

The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, November 5. 1692. Licens'd, E. B.

Quest. 1. **I** Have a Relation in Town who has a Feavour every Christmas-Day, being the Day of his Birth: Query, Whether it is of the same Nature as other Feavours? and whether Cureable or no?

Ans. Meekren in his Medico-chirurgical Observations, gives us an Account of a Man that had a Septenary Feavour; and Pliny, if we may believe him, tells us, of one Antipater a Sidonian, that also had a Fever (or as some call it an Ague) every Year upon his Birth-day; and if so, the Case of your Friend, tho' very rare, is not without a President: As for the Nature of such Feavours or Agues, we look upon 'em to be as unaccountable as the revolution of Sevens, a Year in which it's observ'd a great part of the World (that get out of Childhood) dye in, and we know now of one Family that never escapes it. Whether an Anniversary Ague is cureable, we dare not pretend, since we want Examples, perhaps from the fewness of 'em; but for other Agues, we are certain they may, and we are as sure that the Remedy in one of our late Advertisements is infallible, if carefully us'd, tho' the Author pretends it cannot be frustrated by any carelessness whatever. See our Mercury for 19th. of the last Month, October.

Quest. 2. In the Reign of K. Henry the 2d. near Orford, in Suffolk, certain Fishermen took in their Nets a Fish, having the shape of a Man in all parts, was kept in the Castle of Orford 6 months, and more, he spake not a word, coveted mostly raw Fish, and often went to Church, but without any shew of Devotion, and at length being not well looked to stole to the Sea, and was never seen more; there was another such taken in the Reign of K. John: Your Opinion is desired upon the same?

Ans. We have formerly spoke of things of this Nature, in our Paper of Mermaids, &c.

Quest. 3. A very wicked Wretch, (a Neighbour of mine, tho' not of the same Parish) having brought up his Wife's Niece from a Child, has for some years past made her his Whore, has several Children by her: Query, Whether it does not concern every good Christian (and Minister especially) to take Cognizance of such Villany, and do as much as in them lies, all they can to suppress this complicated Sin of Adultery and Incest? If it be our Duty (as truly it seems so to me) to endeavour the Suppression of this notorious Sin: I humbly beg of you to inform me what method is most proper for such an Undertaking: I have waited long for an Answer to this, but I hope now to have an Answer speedily, in which you will oblige yours, &c. I know not whether or no it be material to let you know, that I am the Minister of the next Parish, where the aforesaid wickedness is committed, unrebuk'd.

Ans. If the present Ministers and Church-wardens of your Neighbouring Parish are careless in the Concern, and won't act in it, (which you ought first to admonish them of) your Method is to serve them all four into the Spiritual Court: And the Parish may, and ought also to enquire after Security for the Children, where there's no visible legal Father. The Offendor may be process'd upon Common Fame, but if the matter be notorious, and own'd, there's yet better ground to go upon, and stirring in it is more justifiable, or rather a greater Duty. But if after all, (for the Case is not full enough stated) if nothing can be prov'd upon the Offendor since the last General Pardon, he'll make that Plea in Court, as was not long since the Case of a Great Person in this Nation. Such Members are a very pernicious Scandal to a Church, and ought to be Excommunicated; for ill Example has no little Interest against all that a Minister can teach to the contrary: We don't look upon the Act to be Incest. If you please you may let us hear how you proceed in the Affair, and what it comes to.

Quest. 4. Gentlemen, It's observ'd, that in your Mercury of October 15th. you very easily pass over the Reason of the Tides, by excusing the Moon from a Regency over them; whereas some others (and those Learned too) think, That if that Planet be herein render'd useles, and in some other matters, wherein also you seem also to deprive her of Power; it seems strongly to result, that God and Nature have Created somewhat in vain: For, if she were made only for Light, (of which she hath none Innate) the advantage were very small to the Sons of men. One half of the time she shineth being of no use to mortals, or of so little, that the London Lucidaries are preferable before it, and yet we are unwilling to have an equal regard to Humane Contrivance, with the Glorious Works of God. Your second Thoughts on this Subject are therefore desired by some that are greatly in Love with the Lunar Influence?

