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# **A Brief Guide to the Celestial Ruby**

**by Eirenaeus Philalethes, 1694 AD**

## **Concerning the Philosopher's Stone and its Grand Arcanum**

The Philosopher's Stone is a certain heavenly, spiritual, penetrative, and fixed substance, which brings all metals to the perfection of gold or silver (according to the quality of the Medicine), and that by natural methods, which yet in their effects transcend Nature.

It is prepared from one substance, with which the art of chemistry is conversant, to which nothing is added, from which nothing is taken away, except that its superfluities are removed. No one will question the utility of our Art, if he believes that it enables us to transmute base metals into gold. That base metals are capable of such transmutation is clear; Nature has destined them all to become gold, but they have not been perfectly matured. If, then, that which hinders their perfect digestion be removed, they will all become gold; for crude, cold, and moist Mercury is the common first substance of gold as well as of the other metals. Hence all other metals may be perfected into gold, by the aid of our Divine Magistry, which, being projected upon imperfect metals, has power to quicken the maturing process by as much as itself exceeds the standard maturity of gold. How patent, then, must the spiritual nature of our Stone be, which can effect more in one hour by a bare projection than Nature in the course of ages. If that substance which Nature supplies be taken in hand by Art, dissolved, coagulated, and digested, its perfection is increased from a monadic to a denary virtue; by repeating the same process, it is increased a hundred-fold, and then a thousand-fold, etc. This wonderful Medicine penetrates each smallest part of the base metals (in the proportion of 1::1,000) and tinges them through and through with its own noble nature: your arithmetic will fail sooner than its all-prevailing power. Each smallest part that is pervaded with the vitalizing power of the Elixir in its turn tinges that part which is nearest to it until the whole mass is leavened with its marvellous influence, and brought to the perfection of gold. This is done in a very short time, on account of the spiritual nature of the agent; it is the true metallic fire, and as a common fire warms even those parts of any object which are not in immediate contact with the fire, so this Elixir penetrates dissolved and melted metals in a moment of time—just in the same way as the virtue of leaven or yeast is brought to bear even upon those parts of the meal which it never reaches. A reproach is sometimes levelled at our Art, as though it claimed the power of creating gold; every attentive reader; of our former tract will know that it only arrogates to itself the power of developing, through the removal of all defects and superfluities, the golden nature, which the baser metals possess in common with that highly-digested metallic substance.

Listen, then, while I make known to you the Grand Arcanum of this wonder-working Stone, which at the same time is not a stone, which exists in every man, and may be found in its own place at all times. Let the knowledge which I declare is not intended for the unworthy, and will not be understood by them. But to you who are earnest students of Nature God will, at His own time, reveal this glorious secret.

I have shewn that the transmutation of metals is not a chimerical dream, but a sober possibility of Nature, who is perfectly capable of accomplishing it without the aid of magic and that this possibility of metallic transmutation is founded upon the fact that all metals derive their origin from the same source as gold, and have only been hindered from attaining the same degree of maturity by certain impurities, which our Magistry is able to remove. Let me tell you, then, what is the nature of this grand arcanum, which the Sages have called the Philosopher's Stone, but which is in every man, in every thing, at every season of the

year, if it be sought in the right place.

It must consist of the elements, for they are the universal substance of all things, and as it is of a nature homogeneous with that of gold, it must be that which contains the qualities of all elements in such a combination as to render it incapable of being destroyed by fire. It follows, then, that you must look for the substance of our Stone in the precious metals, since the required combination of elements is not found anywhere else. Those foolish sophists who seek it outside the domain of metals will never arrive at any satisfactory conclusion. For there is only one true principle, and nothing heterogeneous must be introduced into our Magistry.

For as a lion is always born of a lion, and a man of a man, so all things owe their birth to that which they are like; that which is combustible is derived from that which is combustible, that which is indestructible from that which is indestructible. Nor must we expect to find the principle which imparts the qualities of gold anywhere but in gold itself. If, indeed, we were able to create the sperm of things, we might hope to evolve this metallic principle from plants or animals which do not contain it; but that is the privilege of God alone. We must be content to dispose and develop the sperm which is made ready to our hands—new things we are unable to produce, and even if we could, our artificial seed would be no better than that which Nature has provided. If any one calling himself a Sage cannot use the things which are already created, it does not seem likely that he will be able to create new things out of heterogeneous substances—the seeds of metals out of herbs or animals.

Thus, you see that the Stone which is to be the transformer of metals into gold must be sought in the precious metals, in which it is enclosed and contained.

But why is it called a Stone, though it is not a stone; and how is it to be found? The Sages describe it as being a stone and not a stone; and the vulgar, who cannot imagine how so wonderful a thing should be produced except by art-magics decry our science as impious, wicked, and diabolical. Some silly persons clamour for an Act making the profession or practice of this Art punishable by statute law. Now, one can hardly be angry with the illiterate and ignorant persons who raise this cry; but when it is taken up by men of exalted station and profound learning, one hardly knows what to say. These men I also reckon among the rude multitude, because they are deplorably ignorant of everything pertaining to our Art, and yet, forgetful of their dignity, they join in the hue and cry against it, like so many cowardly village curs. It is neither religious nor wise to judge that of which you know nothing; and yet that is exactly what these people do, who claim to be both Christians and scholars.

But let us return to the point from which we strayed. Some Alchemists who are in search of our Arcanum seek to prepare something of a solid nature, because they have heard the object of their search described as a Stone.

Know, then, that it is called a stone, not because it is like a stone, but only because, by virtue of its fixed nature, it resists the action of fire as successfully as any stone. In species it is gold, more pure than the purest; it is fixed and incombustible like a stone, but its appearance is that of very fine powder, impalpable to the touch, sweet to the taste, fragrant to the smell, in potency a most penetrative spirit, apparently dry and yet unctuous, and easily capable of tinging a plate of metal. It is justly called the Father of all miracles, containing as it does all the elements in such a way that none predominates, but all form a certain fifth essence; it is thus well called our gentle metallic fire. It has no name of its own; yet there is nothing in the

whole world whose name it might not with perfect propriety bear. If we say that its nature is spiritual, it would be no more than the truth; if we described it as corporeal, the expression would be equally correct; for it is subtle, penetrative, glorified, spiritual gold. It is the noblest of all created things after the rational soul, and has virtue to repair all defects both in animal and metallic bodies, by restoring them to the most exact and perfect temper; wherefore is it a spirit or quintessence.

But I must proceed to answer the second and more important part of my question. How is this Stone to be obtained? It does not exist in Nature, but has to be prepared by Art, in obedience to Nature's law. Its substance is in metals; but in form it differs widely from them, and in this sense the metals are not our Stone. For if we would elicit our Medicine from the precious metals, we must destroy the particular metallic form, without impairing its specific properties. The specific properties of the metal have their abode in its spiritual part, which resides in homogeneous water. Thus we must destroy the particular form of gold, and change it into its generic homogeneous water, in which the spirit of gold is preserved; this spirit afterwards restores the consistency of its water, and brings forth a new form (after the necessary putrefaction), a thousand times more perfect than the form of gold which it lost by being reincrudedated.

