

The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, November 26. 1692. Licens'd, E. B.

Quest. 1. **F**rom whence proceeds a Fog, and what's the Cause?

Ans. A Mist, or Fog is of the same Nature as Rain, only the weakness of the Sun at this time of the Year is not able to raise it high enough to compleat that work, therefore it hovers nigh the surface of the Earth. Hence by the by, we may easily solve that unual, and to some frightful darkness, which happen'd between ten and eleven in the Morning, in January 1679. over many places of the City of London, a very thick Mist arose in the Morning, which was clear'd from the South, about 9 (it being Sunday, and therefore the Fires were kindled later) the Smoke ascending was choakt by the great Fog, or Mist that hover'd over the tops of the Houses: Upon this the Smoke was beat down again, and spread under the Fog, and caused the darkness, which appear'd reddish against the Windows. Soon after a little Wind arising in the North-East, carry'd off the Mist, and so the Darkness remov'd by degrees towards Lamberth and Clapham; and afterwards the Mist arising by the heat of the Day, gave way for the Smoke to ascend, and then the Darkness wholly vanish'd.

Quest. 2. How may that Phenomenon of Star-falling be sol'd, since to the Vulgar 'tis unaccountable, and the Learned themselves differ about it?

Ans. There's a very late Philosopher, that treating of Star-shooting, after a grave and long harangue, taking it for a kind of a Jelly, which he says falls down, (and which the Countrey People think to be the Star itself) wishes that the Composition of that Jelly were Chimically examin'd, that the Learned might be better enabled to guess at the Nature thereof; but let 'em examine it as long as they please, we are satisfy'd 'tis easie to prove they'll search upon a wrong ground. Whether there may be any Jelly, or as some call it, *Star-slug*, or according to others, *Star-shoot*, that falls down from the middle Region of the Air, we shan't be positive: But be it as it will, its impossible in its fall it shou'd cast such a stream, or be so much as visible, being of it self a Substance which imbibes the Rays of Light; and much more ridiculous is it for any one to pretend they see it fall, so as to go and gather it up immediately, for no one ever saw it shoot over their Heads, but obliquely, and at a very great distance. As for this Jelly, we have our selves been something curious in our Searches after it, and find it to be nothing else but the Intrails of Frogs, which have been kill'd by Crows, and eaten up all but their Guts, which in little time turns to Jelly; we have found 'em sometimes half Gut, half Jelly; sometimes new kill'd; sometimes with a Leg, or a piece of the Body left with it, which possibly might happen by the Crows being frighten'd away before she had eat those parts: Besides, the bigness of the Lump also shows it to be no larger than what a Frogs Guts might produce. So that this Story about something falling from a Star, or the middle Region of the Air, being fabulous, we must seek some other Reason for the Solution of such an Appearance: And to us nothing seems more Rational, than that some small parcel of that Nitrous and Sulphurous Matter, which are the Ingredients of Thunder, are fired as Thunder is in the middle Region of the Air, and dart downwards, or obliquely, accordingly as they receiv'd their first Motion: Sometimes they leave a Stream behind 'em like a long Rope, which continues a minute together scattering its Combustible Matter all the way it goes. Of this Nature, tho' much larger, are those Phenomena's we call *Darts*, *burning Lances*, the *skipping Kid*, the *Dragon*, &c. In February, 1675. there was seen one which flew over Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire,

Hartfordshire, Middlesex, Essex, &c. Now from all this 'tis easie to conjecture the soundness of the Common receiv'd Opinion of falling *Gelatine Matter*.

Quest. 3. What is meant by the Expression of Lambent Fire, and what is it?

Ans. *Lambens Ignis*, or the *licking Fire*, so called from its Innocency, is most probably an Inflammation proceeding from the steams of the Body of a Sweating Animal, which without any hurt, seems to hang on the Cloaths or Hair, and not to be brush'd off, because 'tis still renew'd from the evaporating steams. It happens mostly when Men have drunk hard, and then in a still dark Night ride fast home; the first kindling of it may probably be (to pass over an Antiperistasis) by some spark of a Flint trodden upon by the Horses Shoe, &c. for as the steams of the Spirit of Wine easily catch Fire, so may the evaporating Spirits being much of the same Nature, discover'd by Chymists to be plentiful in Humane Bodies, as also in Animals, when they are in any sufficient Quantity sent out by perspiration, and Sweating.

Quest. 4. We read often of the word Assylum: Pray whence is the use thereof?

