

The Athenian Mercury:

Saturday, December 31. 1692. Licens'd, E. B.

Quest. 1. IN those remarkable TRYALS of WITCHES published this Week by Mr. Mather, 'tis said that Nineteen Witches have been lately Executed at New-England, and that there is an Hundred Witches still in Prison, Committed upon the Accusation of fifty Witches, some of Boston, but most about Salem and the Towns adjacent: This Relation is very strange and surprizing, I therefore desire your Sentiments of it?

Ans. You'll find an Answer to this Question in p. 48. of the said Book of Tryals, in these words:

THe Reverend and Worthy Author having at the Direction of his Excellency the Governour so far obliged the Publick as to give some Account of the Sufferings brought upon the Countrey by Witchcraft, and of the Tryals which have passed upon several Executed for the same:

Upon perusal thereof we find the Matter of Fact and Evidence truly reported, and a Prospect given of the Methods of Conviction used in the Proceedings of the Court of Salem.

Boston,
Octob. 11. 1692.

William Stoughton.
Samuel Sewall.

These two Gentlemen who give their Attestation to these Tryals published by Mr. Mather, being both of 'em Magistrates of known Worth and Integrity, we shall add no more by way of Answer to this Question, but only to acquaint our Readers, that if any thing occurs in reading which may occasion any doubt or dissatisfaction, We shall be ready if such Objections are sent in unto us to give what Explanation we are able, on such a strange surprizing Subject.

Quest. 2. At Colchester, where Sir Charles Lucas was shot, in the place where he fell, no Grass has grown since that time; there being the perfect shape of a Man's Body, and Grass growing all round it, and between the Sign of the Legs and Arms extended: The Reason of this?

Ans. This Question, with these immediately following it, were all three sent in the same Hand, and by the same Person, who affirms he's certain of the Truth of 'em all; — thō we confess his being certain makes not us so, for things so strange, ought to have been better attested, than by a single unknown Affirmation: However, this of Sir Charles, &c. if not true, is easily confuted, and does but disserve the Royal Cause for which that Gentleman dy'd very bravely, which needs no Falshoods to defend it. If it be true, which may easily be known by any who live about those parts, and if they wou'd inform us thereof, we'd own our selves oblig'd; it can hardly be deny'd, but that 'tis a Confirmation of the Justice of the Cause in which he suffer'd, and that, as our Histories say, contrary to the Law of Arms, he and the rest having Quarter promis'd 'em before they yielded.

Quest. 3. In my Lord Gainsborough's Park at Titchfield in Hampshire, some few years past a Deer was kill'd. After 'twas broke up, the Keeper went to quarter the Heart, and the edge of his Knife grated against something that was hard, which he found to be a Bullet near the middle of the Heart, about which Bullet there was a Gallous skin, like Horn, by which 'twas suppos'd that the Deer had been formerly shot, and liv'd several years afterwards: The Reason of

Ans. There are some singular Cases of this Nature, which will puzzle all the Anatomists in the World to resolve 'em: There are Instances almost every day both of Men and Beasts, who have liv'd with Bullets or Stakes lodg'd in their Bodies. The famous Knife-blade which lay so long in the Peasant, has been sufficiently talk'd of; and we our selves have assurance of a certain Butcher that kill'd a Bullock which had been a little lame for a year or two before, and in cutting it up, found between the Shoulder and the Breast, quite cover'd over with hard flesh, about a Foot and a half of an old Hedge-stake, which it seems had been broken off there some years before. But this is nothing to any such substance in the Nobler parts, thō even there strange things have been found. — Howel in his Letters, makes mention of a Person who lay for some years languishing of a Disease, which puzzled the Physicians, and Death was the only Cure, at whose Dissection there was found (as we remember) in the Left Ventricle of the Heart, a Living Serpent, and the German Virtuosi give us Instances much of the same Nature: But neither does this reach, for Violence from without seems more mortal than any such Substance bred within. To come yet nearer, there are some Surgeons who tell us of Wounds in the Pericardium which have been cur'd, tho' never any before that we met with in the very substance of the Heart; nor can it be easily suppos'd, that the Bullet in the present Case cou'd be lodg'd in any Vacuity there, without making a wound to get in. The Fact seems to be well enough Circumstantiated, and therefore 'tis neither civil, nor scarce reasonable to deny it; but for the reason and manner how Nature cou'd save it self harmless, notwithstanding that callous substance wherewith it guarded it self, as is very usual in such Cases, we must ingenuously acknowledge we can't resolve, and here propose it as a Problem to the best Professors in the Noble Art of Chirurgery, whose Judgments we shan't fail to communicate to the World concerning it.

Quest. 4. In Castle-Mallard-Walk in New-Forrest in Hampshire, there is an Oak which every Christmas-day buds forth leaves as big as those of a Gooseberry, tho' there's no appearance of any Leaf either the day before, or after: The reason of it?

Ans. We doubt very many Readers will be Infidels in this, as well as in the two former Questions. The Querist wou'd do well to be more particular in this Matter, and 'twou'd be a very pleasing Entertainment to the World, if he, or any other of the Neighbours, cou'd give an exact, and well-attested account, whether this be peculiar to that Oak, or other Oaks or Trees do the same near it? Whether it does this certainly and precisely on Christmas-day, and not before or after? In what manner the Leaves appear, whether all at once, or by degrees? and how they go away, whether they fall off, wither, or creep into the Bark again? Curiosities worth watching for one 24 hours, which if true, its a wonder how this Tree scaped Reformation in the last Age, when its superstitious Brother of Glaffenbury was cut down by the Souldiers.

Quest. 5. One that by his daily Labour can procure but just from Hand to Mouth, for the subsistence of himself and Family: Query, Whether or no he be indispensibly bound to give to the Relief of others that are in want; and if he be, in what proportion?

Ans. That even those who only maintain themselves by daily labour, are bound to relieve such as are really Objects of Charity, viz. such as wou'd, and can't work for their Livings, is very clear from that of the Apostle,