It is necessary, then, to reduce metallic bodies to their homogeneous water which does not wet the hands, that from this water there may be generated a new metallic species which is nobler by far than any existing metal, viz., our Celestial Ruby.

The whole process which we employ closely resembles that followed by Nature in the bowels of the earth, except that it is much shorter. Nature produces the metals out of cold and humid Mercury by assiduous digestion; our Art takes the same crude, cold, and humid Mercury, and conjoins with it mature gold, by a secret artifice; the mixture represents a new and far more potent Mercury, which, by digestion, becomes not common gold, but one far more noble, which can transmute imperfect metals into true gold.

Thus, you see that though our Stone is made of gold alone, yet it is not common gold. In order to elicit our gold from common gold, the latter must be dissolved in our mineral water which does not wet the hands; this water is Mercury extracted from the red servant, and it is capable of accomplishing our work without any further trouble to the Artist. It is that one true, natural, first-substance, to which nothing is added, from which nothing is subtracted, except certain superfluities, which, however, it will cast off without any aid by its own inherent vital action. The chief object of your perseverant efforts should be the discovery of this Mercury, or the albification of our red Laton; all the rest is mere child's play, as the Artist has only to look on while Nature gradually matures his substance.

But remember that our albification is by no means an easy task. Gold which has been thus whitened can never resume its old form, for, instead of being corporeal and fixed, it is now spiritual and volatile. Concentrate your whole mind, therefore, on the whitening of the Laton. It is easier to make gold than thus to destroy its form; he who so dissolves it may be said rather to coagulate it-for dissolution of the body and coagulation of the spirit are coincident in it.

Consider these signs, ye sons of knowledge. That which dissolves is spirit; that which coagulates is body. A body cannot enter a body so as to cause dissolution; but a spirit can enter it, attenuate and rarefy it; and as you seek water, you need water to bring it to light; for every Agent has a tendency to assimilate to itself that which it acts upon, and every natural effect is conformed to the nature of the efficient; hence water is necessary if you would extract water from earth.

When I speak of water, I do not mean aquafortis, royal water, or any other corrosive whatsoever, for these waters, instead of dissolving metals, only corrode, mar, and corrupt them, without destroying their old form, to which task they are insufficient, as they are not of a metallic nature. No, our water is the water Mercury, which dissolves homogeneous metallic bodies, and mingles with them in indissoluble union, abides with them, is digested with them, and together with them becomes that spiritual whole which we seek. For everything that dissolves a substance naturally (still preserving the specific properties of the thing dissolved) becomes one with it both materially and formally, coalesces with it, and is thickened by it, thus nourishing it; as we see in the case of a grain of wheat, which, when dissolved by the humid earthy vapour, thereby takes up that vapour as its radical moisture, and grows together with it into a plant. We may also observe that, every natural dissolution being a quickening of that which was dead, this quickening can take place only through some vital agent which is of the same essence with the dead thing; if we wish to quicken the (dead) grain of wheat, we can do this only by means of an earthy vapour, which, like the grain itself, is a product of the earth. For this reason common Mercury can have no quickening effect on gold, because it is not of the same essence with it. A grain of wheat sown in marshy soil, so far from being quickened into life, is, on the contrary, destroyed, because the aqueous humour of the soil is not of the same nature. In like manner, gold, if mixed with common Mercury, or with anything except its own essential humour, is not dissolved, because such waters are too cold, crude, and impure; for which reason, being utterly unlike gold, they cannot amalgamate with it, or attain with it to a far nobler degree of development. Our Mercury, indeed, is cold and unmaturred in comparison with gold; but it is pure, hot, and well-digested in respect of common Mercury, which resembles it only in whiteness and fluxibility. Our Mercury is, in fact, a pure water, clean, clear, bright, and resplendent, worthy of all admiration.

If you wish for a more particular description of our water I am impelled by motives of charity to tell you that it is living, fluxible, clear, nitid, as white as snow, hot, humid, airy, vaporous, and digestive, and that gold melts in it like ice in warm water; moreover, that in it is contained the whole regimen of fire, and the sulphur which exists but does not predominate in it. This water is the true Keeper of our Gates, the Bath of the King and of his Queen, which warms them incessantly, but is not taken of their substance, and is distinct from the whitening substance of the water, though the two are united and appear under the same flowing form and colour. It is our vessel, our fire, the abode of our furnace, by whose continuous and gentle warmth the whole substance is digested. If you know this water, it will be seen to contain all our fires, all our proportions of weight, all our regimens. It is Bernard of Trevisa's clear pellucid Fountain, in which our King is cleansed and strengthened to overcome all his foes. All you have to do is to find this water and to put into it the purified body; out of the two Nature will then produce our Stone.

This mineral water can be extracted only from those things which contain it; and that thing from which it is most easily obtained is difficult to discover, as is also the mode of its extraction. It dissolves gold without violence, is friendly to it washes away its impurities, and is white, warm, and clear Without our Mercury, Alchemy could not be a science, but only a vain and empty pretence. If you can obtain it, you have the key of the whole work, with which you can open the most secret chambers of knowledge. Its nature is the same as that of gold, but its substance is different, and the preparation of it causes a great stench. Weigh well the possibilities of Nature; refrain from introducing any heterogeneous element into our Magistry, and do not blame me if you fail to understand my words. . Our Stone is produced from one thing, and four mercurial sub-. stances, of which one is mature; the others pure, but crude, two of them being extracted in a wonderful manner from their ore by means of the third. The four are amalgamated by the intervention of a gentle fire, and there subjected to coction day by day, until they all become one by natural (not manual)

conjunction.

Afterwards, the fire being changed, these volatile substances should be fixed and digested by means of heat which becomes a little more powerful every day (i.e., by means of fixed and incombustible Sulphur of the same genus) until the whole compound attains the same essence, fixity, and colour.

There are twelve degrees or phases of this our process, which I may briefly enumerate and describe as follows. The first is Calcination.

Calcination is the first purgation of the Stone, the drying up of its humours, through its natural heat, which is stirred into vital action by the external heat of water-whereby the compound is converted into a black powder, which is yet unctuous, and retains its radical humour.

This calcination is performed for the purpose of rendering the substance viscous, spongy, and more easily penetrable; for gold in itself is highly fixed, and difficult of solution even in our water; but through this calcination it becomes soft and white, and we observe in it two natures, the fixed and the volatile, which we liken to two serpents. In order that a full dissolution may be made, there is need of contrition, that calcination may afterwards produce a viscous state, when it will be fit for dissolution.