Ans. In Sacred Writ there was a City of Refuge, where the Criminal fled for Protection, and if his fault was not wilful, as in Murder, the Avenger of Blood cou'd not take him thence. 'Tis story'd of *Cadmus*, that at the Building of *Thebes*, opened a Sanctuary of Refuge for Criminals, bond or free, to fly to, probably in imitation of that in Sacred Writ. As for this *Assylum*, 'twas also a Sanctuary of Refuge built upon the Hill *Palatine* in *Rome*, founded by *Romulus* for the end above. There was also such another Custom in the City of *Croton*, where whosoever fled to the Altars of their Gods, were forgiven their Crimes. We shall pass over the Practice of the Europeans beyond Seas, and only note, that hence came these Proverbs, *Ad te tanquam ad Assylum*, *ad te tanquam ad Aram confugimus*: We fly unto thee as our only Refuge.

Quest. 5. What was the reason that our Saviour was Crucified, since we find no such Death in the Jewish Economy: And what was the manner of it as near as you can guess, by what credible Authors say?

Ans. 'Tis true, we find no such Death in the Jewish Law. 'Twas a Roman Punishment, and at that time the Romans were their Masters, and they were govern'd by their Laws. Crucifixion amongst the Romans is call'd by *Tacitus*, *Servile Supplicium*, the punishment of Slaves, and sometimes Freeman underwent that Death, (tho' very seldom, and for Capital Crimes) as in the Case of that Guardian which *Galba* crucify'd for poisoning his Ward; for when the Guardian claim'd the benefit of the Law, as being a Freeman, and a Roman Citizen: *Galba*, as if he would allay his punishment with some Comfort and Honour, commanded the Cross already made to be changed, and another to be reared far higher than ordinary, and the same to be overlaid with a white Colour. Those that were thus punished, bore the Cross upon their Shoulders to the place of Execution. *Plut. de Sera Num. vind. Malificium ad Supplicium educuntur, quisque suam Effert Crucem*: the Party was first strip'd, and then fastned to the Cross, commonly with Nails, and that Equity of Proceeding might clearly appear to the People, the Cause of this Punishment was commonly writ in Capital Letters, declaring the Cause of his Death, (*vide Lips. de Cruce l. 2. c. 11.*) Sometimes a Common-Crier published what the Person was, as in the Case of *Attalus* the Martyr, (*Apollon. Chap. 2.*) who was led about the Amphitheatre, with an *This is Attalus the Christian*.

Quest.

Quest. 6. *Whether there be any of the Race of Julius Cæsar's Horses now in the World, who, as they say, wept for the Death of their Master? and if there be, Whether it would not be Prudence for the French King to store himself with some of them, that whenever his Life meets a Period, he may not dye without Mourners?*

Ans. If that Race be extinct, possibly he may find one half Man, half Horse, in *West Tartary*, which by good Usage may be taught before hand. If he fails there, the great *Turk* will certainly be sensible of the Loss of so good an Allie. But now we think on't, he needs not go out of his Court, for surely his Parasites and Worshipers, who have made him swallow so many Blasphemous Titles, will Counterfeit a Sorrow, perhaps act a real one; for why mayn't Custom, which has now made Flattery a Duty and an Accomplishment in that Court, naturalize a Sorrow for the loss of that which they have made themselves believe a Happiness.

Quest. 7. *In the 2d. Job 9. you will find a great difference between the words in the latter part of that Verse, as they are rendered in two Translations, viz. the English and the Lattin: In the former you will find it thus, Curse God and dye; in the latter, Benedicendo atque moriendo; that you would be pleased to reconcile these two Translations, is the humble request of (Gentlemen) your humble Servants?*

Ans. The Hebrew word signifies both to Bless and to Curse; so that where 'tis Translated Bless, as in the *Latin, French, &c.* 'tis by way of Irony, for 'tis plain she meant Curse by the Context; *Thou speakest as one of the foolish Women, &c.* which he would not have said unto her, had she meant Bless; as also by what precedes, *Dost thou still retain thy Integrity? Curse God, &c.* where there's a plain Antithesis, as much as to say, What signifies thy Piety? Curse the Author of this Unjust Dealing with thee, and lay Violent Hands upon thy self to be free from thy Sufferings. There can be no other meaning put upon the place.