Ans. We can't recant what we have said on this Subject, till we see better Cause than what this Letter offers: It may be further urged, that tho' the Moon may want her Light for some time in the Month, yet it's no fair Consequence that God made her in vain, at least for that time; for such a Change does very remarkably signalize the Power of God, and consequently gives us thereby occasion to glorifie him: But why should we argue that things are in vain, that to us are invisible, or unaccountable? What then becomes of the late discoveries of that Infinity of Stars in *Via lactea*, by Telescopes, if they were made in vain for so long a time; (which yet we can't grant till we know whether there are more Worlds above us to which they might be serviceable;) 'tis yet more Honour to the Maker, that we can make new Discoveries of his Works, which therefore are not in vain, since they answer that end. But to the Tides, 'tis evident enough the Moon is not the Cause of 'em; for as the Learned Dr. Wallis has very well observ'd in his Letter to Mr. Boyle, (*Royal Transact. N. 16. p. 263.*) That if this fancy'd Magnetick Vertue, which some wou'd ascribe to the Moon, does draw the Waters to it, or drive them from it, it wou'd be always high Water when the Moon is vertical, and *Vice versa*, which are both false; and it wou'd be wisht that this Great Man's Hypothesis of the Earths Motion making the Tides, had been as firm, as 'tis full of Wit and acute Invention: But it will be hard for him, (or before him for Galileus) to give us any reason why the Earths Motion shou'd influence and throw those vast Waters, first one way, and then another, when the largest *Meres* we have in England, or other Countries, (which have no Communication with the Sea) remain steady and unmoveable, notwithstanding they are commonly fine and thinner than the Water of the Sea; but 'tis easier to find very good Objections, than lay down a true Hypothesis in this, or many other Cases, therefore we shall say no more of it.

Quest. 5. I read about a Week ago your Answer to a Question concerning the Eternity of the World, which you resolv'd in the Negative. The Arguments you made use of were very Ingenious, and very good, notwithstanding I found place for the following Objection: *Viz.* — The Will of God to create the World was certainly Eternal; that 'is, from all Eternity God had the Will to Create the World; the effect of that Will could not be separated from the Will it self by any time; (there being no time) therefore the effect of that Will to Create the World (that is, the Creation of the World it self) not being separable from the Will it self, must of consequence have been as Eternal as the Will it self.

Ans. If the Divine Being is One unsuccessive, and unalterable in his Nature, free from the Power of Time or Place, and therefore most properly call'd in Sacred *VVrit*, *I am*; which also further informs us, that

thousand Years are but the same thing to him as one day, & vice versa; it follows that this is vain, and so convertible that the quite contrary Inference might be drawn from it; for if God's Will could not be separated from the Effect by any Time when Time was not, how could it be joyn'd to the Effect of making a great part of the World in any time before time was; for the Sun, Moon and Stars, which are the proper Measure of time, were not first made: But all this is Quibble and Noise, and the Knot is easily unty'd, for if God's Will could not be separated from the Effect by any time when time was not, it might be suspended according to the Circumstances of how and when, which his Will also at the same instant determin'd. Those that will take the Pains to read that incomparable piece, entituled *The Bulk and Selvidge of the World*, may have more satisfaction about the Duration of Time, Eternity, &c. than they can easily promise themselves, after the difficulties that Dr. More and others have embarras'd those Subjects withall.

Quest. 6. Gentlemen, Consider the meaning of the 21, and 22 Verses of the 21th. of Exodus, and pray your Judgments thereon — Whether all wilful Abortions are actually Murder?

Ans. Abortions or wilfull Miscarriages by Physick are not countenanced by this Text, that being Murder in the Intention, tho' it cannot be actually Murder, because the Text makes this positive difference; if a Woman fortuitously or by some Chance be caused to Miscarry, if no further mischief ensue, but only the loss of her unripe or unlive Fruit, then a Fine must be paid; therefore she that causes her own Miscarriage wilfully, deserves Corporal Punishment, and great Repentance is required to obtain Pardon of God; but if the Fruit or Child was alive, then Life was to go for Life, it was Murder in Fact: This Law was most wisely Ordained, to restrain the Rigour of Husbands, who would Prosecute another Man to Death for any thing that could be pretended a Miscarriage, tho' it were a false Conception, Mola, or a monstrous Embrio.