When the substances are first mixed, they are at enmity with each other, by reason of their contrary qualities, for there is the heat and dryness of the Sulphur fiercely contending with the cold and moisture of the Mercury. They can only be reconciled in a medium which partakes of both natures, and the medium in which heat and cold are reconciled is dryness which can co-exist with both. Thus cold and heat are brought to dwell peaceably together in the dryness of the earth, and dryness and moisture in the coldness of the water. This reconciliation of contrary qualities is the second great object of our calcination.

Its sufficient cause is the action of the inward heat upon the moisture, whereby everything that resists it is converted into a very fine powder; the moving and instrumental cause is the fire contrary to Nature, which, being hidden in our solvent water, battles with its moisture and digests it into a viscous or unctuous powder.

This operation takes place before our dissolution, because whenever bodies are dissolved, the spirits in their turn are congealed. Again, the woman must reign, before she is overcome by the man. The dominion of the woman is in the water, and if the man overcome her in the element in which both her qualities of coldness and moisture inhere, he will easily conquer her where she has only one quality.

Calcination, then, is the beginning of the work, and without it there can be neither peaceable commixtion nor proper union. The first dealbation reduces the substance to its two principles, sulphur and quicksilver, the first of which is fixed, while the other is volatile. They are compared to two serpents, the fixed substance to a serpent without, and the volatile substance to a serpent with, wings. One serpent holds in his mouth the tail of the other, to shew that they are indissolubly conjoined by community of birth and destiny, and that our Art is accomplished through the joint working of this Mercurial Sulphur, and sulphureous Mercury. Hence the whole compound is at this stage called Rebis, because there are two substances but only one essence. They are not really two, but one and the same thing the Sulphur is matured and well digested Mercury, the Mercury is crude and undigested Sulphur. It has already been said that in our Art we imitate Nature's method of producing metals in the bowels of the earth, except that our method is shorter and more subtle. In metallic veins only crude and frigid Mercury is found, in which the inward heat or

dryness (i.e., Sulphur) can scarce make its influence felt. No digestive heat is found there, but in the course of ages an imperceptible motion changes this metallic principle. In the course of centuries, however, this imperceptible digestive heat changes the Mercury into what is then called fixed Sulphur, though before it was denominated Mercury.

But in our Art, we have something besides crude and frigid Mercury, viz., mature gold, with its manifold active qualities. These are united to the passive qualities of our Mercury; and so one aids and perfects the other, and as we have two fires, instead of the one slow inward fire of Mercury, the operation is more expeditious, and something far nobler than common gold is produced.

Thus you see that in our Art we have two Sulphurs and two Mercuries (i.e., Sulphur, and Mercury of Mercury, and Sulphur and Mercury of gold), but their only difference consists in degrees of perfection and maturity. Now, the perfect body of gold is reduced to its (two) first principles by means of our Divine water which does not wet the hands (viz., Mercury and Sulphur). This operation for a time gives the ascendancy to the female agent; but this being unnatural, the male agent soon reasserts itself, and by means of its heat dries up the moisture of the female agent, and-through calcination-converts it all into a most subtle and viscous powder, which powder is then changed by dissolution into a water, in which the spirits of the solvent and the thing dissolved, the male and the female principles, are mingled. But the inward heat, which has once been roused into action, still continues to work, separating the subtle (which floats on the surface) from the gross (which sinks to the bottom), until the man has gained the upper hand, the inseparable union takes place, and the male impregnates the female; the female brings forth a nebulous vapour, in which they are putrefied and decay, and from which both arise with a glorious body, no longer two, but only one by inseparable conjunction. This new birth is then coagulated, sublimed, nourished, and exalted to the highest degree of perfection, and may afterwards be indefinitely multiplied by fermentation, and used both for projection and as an Universal Medicine. We see, then, that these black and fetid ashes are not to be despised, since they contain the Diadem of our King; your substance will never be white, if it has not first been black. It is by means of putrefaction and decay that it attains the glorified body of its resurrection. Therefore, you should honour the tomb of our King, for unless you do so, you will never behold him coming in his glory.

A great many students make a mistake at the very outset by performing this calcination on a wrong substance-borax, or alum, or ink, or vitriol, or arsenic, or seeds, or plants, or wine, vinegar, urine, hair, blood, gum, resin, etc; or they choose a false method, and corrode instead of calcining the metallic bodies on which they operate. Calcination can take place only by means of the inward heat of the body, assisted by friendly outward warmth; but calcination by means of a heterogeneous agent can only destroy the metallic nature, in so far as it has any effect at all. Every calcination of gold, which is not succeeded by a spontaneous dissolution, without laying on of hands, is also fallacious.

The true calcination is by means of Mercury, which (being added to gold in due proportions) softens and dissolves the gold, and, by its inward heat, united to outward heat, stirs into action the native heat of the gold, and thus causes it to dry up its humidity into that fine, viscous, black powder. And this is the true key of the work-to incrudate the mature by the conjunction of an immature-being incrudated to calcine it-being calcined to dissolve it-and all this philosophically, not vulgarly.

The outward signs of the calcination are as follows:-When the gold has become saturated with water, and the fire of the Mercury has called into play the heat of the bath, the water which was so brilliant begins to

grow dim, then visibly swells and bubbles, until the whole becomes a fatty and viscous powder, which, however, still retains its radical humour. For when the heat first begins to operate, the cold and the moist seek refuge by rising to the top; thence they descend in liquid form and assimilate as much of the substance as they can to themselves; thus the powder is converted into a glutinous water. For between the different processes of our Art, there exists such a concatenation that not one can be produced or understood without the rest. In order to hide our meaning from the unworthy, we speak of several operations; but all these-the whole progress of the substance from black to white and red-should be philosophically understood as one operation, one thing, one successive disposition to black, white, and red.

The following rules should be observed if you wish to bring about true calcination:- In the first place, you must procure our Mercury; common Mercury will produce no effect if you operate on it till doomsday.

Secondly, the external fire of the furnace should be neither too violent (in order that the equilibrium of chemical forces in the substance may not be disturbed), nor yet too gentle, so that the action of the inward fire may not languish for want of outward heat. It should be just such as to keep up an equable vital warmth.

In the third place, the Laton should receive neither too much nor too little to drink. If it receive too much, it will not be able to give it out, and a nebulous tempest will arise; if too little, it will be burnt to cinders. The activity of the Sulphur must dry up the superfluous humour of the Mercury; therefore, the active (sulphur) must not be swamped with too much sperm; nor must the moisture be choked with too much earth. The proportions should be between two or three parts of water to one of gold; but the larger the quantities of both substances, the more perfect will the calcination and dissolution be. The chief mistake against which you must guard is the swamping of your earth with water. For the earth contains the fire, which is the principal digestive in our Art.

In the fourth place, you should take care to seal up your vessel properly, to prevent the spirit from evaporating. Consider how carefully Nature has closed up the female womb to prevent anything from escaping or entering that might prove hurtful to the young life; and quite as much (if not more) care is required in our Magistry. For when the embryo is being formed, great winds arise, which must not be allowed to escape-or else our labour will have been all in vain.