Quest. 8. *My Father left me Guardian to a younger Brother, and in the Management of my Guardianship I have wronged him very considerably to what he had left; he is an Orphan, both as to Father and Mother; and I remember the Threats in Scripture against those that oppress them, but more particularly in Exod. 22. 22. in Malach. 3. 5. which is very severe, and my Heart does a little misgive me, and I have thoughts sometimes of making satisfaction, but would not have it known; therefore what Method would you advise to do it, not to be taken Notice of? and I would also know how particularly the bairousness of the sin?*

Ans. It's impossible for us to prescribe which way to make Restitution, we knowing nothing of the Circumstances: We can only in general Terms remind you, that if those Texts you your self have cited, won't persuade you, we are sure you won't believe us, No, nor your Father, tho' he shou'd rise from the Dead: there's certainly no Salvation for you without present restitution, if all you have in the World will do it; if not, as far as you are able; besides, an habitual Repentance, answerable to the habit of your sin. We are surprized at the words, *My Heart does a little misgive me, and I have Thoughts sometimes of making Restitution: Your Circumstances require more Application of Mind, a hearty Sorrow, a sincere Repentance, a willing Restitution, and all this immediately, for you know not how soon you may be called to give an Account of your Stewardship. If you will give us a further Account, we shall by a private Letter give you what further Advice we are able, being willing to hope that you won't relapse, nor make a stay at a bare Conviction.*

Quest. 9. *A Young Man being in a kind of a Slumber, in the Evening about 12 a Clock, he at last awaked, and saw appear, to his thinking, a Creature like a Woman, clothed in white Arrayment and it stood leaning against a solid place, he arose, and it started back, and he made towards it, and it went farther from him; and at the last he was affrighted, and stood still, and said, In the Name of God who art thou? and it vanished away, and he saw it no more; he being much concerned about it, desires your speedy Answer, what should be the meaning of it?*

Ans. The impressed Idea in his continued, slumber when he was almost awake and as he grew more awake, it removed more from his imagin'd sight, the Idea by degrees vanishing quite away.

Quest. 10. *How long is it since Surnames were given, to whom, and by whom first of all? and how comes there to be so many different Surnames?*

Ans. To distinguish Men for some remarkable Action, Employment, Act, or Deformity of Body, has no doubt been before the Flood: Christ gave a Sur or Surname, or a Name over and above; a Sur-name to Simon, when he said, *Thou shalt be called Peter*; alluding to the Peter or Rock of Salvation he built upon; and Labbeus was Surnamed Thaddeus, Matth. 10. 3. *Hermes Tresmegistus, Judas Machabeus, and Tubal Cain* to distinguish him from Cain who was markt, Gen. 4. 22. therefore in all Countreys more or less Surnames have been given.

Quest. 11. *Whether by your Order, or to your Knowledge, there's any Money paid, or to be paid, at the Coffee-House in Stocks-Market, at the delivery of any Questions sent to you?*

Ans. There's neither any paid, nor any demanded, to our Knowledge; what we do, we do *Gratis*, both in receiving and answering: Only Letters that come out of the Countrey, its reasonable they pay the Postage, neither will any such be taken in, whole Postage is not paid for.

Advertisements.

THe Compleat Library for November is now in the Press, wherein is finish'd all those Discourses concerning the *Sacred Scriptures*, which were begun in May's Journal, and Promised in June — This Journal for November concludes the *FIRST VOLUME* of The Compleat Library, to which will be added two Alphabetical Tables, the one of the Books, and the other of the Matters. The *SECOND VOLUME* of The Compleat Library will be continued by the same Hand that writ the First, which Author that he may have room to insert all Valuable Books Printed from time to time he designs to continue his Journal monthly in a 12 d. Book, the six Months already publish'd having met with a very kind Reception. If any Persons for the good of the Publick will so far contribute to the Perfecting of this Undertaking as to abridge themselves what Valuable Books they Publish, they shall have 'em insert'd in this Monthly Journal, if they send their Abridgments to John Dunton at the Raven in the Poultry: — In next Saturdays Mercury will be insert'd an Account of the Books design'd for the following Months.

AT the Sign of the *Archimedes* and *Spectacles* in Ludgate-street, the West-End of St. Paul's Church, London, by John Marshal are made all manner of Prospective-Glasses, Telescopes, Microscopes, single and double, Reading-Glasses, large Concave Glasses, Concave Cylinders, and Cones of Metal: The Seller hereof hath Invented a large double Microscope, and a Pocket Microscope, more useful than any that hath been yet made, being approved of by the Royal Society.

He hath also invented a Wheel-Prospective-Glass, with three Concaves in the Eye-Glass, exceeding any thing in that Nature yet extant: Also, Dark-Lanterns, Candlesticks with Convex-Glasses, and Speaking Trumpets. He likewise selleth Spectacles, fit for all Ages, in Horn, Tortise-shell, Silver, and Leathern Frames, by Wholesale, or Retail.

Any Gentleman that Practiseth Glass-Grinding, may have all manner of Tools made for Grinding; as also, all manner of Turners-work belonging to the Whole Art of Glass-Grinding.

Also at Mr. John Cock's in Long-Acre at the Sign of the Telescope are the abovementioned Goods made and Sold by Wholesale or Retail.