Quest. 7. A Lady of an extraordinary shape, (but inclining to Fat) fears her Fat may grow excessive, and therefore desires your Advice, what she shall do in that Case? and in case you (in your next Mercury) will prescribe a Method for obtaining her desire, (viz.) stopping (or rather lessning) her Fat, a way will be found out for an ample Requital of such a Favour, provided you prescribe a Practicable Method.

Ans. It's needless to prescribe many things where fewer will do, therefore if the Lady confine her self to make her Breakfasts and Suppers for a Month or two of Water-gruel, made only with the Leaves of Mallows boiled in Water, and thickned with a little Oat-meal, this Diuretick Gruel will discharge and sensibly diminish the superfluous fatness: If it be only to prevent the encrease of Fat, then a Week now or then will be sufficient, Purging once in a Week with Pills called *Nendick's Popular Pills*, sold at the Coffee-House at *Westminster-Hall-Gate*, by this Method the Lady will obtain what's desired: *Probatum est.*

Quest. 8. Some time since meeting in your Mercury, Numb. 8. with a Receipt for making of China Earthen Ware, and supposing it a Collection out of some Author writing of that Countrey, and whereas in those Authors writing of that Countrey, which I have read, had not met with the like, I therefore was desirous to know your Author, and accordingly sent you a Query to that end, enclosed in a black Cover, to your Bookseller, Mr. Dunton, but meeting with no Answer in your following Mercuries, I doubted whether the Penny-Post, with whom I sent it, delivered it right; or whether the Question, not worded as it should have been, merited your Answer: I therefore repeat my Question thus, *Whether the Receipt mentioned in your Mercury, N. 8. in Answer to Question 6th. thereof, for making China Earthen Ware, be an Experiment of your own, or a Receipt taken out of some Author? if the last, you are desired to mention the Title of the Book, and the Folio where it may be found? My reason of this Question is, the hopes I have to find some other Curiosities therein, worthy my knowledge.*

Ans. The Receipt of making the China Ware is out of no Author, but the common Practice at this day in

China, in those Men's houses where *China Ware* is made, as at our Pot or Glass-houses here, by Ovens and Kilns do calcine or dissolve the Composition.

Quest. 9. What mean you by A Practical Discourse of Earthquakes? is it a Book as will teach one how to make Earthquakes, as if a Laplander were to teach one to sell a Wind?

Ans. The Querist may please his Fancy with the Banter, but we mean the Book is as useful as a Bibliotheque or Dictionary, upon all occasions to have recourse to for things of this Nature, the whole being a Curious Collection, and each instance greatly improved by the Author.

Quest. 10. Whether Godfathers, Godmothers and Bishoping, are not Popish Customs, pray your Answer?

Ans. No. Popery is the Political and Ceremonial Inventions, which were introduced by degrees by several ignorant, wicked, ambitious, or Money-minded Popes, hundreds of Years after the Apostles; but Godfathers, &c. were in Practice in the Apostle's time, as sundry Historians, Secular and Ecclesiastical, deliver. The Custom came in upon this Occasion; Heathen Converts brought their Children to be Baptized, then in Christian Compassion to the Child, one or more of the Church publicly undertook to their utmost, to see the Child brought up in the Faith it was then Baptized into, in Case the Parents dyed, least after the Parents decease it should by Heathens be brought up a Heathen; which Child grown up, came and made publick acknowledgment of its Belief, and Embracing the Gospel was Confirmed, and admitted as a Member of the Church, and entituled unto all the Priviledges contained in the Sacred Scriptures. In the times of Persecution many Imbraced the Christian Religion, and afterwards Apostatized and Betrayed their Brethren to the Persecutors, to prevent which (as much as was possible) Sureties or Susceptores, Sponsors, were taken by the Church, and none admitted without such Sureties: These are mentioned by the Council of Arles, A. C. 312. or 314. so this is no Popish Invention. As to Bishoping, as you call it, or Confirmation, it is often mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, chap. 8. and in many other places.

☞ The Mask'd Lady's Questions shall be Answer'd.

Advertisements.

☞ A Defence of Gospel Truth, being a Reply to Mr. Chauncy's First Part, and as an Explication of the Points in Debate, may serve for a Reply to all other Answers. By Daniel Williams. Price stitche 6 d. Printed for John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry: Of whom is to be had the Second Edition of Gospel Truth Stated.

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