The fifth requisite in our work is patience. You must not yield to despondency, or attempt to hasten the chemical process of dissolution. For if you do so by means of violent heat, the substance will be prematurely parched up into a red powder, and the active vital principle in it will become passive, being knocked on the head, as it were, with a hammer. But our true calcination preserves the radical humour in the body dissolved, and converts it into an unctuous black powder. Patience is, therefore, the great cardinal virtue in Alchemy. It must not be supposed that the signs and colours which I describe appear on the first day, or even within the first week: Bernard of Trevisa tells us that he waited in an anguish of expectation for forty days, and then returned and saw clouds and mists. You need the patience of the husbandman, who, after committing the seed to the earth, does not disturb the soil every day to see whether it is growing... As soon as you have prepared your substance i.e., mixed mature yellow sulphur with its crude white sulphur, put them in a vessel and let them stand undisturbed; at the end of twenty-four hours, the Mercury, which is attempting to rouse the latent fire of the sulphur, will begin to effervesce and send up bubbles. But little variation of colour shall appear until the object of the Mercury has been accomplished, and the Royal Bath prepared; at first it is the Mercury alone that is at work. When, however, the Bath has been made hot (i.e., the inward warmth of the gold roused) the greater part of our work is over, and we shall be easily able to



distinguish the various operations. The first colour which appears after the silver colour of the amalgamated body, is not perfect blackness, but only a darkish white; the blackness becomes more pronounced day by day, until the substance assumes a brilliant black colour. This black is a sign that the dissolution is accomplished, which does not come about in one hour, but gradually, by a continuous process; for the Tincture which comes out of the Sun and Moon appears black to the eyes, but is insensibly and imperceptibly extracted. When the whole of the Tincture has been extracted from the body that is to be dissolved, the blackness is complete. The more you digest the substance at first, the more you subtilize the gross, and blacken the compound. There are four principal colours, the first of which is blackness; and it is of all colours the most tardy in making its appearance. But as soon as the highest degree of intense blackness has been reached (there being no idle intervals in our work), that colour begins little by little to yield to another. The time during which this blackness is developed is very long, and so is the time during which it disappears; but it is only for one moment that the blackness neither increases nor decreases: for things find rest only in that which is the end of their being, but blackness is not the end of our substance.

The advent of the blackness is like the coming of the night, which is preceded by a long twilight-when the last ray of light has faded away, the blackness of night has come; only our work is more tedious, and the change is, therefore, still less perceptible.

It may be objected that the black tincture begins to be extracted as soon as the inward heat is roused, and that, therefore, the colour which appears must be, from the very first, an intense black. My answer is that the Tincture which is extracted is, as a matter of fact, not black, but of a dazzling white; and that the blackness is produced gradually, through the action of the water on the body, out of which it draws the soul (the tincture), thus giving the body up to decomposition. It is this putrefaction (the result of the mutual action of the Sulphur and Mercury) which imparts to the Tincture its black colour; in itself the Tincture is brilliantly white. How long, then, will you have to wait till perfect blackness appears? Flamellus tells us that this intense blackness comes at the end of about forty days. Ripley advises us to let the mingled substances remain together for six weeks, until the conception has taken place, during which time the fire must be very gentle. And Bernard (of Trevisa) suggests the same thing, when he says in his parable: " The King doffs his glorious robes, and gives them to Saturn, who clothes him in a garment of black silk, which he retains for forty days." Of course, the blackness which is here spoken of is not equally intense all the time, as you will understand from what has been said above.

In the course of this change from white to black, the substance naturally passes through a variety of intermediate colours; but these colours (being more or less accidental) are not invariably the same, and depend very much on the original proportion in which the two substances are combined. In the second stage, during which the substance changes from black to white, it is already far purer, the colours are more lucid, and more to be depended upon. In the two phases there are intermediate colours; but in the first they are more dingy and obscure than in the second, and very much less numerous. In the progress of the substance from blackness to whiteness (i.e., the second phase of our Magistry), the most beautiful colours are seen in a variety such as eclipses the glory of the rainbow; before the perfection of blackness is reached, there are also some transition colours, such as black, azure, and yellow-and the meaning of these colours is that your substance is not yet completely decayed; while the body is dying, the colours are seen, until black night shrouds the whole horizon in pitchy gloom. But when the process of resurrection begins (in the second phase) the hues are more numerous and splendid, because the body is now beginning to be glorified, and has become pure and spiritual.

But in what order do the colours of which we speak appear? To this question no definite answer can be given, because in this first phase there are so much uncertainty and variation. But the colours will be the clearer and more distinct, the purer your water of life is. The four principal colours (white, black, white red), always follow in the same order; but the order of the intermediate colours cannot be so certainly determined, and you ought to be content if within the first 40 days you get the black colour. There is only one caution you should bear in mind, in regard to this point: if a reddish colour appears before the black (especially if the substance begins to look dry and powdery at the same time), you may be almost sure that you have marred your substance by too violent a fire. You should be very careful, then, about the regulation of your fire; if the fire be just hot enough, but not too hot, the inward chemical action of our water will do the rest.

Our Solution, then, is the reducing of our Stone to its first matter, the manifestation of its essential liquid, and the extraction of natures from their profundity, which is finished by bringing them into a mineral water; nor is this operation easy: those who have tried can bear out the truth of my words.

<http://bookofaquarius.forgottenbooks.org>

# A Golden and Blessed Casket of Nature's Marvels

by Benedictus Figulus

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## **An Epigram concerning the Philosopher's Stone.**

**by**

**Alexander de S., to Gulielmus Blancus.**

We dissolve the living body with Apollo's fire ---  
So that what was before a Stone may become a Spirit.  
From the inmost parts of this we extract Gold,  
Which, with natal seed, cleanses impure ores from the dross of their mother.  
After we have separated the bones, these kindred we then wash with water.  
From them is born a Bird, arrayed in various colours, and, being made white, it flies  
into the air.  
So we with new fire paint its wings, and, being coloured, imbue them with its milk:  
As for the rest, we feed it with Blood,  
Until, full grown, it may bear the fury of Mulciber (i.e., Vulcan-fire).  
This Bird, O Gulielmus! The Thrice Great Hermes called his own,  
And the whole world has not its like.  
O Christ, graciously grant that this blessed long-desired bird be born in our Garden!

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## Prolocutory, Dedicatory Address

To the Worshipful, Noble, etc., etc., Master Michael Daniel Pleickhard, Surnamed Poland, of the High and Reverend Cathedral Chapter at Strasburg, Councillor; And to the Honoured, Learned, etc., etc., Master Balthazar Keyben, I.V. Doctor, in Frankfort-on-the-Main; as also to the Honoured, Most Experienced, etc., etc., Master John Enoch Meyer, Master Builder of the City of Strasburg, and Steward of the Convent of St. Nicholas in Undis, in that Ilk; His Generous, Well-Beloved Masters and Beneficent Patrons.

