under the Protection of some Saint. And for Masses, as they Cant, to be said for them to that Saint, &c. the poor People must put in something into the Priests Box, which is not to be Opened till the Ship Return. Thus the Mass at that time was called *Christs Mass*, and the Box *Christs-Mass-Box*, or Money gathered against that time, that Masses might be made by the Priests to the Saints, to forgive the People the Debaucheries of that time, and from this Servants had the Liberty to get Box-money, because they might be enabled to pay the Priest for his Masses, because No Penny No Patronage; for tho' the Rich pay ten times more than they can expect, yet a Priest will not say a Mass or any thing to the Poor for nothing, so Charitable they generally are.

Quest.

Quest. 6. *I some time since Contracted an entire Friendship with a particular Person, which I hoped would not have expired before our Lives; but I find my self greatly mistaken, being without any Cause very much slighted, and my Love which is too firmly fixed to be removed, to be returned with Acts of Ingratitude, by reason whereof I have no peace Day or Night: If you have any Pity or Compassion to any one who is truly miserable, I earnestly request you would be pleased to advise me speedily what I shall do in this sad Condition which I am in?*

Ans. If it be a Woman, you may conclude that she has no regard for you; for if she had, she would Rail at you, or Affront you, or Cheat you: But by Slighting you, it's the highest Contempt and Disesteem; and if she will not give you her Reasons in Answer to your Letter, &c. you must practice to slight her, that's the Remedy.

Quest. 7. *I having promised a Gentleman marriage, he going into Ireland, I received advice from a Friend of mine that he was killed, whereupon I married another; some time after he comes home, and said he did not think I would serve him so: I told him how it was, and produced the Letter; now my Husband being dead, he would have me to Wife: Query, Whether I am oblig'd for to have him, I would desire your speedy Answer?*

Ans. This hath been Answered. During her Coverture she was not at her own dispose, and could make no such Promise justly, because it served only to alienate her Affections from her Husband, being a Practice worse in its outward Consequences than having two Wives at once, because then they practise not the death of each other: It being past, therefore you may have him or another, as stands best with your Interest.

Quest. 8. *A Friend of mine about three Years agoe married a Wife, and contrary unto his Expectation or her Duty she proves a very passionate furious Woman; I have been several times at my Friend's house, and I have observed that when he doth but speak a word that she doth not approve of, she will run and catch him by the Hair of the Head, or else throw something at him, or kick him, or some such Action, and Curse him bitterly, with abundance of Imprecations at Damn him, and the like, many times swearing that she will be the death of him: Now my Friend is a very honest sober Man, and never repays her in this way, but very gently and lovingly perswades her to be otherwise; but there is no Argument will prevail with her, but she is still the same. Sits, It is my Friend's desire to know your Opinion, whether it is his Duty to live all his Life-time with this Woman, or to leave her, to avoid the evil of these and such like Actions.*

Ans. He ought to try all legal Courses against her Swearing and Threatning his Life, and if he is minded to be at Charge with her to Tame her, the Legal Way, as one Book of Reports calls it, he may suffer himself and her to be Outlaw'd, and let her be taken, and by lying in Jayle she may come to a better Temper; or he may try the Proctors of the Spiritual Court, if they can do as much to free him from the Cruelty of his Wife, as they do for a Woman in Case of Cruelty from her Husband.

Quest. 9. *What's the Cause of Water ascending into a Jugg or Glass, when a lighted Paper is put into it?*

Ans. We have in a late Answer about the Vacuum spoken of small interspers'd Vacua, amongst all Bodies, and parts of Bodies, and that (these little distances excepted) all places are full of Body more or less condense, and that as some are attracted to the Earth (the great Magnes of this sublunary World at least) the other are thrust upwards to avoid Penetration of Bodies: This being here again Premis'd, We Answer, That all Bodies ascending and descending perpendicularly (unless hindered by some accidental Violence) that Columbe of Air, Atoms, &c. that presses upon the Glass, and the Parts about it, forces the Water on every side, and mounts it upwards into the Vacuum made in the Glass, there being more room to retire thither from the Pressure than elsewhere, and there being no other Body at hand that is ready to supply the place. If it be further askt, How that Vacuum came in the Glass? 'tis answer'd, That Smoke being made in the Glass,

where it could not get out as it encreas'd, it expell'd the Air, and when it came to dissolve again, and separate its involv'd loose Particles, which took up a great deal of room, it left the Vacuum behind it. Perhaps by what we have said, some be dissatisfy'd about the pressure of the Air, but such we wou'd refer to what the ever Honourable Mr. Boyle has writ upon that Subject.

Quest. 10. *Whether Purging in giving Chalybeat Medicines is proper? and whether that doth not destroy the Effect of the Chalybeat?*

Ans. It may Rebate its Effect with some, when in others again a Purge may produce a better Effect, and sometimes when the Chalybeat proves contrary to its designed Vertue, a Purge may be of Necessity.

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