*Here Follows the Prolocutory, Dedicatory Speech.*

Worshipful, Noble, etc., generous Masters and Patrons, when reviewing the whole course of my studies, from my youth up, I find ---- and have indeed hitherto found in my work, and clearly experienced more and more with the lapse of time, as daily experience shews is wont to happen to the true believer and right naturalist --- that there are three kinds of Philosophy or Wisdom, of which the world partly makes use, some more than others, some of this and others of that. Yet one of these Three alone is Eternal, Indestructible, and may stand before God Almighty (of which, however, but few students are found) because it proceeds and flows from above from the Father of Light. Now, the First is the Common Philosophy of Aristotle, of Plato, and of our own time, which is but a Cagastrian Philosophy, Speculation, and Phantasy, with which, even at the present day, all the Schools are filled, and by which they are befouled, and beloved youth thereby led astray. The same is inane, erroneous, empty chatter; and far removed from the foundation of Truth. Even at the present day it is blasphemously defended, tooth and nail, with all sorts of opinions, ideas, imaginations, and erroneous thoughts of the old heathen (who were held to be Sages), which were accepted as the Truth. For it is derived from an unpropitious Heaven and Stars, evil Influences, also Inspirations of Satan, and at that time was considered a great mystery and Sacred Thing, as it also is at this present by the great majority of learned me. But this is an erroneous, false, fatal, misleading sophistry, which, like the body in the grave, is brought to naught but dust and ashes, and is the same against which the inspired Apostle Paul warns us in his Epistle: "Beware of vain Philosophy", and "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit".

This Philosophy, although, from my youth up, it was earnestly and diligently inculcated, and forced upon me, in the Schools (as unfortunately occurs to others at the present day), yet, by special interposition of the Holy Spirit, it became so suspected by me that I never would, nor could, torture my head, mind, and soul with it, nor persuade my heart that the same was a sacred thing, nor cleave unto it as others did; but, according to my childish judgment, let the matter rest there until, about the year 1587 or 1588, another philosophy came into my hands. At the same time I had, in my own mind, firmly resolved not to remain the least among my fellow scholars, but in due time to graduate in advance of all.

But it has pleased God otherwise in His Divine Providence, and all sorts of impediments on the part of my superiors hindered on the part of my superiors hindered the course of my studies, until at last, in 1587-88, the books and writings of

Theophrastus, of Roger Bacon, and of M. Isaac the Hollander, fell into my hands; in which I, (especially in medicine) for they wrote about the Universal Stone and Medicine), saw and found a better foundation, and yet understood it not at first. But I took such a liking to the subject that I resolved not to die, nor yet to take my ease, until I had obtained this Universal Stone and Blessed Heavenly Medicine. However, the poverty of my parents and the impossibility of obtaining the necessary funds (for at that time but few princes and nobles patronized this study) compelled me unwillingly to relinquish my plan, although I was so eager for it that, for many months, I could not sleep on account of it. At last, in 1590, I found myself plunged by the devil and his friends into great misery, misfortune, and sickness, out of which God mercifully helped me when my death would have been preferred to my recovery, and when, from reasons of poverty, I had been held to commerce against my will, by my relatives, suffering all manner of persecution, partly from the Anti-Christian mob, partly from false brethren, wife and friends, tortured, plagued and agitated, and thus thoroughly tried by the devil.

But having been rescued from the same by God's fatherly care, I turned my attention for some years to poetry, whereunto, when I found that it was irksome to all, I said good bye; and, only three years ago, I returned to this true Philosophy, the Study of Medicine and the Theophrastic School --- for which God be praised --- and have publicly declared myself a disciple of Paracelsus. From this neither the devil nor the world, with its serpents and viper brood, shall, or can, ever turn me away.

The other philosophy can never teach us the "know thyself", nor the foundation of Natural Revelation, in which some heathen philosophers, particularly Pythagoras, had progressed so far that they might with reason be preferred to many professed Christians of today. He especially from the stars and the creatures of this earth learnt more about Nature than our arrogant, boasting philosophers, who, at bottom, understanding nothing themselves, would fain teach others.

But this our Hermetic Philosophy, which comprises the true Astronomy, Alchemy, and magic, as also Cabala, etc., is an extremely ancient, true, Natural Science, derived from Adam, who, both before and after the Fall, had full knowledge of all things, and handed it down from father to son through the patriarchs and dear friends of God. After the Flood the general understanding and knowledge of this true natural philosophy became weakened in force and scattered in fragments in all directions; hence arose a subdividing of the whole into parts ---- and one has become an Astronomy, another a Magician, a third a Cabalist, a fourth an Alchemist, and especially did it afterwards flourish in Egypt. For instance, the smith, Abraham Tubalkain, past master in all kinds of brass and iron work, and also an excellent Astrologer and Arithmetician, brought these arts with him from Egypt into the Land of Canaan. And the great skill, wisdom, and knowledge in the above arts attained by the Egyptians was by them also communicated to other nations.

The Chaldeans, Hebrews, Persians, Egyptians, have also always possessed and cultivated this knowledge, together with Theology and instruction in Divine things. Thus, Moses was so informed by all good arts in the schools of the Egyptians that he became perfect in wisdom, and therefore was not in vain chosen by God to be the leader of the people of Israel.

Thus also Daniel, from his youth up, learnt and imbibed this art in the Schools of the Chaldeans, as his Prophecies, and his skill in all kinds of interpretation before King Nebuchadnezzar and King Belshazzar, clearly and wondrously testify. Such Philosophers and Magi were also the Three Wise Men from the East, who sought Christ Jesus from the Rising of the Sun, and found him in a manger at Bethlehem.

But subsequent to the origin of this Divine Magic and natural true Philosophy, namely, 27 years after the Flood --- about the year 1680, A.M. --- among the Chaldeans, Persians, and afterwards in Egypt, the idolatrous and superstitious Greeks, having heard of the same, their noblest and sagest men proceeded to Chaldea and Egypt, in order that they might learn such wisdom in their Schools. But they did not relish the teaching of God's word from the Holy Bible and the Law of Moses, and, depending upon their reason and understanding, wished to be cleverer and wiser than God Himself, as is the wont of Lucifer and his disciples; for it always happens that where God builds a Church, the devil sets his chapel up beside it; as is also recorded in the New Testament, for when Christ, the greatest Spagyric Philosopher and Heavenly Sower, sowed His good seed, the Enemy immediately threw his tares and weeds upon it, which, alas, happens to this day. Therefore have they fallen away from the foundation and essence of all Natural Mysteries and hidden Arts, and have sought wisdom in the senseless, stupid, erroneous, and deceptive Star of Satan, with which they have obscured and diluted the truth. For their own pride and presumption have hindered, befooled, and plunged them into error. For, after having learnt a little from the Chaldeans and Egyptians, they became to puffed up and proud, depending more than was meet on their own understanding, that they began to criticize things with many false and vain inventions, and took themselves to ascribe them to a false philosophy, concocted in their own subtle brains, under the influence of that evil star; which false philosophy not only go the upper hand among the Greeks, but spread from them to the Latins, who, not less than the former, also wished to shew their own understanding immediately they had acquired a kittle knowledge, whence, instead of improving, increasing, or adorning, they have only made things worse.

Now, by these this so-called Philosophy has been disseminated throughout entire Europe. Almost all Academies and High Schools teach it, to the neglect of Moses and the Prophets, even of Christ Himself not only in Germany, but in almost all other nations. When anyone advances aught of the true Philosophy, grounded in the Word of God, but which is contrary to theirs, he is not only condemned, mocked, and laughed at, but is called an eccentric, a heretic, and haeresiarch --- as has happened to me at the hands of certain pseudo-Levites --- or is even persecuted. The old proverb remains true: "The world wished to be deceived". Satan is a clever juggler, using many deceptions with which he leads astray all Christendom, shewing the way unto the eternal night of hell with his dark lantern, which they take to be a true guiding light. Let him who would be deceived continue in his present course; on a certain day he will find, with eternal lamentations, howling, and gnashing of teeth, how hot hell is.

But, generous Masters and Friends, if we would follow after the true Natural Philosophy, founded on the Light of Nature; if we would acquire the same as our Spagyric Philosophy, true Astronomy, and Magic, where and under whom we shall study this? Shall we seek the teachers and professors in the Universities? Verily, we shall not find it there, for they are the true enemies, mockers and persecutors of our



Philosophy, and of all its adherents. “Art has no haters but the ignorant”. They would rather remain with the husks and chaff, which the wind strews hither and thither, than with the good nourishing grain, ye, and wheat from the great store-houses or treasury of the Eternal God and Bountiful Lord, which He gives and invites us to partake of. Where then, I ask, shall we seek it, and in what school? Dear Masters and Friends, we neither can, nor should, nor must look for it elsewhere than in the Stars; there is the school from which everything is learned.

All Natural Art and Wisdom are given by the Stars to men, and we are the disciples of the Stars. The Constellations are our natural teachers. From the light of Nature we must learn as from our father from whom we are made and begotten. The Stars are our lawful instructors, for all understanding and Art come to us from them. God has so ordered it that the natural light is in the Stars, and in the same has He laid the treasure of men to be obtained from them. But what man learns from the stars in all temporal knowledge, reason, art; what also is of the light of Nature must be derived from the same source. In short, the firmament teaches us whatsoever pertains to things temporal. But that which pertains to the immortal soul, and to the godly conversation of the inner man, all that must be learned from God. For it concerns the Image of God, and it is the office of the Holy Spirit to instruct men in things eternal.

Now, there are two bodies in man, one formed from the elements, and the other from the stars. Through death the elementary body, with its spirit, is brought to the grave, and the ethereal body and spirit are consumed in their firmament. But the spirit of the Image goes to Him in whose image it is. Thus each one dies in that of which he is, and is buried in the same. Thus, also, does death divide from each other the three spirits of man. Therefore, the wise man is he who lives in the wisdom of the Lord, the same ruling over his planetary and elementary body. But, brethren, man should walk, as regards his earthly body, according to the law of Nature, as did the old heathen Sages; and, for the rest, in the Will of God and the Holy Spirit, and not set the mortal body with its wisdom above the Immortal Image (as almost all the world now does, with its fancied, spurious wisdom). Neither should he reject the Eternal Image for the animal body in his fancied wisdom, wherefore the Lord Jesus has not said in vain in His Gospel, concerning the tax penny.” “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and unto God the things that are God’s”. What did He mean to convey by that? Why this, that the body, according to the natural life, belongs to Caesar, and shall be subject to him as to its earthly head upon earth. But the soul belongs to God, and the same shall be given again to God, and shall make answer for its work. That is, he shall return Him His Image according to the spiritual life, as to his Heavenly Lord, from whom body and soul each separately come. Therefore he shall walk in His laws according to the Will of God, that he may return to God his Image, and the eternal fiery breath of life entrusted him, as it were, shall be given into Abraham’s bosom, and not be cast out from before His Face eternally into outermost darkness on account of godless, devilish life and conversation. Such was Christ’s meaning and object. Now, he who lives according to the Image of the Lord, overcomes the stars, and should with reason be considered a wise man, although by a blind and senseless world he may be held as a fool.

But to philosophize further concerning these things belongs not in this place to mortal philosophy, but to the Eternal, Immortal wisdom, which we have alluded to, which has Christ Jesus as its Founder, concerning whom we have the voice of the Father, saying:

“Hear ye him”; so also His own voice calls to us (Matthew xi.): “Come unto Me all ye who are heavy laden... Learn from Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart”, etc. From Him must we derive the Heavenly and Eternal Philosophy in order that we may come to the Kingdom of Heaven. Of the above Philosophy we will, D.V., treat briefly elsewhere. But in this place we must consider somewhat more at length the Mortal and Natural Philosophy. For I am, and will remain to my grave, the fervent disciple and follower of the Natural and Mortal, and the Supernatural Heavenly Instruction, having totally repudiated the false, heathen wisdom which proceeds not from the true light and groundwork of Nature, since beside Christ and His Wisdom there is in the world only vanity of vanities. But to return to our intention of exploring Nature. Generous Masters and Friends, this cannot be done by sitting at the fireside nor by poring over philosophical tomes. No, if we would explore Nature in our Philosophy, and attain the desired successful results, we must tread the books of Nature with our feet. Writings are examined by means of letters, but Nature by going from land to land. In this way one finds occasionally pious and faithful Nicodemuses, Naturalists, Philosophers, Explorers of Nature, and Lovers of our Spagyric Philosophy (I speak not now of the knavish, vagabond, false Alchemists, on whose account I would not move a step). From such as these, in addition to one’s own observations, one can often obtain much useful knowledge. Hence each fresh country is a new leaf in the Book of Nature. Thus is our Codex Naturae sufficiently large and ample, the leaves of which must be turned over with our feet, and examined with the spirit of understanding, and, although we be called vagabonds and land loupers by the big wigged doctors and syrup boilers, that matters nothing to me. The disciple should not fare better than his master, and the same thing has happened to Theophrastus, our dear Preceptor and Monarch of Arts, also to Alex. von Suchten, Phaedro, and others. Therefore, on my journeys I regard but little what is made by men’s hands though others think much of it, but the works of God alone, these I regard, admire, and seek to explore. To find out their three principles, to separate the pure from the impure, and thereby, to the praise and glory of God, to benefit myself and my neighbors in body and soul, is my highest endeavor. For all created things are living letters and books in which can be deciphered the origin of man, in which also may be read what man is. Before all things, let everyone commend to himself the Nosce teipsum, that he may know himself, as Aristotle said to Alexander the Great: “Know thyself and thou shalt possess all things”; and Morienus: “Those who do in themselves hold all things, are in need of no other aid”.

Therefore also am I content with these three books, from which I may learn every wisdom.

The first is the great, full-meaning Book of Nature, written not with ink or stylus, but by the finger of God, wherein, lying open before our eyes, are inscribed and registered Heaven, Earth, and all creatures therein, through the sacred impress of the Three in One --- which volume is called Macrocosmus.

The second is the Small Book, which with all its leaves and pieces is taken from the larger work, and this is Man himself, for whose sake all that God has ever created is there; the same also is called Microcosmus. And man alone is the instrument of Natural Light, to fulfill and shew by arts and wisdom what God has ordered in the firmament. Also He has further ordered that man have a twofold magnet --- viz., one composed of three elements (his body), and hence also he attracts them to himself ---

another of the stars, by which he attracts from the stars the Microcosmic tense. Therefore, the Reason of man has a magnet which attracts into itself the mind and thoughts of the Stars. From these, I say, yet another arises in the true believers, Magi, and Cabalists, and this third magnet is hidden in the image of God, in man's soul. The same penetrates, through faith, to Him from whom it came, and seeks eternal wisdom from the Holy Ghost, promised by Christ to it. It must be well remembered that there are two souls in man, the Eternal and the Natural, that is, two lives. One is subject to death, the other resists death. Thus there also are two souls, the Eternal and the Natural --- the Natural soul is the starry body, and the starry body in the fleshly, and these two together form one man but two bodies.

There are also two heavens in man, the one is Luna Cerebrum, the Cagastrian heaven. But in the heart of man is the true Iliastic, Necroc cosmic heaven. Yes, the heart of man itself is the true heaven of Immortal being, out of which the Soul has never yet come, which New Olympus and Heaven Christ Jesus has chosen for a dwelling in all true believers. The third Book is the Holy Bible, the Holy Writ of the Old and New Testaments, which explains to us the two preceding Books. The Divine Chronicles, inspired by the Holy Ghost, shew how the Great World was created for the Small World (Man), who in the great world is fed, nourished, and preserved by God the Father. The same, after the Fall, was by God's Son delivered from everlasting punishment, who also has ben born again through water and the Spirit, is fed with the Heavenly Manna and Immortal Food of the new Creature, and is guided by the Holy Ghost to the knowledge of all truth.

Generous Masters and Friends, from these three Books we can, by the grace of God and the Holy Spirit, learn that which will profit us in body and soul for Time and Eternity, and avoid all heathenish deceitful books, of which the world is full.

But to return to our occult Hermetic Philosophy: Beloved Masters and Friends, we, with others, have to complain not a little that, although innumerable devilish philosophers have written about the Universal medicine and the Philosopher's Stone, yet both Heathens and Christians have left us true writings, which godless Cacosophists and pseudo-sophists have, for the most part, either wholly kept back or altered.

Truly this is a trick of the devil, that his jugglery and lies, with which he for many centuries dazzled and befooled the world, may not be brought to light.

We have further to complain of those who mutilate and falsify the works of true seekers after natural Wisdom and Art, for I have clearly discovered defects, alterations, and foreign matter in the *Triumphal Chariot* of Fr. Basilus, and also in the writings of A. von Suchten and Theophrastus. More especially, dear Friends, have we to complain of the devilish cunning way in which the works of Theophrastus have hitherto been suppressed, only a few of which (and those to be reckoned the very worst) having appeared in print. For although they have been collected together from all countries in which Theophrastus has lived and traveled --- the books he has written in Astronomy, Philosophy, Chemistry, Cabala, and Theology, numbering some thousand volumes --- yet the same has only been done from avarice to get riches. For, having been trafficked in and sold for great sums, they have become scattered among the courts of princes and nobles, while Christendom at large, for whose use and

benefit Theophrastus wrote, has no part in them. Particularly his theological works (because they annihilate the godless, and do not suit children of this world --- belly-servers, deceived by the devil), have hitherto been totally suppressed. For which devilish end Thurneyser, a true instrument of Satan, who with his lies and false Alchemy has cheated all the world, Electors and Princes, great and small, has (amongst others whom I will here spare) been made great us of.

But, at the Last Day, before the Judgment Seat of Christ, I, together with all true sons of the Doctrine, shall demand an account of them for having stolen, sold, divided, and shut Truth away in boxes, walls, and vaults, and behind locks and bolts. Now, these precious and revered writings were ordered by God in our latter times, through Theophrastus, for the use and weal of the whole of Christendom. As regards our dear, highly-favoured Monarch and Preceptor, Ph. Theophrastus, of blessed memory, we, for our part, will not suppress his Life, his well-merited praise, and his immortal fame, given him by God, the Angels, and the whole Firmament, but will heartily the whole Firmament, but will heartily defend his honour and teaching to the very end of our life. Therefore (D.V.), we shall shortly endeavor to promote the same in an especial manner by publishing, to begin with, his Cabalistic and Theological Books, for the weal and salvation of Christendom, in order that the three-headed Antichrist, or three unclean spirits in the Apocalypse, may be right well recognized and avoided by all. Being therefore resolved, with the aid of Christ, to publish as many of Theophrastus' works as can be got together, I shall do so in the comforting assurance and hope of cordial assistance and support from all zealous, Christian lovers and followers of the true and Christian Philosophy, derived from our Heavenly Philosopher, Christ Jesus. Therefore, for the Honour and Glory of Christ, and for the long-suppressed Truth, and for the sake of this beloved and noble Philosophy, Magic, and Alchemy, as also for God's sake, I call upon persons of high and low degree to assist me with such writings. For the same they shall be humbly and gratefully rewarded when we (D.V.) shortly reach our goal in Philosophy and Medicine. For then shall they learn and appreciate the truth of that which we and others have long sought for.

“What though adverse omens be scanned by a reprobate world! Yet the goddess will fully triumph at last.

“Sacred Truth is always enshrouded in darkness”.

Generous masters and friends, as regards the present little book, called by me *The New Golden and Olympic Pandora*, I have wished to publish the same (faithfully and without guile, jus as I have received it) for the benefit of disciples of the Spagyric Doctrine. It treats of the Philosopher's Stone, and has never appeared in print before. And, seeing that your Worships have for many years been special patrons of Alchemy and the Spagyric Art, possessing no little information and understanding in the same, I have wished to publish this book under your noble patronage, humbly begging your noble patronage, humbly begging you to accept thereof as from a well-known, yet poor disciple of the Theophrastian and Immortal Christian Philosophy, and to defend me and this philosophical book against all slanderers, mockers, and persecutors of these beloved Arts, and to assist in promoting and confirming the truth in every way. For which protection and favour, I will, by God's Grace and Blessing, faithfully testify my gratitude by word and deed.

Herewith commend I all and each of us to the Gracious Ward and Protection of God.

Done in our Scholarly Hermit's Cell, near Hagenau, on the day after the Festival of the Birth of Jesus Christ, our Trismegistus Spagyus, into this world, December 26th, 1607.

Your Worships', etc., etc.,

Most Officious Servant,

Benedictus Figulus of Utenhofen, Fr. Poet; L.C. Theologian; Theosopher;  
Philosopher; Physician; Hermit, T.M.

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# **The Book of The Revelation of Hermes,**

**Interpreted by Theophrastus Paracelsus,**

**Concerning**

**The Supreme Secret of the World.**

Hermes, Plato, Aristotle, and the other philosophers, flourishing a different times, who have introduced the Arts, and more especially have explored the secrets of inferior Creation, all these have eagerly sought a means whereby man's body might be preserved from decay and become endued with immortality. To them it was answered that there is nothing which might deliver the mortal body from death; but that there is One Thing which may postpone decay, renew youth, and prolong short human life (as with the patriarchs). For death was laid as a punishment upon our first parents, Adam and Eve, and will never depart from all their descendants. Therefore, the above philosophers, and many others, have sought this One Thing with great labour, and have found that which preserves the human body from corruption, and prolong life, conducts itself, with respect to other elements, as it were like the Heavens; from which they understood that the Heavens are a substance above the Four Elements. And just as the Heavens, with respect to the other elements, are held to be the fifth substance (for they are indestructible, stable, and suffer no foreign admixture), so also this One Thing (compared to the forces of our body) is an indestructible essence, drying up all the superfluities of our bodies, and has been philosophically called by the above-mentioned name. It is neither hot and dry like fire, nor cold and moist like water, nor warm and moist like air, nor dry and cold like earth. But it is a skillful, perfect equation of all the Elements, a right commingling of natural forces, a most particular union of spiritual virtues, an indissoluble uniting of body and soul. It is the purest and noblest substance of an indestructible body, which cannot be destroyed nor harmed by the Elements, and is produced by Art. With this Aristotle prepared an apple prolonging life by its scent, when he, 15 days before his death, could neither eat nor drink on account of old age. This spiritual Essence, or One Thing, was revealed from above to Adam, and was greatly desired by the Holy Fathers, this also Hermes and Aristotle called the Truth without Lies, the most sure of all things certain, the Secret of all Secrets. It is the Last and the Highest Thing to be sought under the Heavens, a wondrous closing and finish of philosophical work, by which are discovered the dews of Heaven and the fastnesses of Earth. What the mouth of man cannot utter is all found in this spirit. As Morienus says: "He who has this has all things, and wants no other aid. For in it are all temporal happiness, bodily health, and earthly fortune. It is the spirit of the fifth substance, a Fount of all Joys (beneath the rays of the moon), the Supporter of Heaven and Earth, the Mover of Sea and Wind, the Outpurer of Rain, upholding the strength of all things, an excellent spirit above Heavenly and other spirits, giving Health, Joy, Peace, Love; driving away Hatred and Sorrow, bringing in Joy, expelling all Evil, quickly healing all Diseases, destroying Poverty and Misery, leading to all good things, giving man his heart's desire, bringing to the pious earthly honour and long life, but to the wicked who misuse it, Eternal Punishment".

This is the Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot comprehend without the interposition of the Holy Ghost, or without the instruction of those who know it. The same is of a mysterious nature, wondrous strength, boundless power. The Saints, from the beginning of the world, have desired to behold its face. By Avicenna this Spirit is named the Soul of the World. For, as the Soul moves all the limbs of the Body, so also does this Spirit move all bodies. And as the Soul is in all the limbs of the Body, so also is this Spirit in all elementary created things. It is sought by many and found by few. It is beheld from afar and found near; for it exists in every thing, in every place, and at all times. It has the powers of all creatures; its action is sound in all elements, and the qualities of all things are therein, even in the highest perfection. By virtue of this essence did Adam and the Patriarchs preserve their health and live to an extreme age, some of them also flourishing in great riches.

When the philosophers had discovered it, with great diligence and labour, they straightway concealed it under a strange tongue, and in parables, lest the same should become known to the unworthy, and the pearls be cast before swine. For if everyone knew it, all work and industry would cease; man would desire nothing but this one thing, people would live wickedly, and the world would be ruined, seeing that they would provoke God by reason of their avarice and superfluity. For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath the heart of man understood what Heaven hath naturally incorporated with this Spirit. Therefore I have briefly enumerated some of the qualities of this Spirit, to the Honour of God, that the pious may reverently praise Him in His gifts (which gif of God shall afterwards come to them), and I will herewith shew what powers and virtues it possesses in each thing, also its outward appearance, that it may be more readily recognized.

In its first state, it appears as an impure earthly body, full of imperfections. It then has an earthly nature, healing all sickness and wounds in the bowels of man, producing good and consuming proud flesh, expelling all stench, and healing generally, inwardly and outwardly.

In its second nature, it appears as a watery body, somewhat more beautiful than before, because (although still having its corruptions) its Virtue is greater. It is much nearer the Truth, and more effective in works. In this form it cures cold and hot fevers, and is a specific against poisons, which it drives from heart and lungs, healing the same when injured or wounded, purifying the blood, and, taken three times a day, is of great comfort in all diseases.

But in its third nature it appears as an aerial body, of an oily nature, almost freed from all imperfections, in which form it does many wondrous works, producing beauty and strength of body, and (a small quantity being taken in food) preventing melancholy and heating of the gall, increasing the quantity of the blood and seed, so that frequent bleeding becomes necessary. It expands the blood vessels, cures withered limbs, restores strength to the sight, in growing persons removes what is superfluous and makes good defects in the limbs.

In its fourth nature it appears in a fiery form (not quite freed from all imperfections, still somewhat watery and not dried enough), wherein it has many virtues, making the old young and reviving those at the point of death. For if to such an one there is given, in wine, a barleycorn's weight of this fire, so that it reach the stomach, it goes to his

heart, renewing him at once, driving away all previous moisture and poison, and restoring the natural heat of the liver. Given in small doses to old people, it removes the diseases of age, giving the old young hearts and bodies. Hence it is called the elixir of Life.

In its fifth and last nature, it appears in a glorified and illuminated form, without defects, shining like gold and silver, wherein it possesses all previous powers and virtues in a higher and more wondrous degree. Here its natural works are taken for miracles. When applied to the roots of dead trees they revive, bringing forth leaves and fruit. A lamp, the oil of which is mingled with this spirit, continues to burn for ever without diminution. It converts crystals into the most precious stones of all colours, equal to those from the mines, and does man other incredible wonders which may not be revealed to the unworthy.

For it heals all dead and living bodies without other medicine. Here Christ is my witness that I lie not, for all heavenly influences are united and combined therein.

This essence also reveals all treasures in earth and sea, converts all metallic bodies into gold, and there is nothing like unto it under Heaven.

This spirit is the secret, hidden from the beginning, yet granted by God to a few holy men for the revealing of these riches to His Glory --- dwelling in fiery form in the air, and leading earth with itself to Heaven, while from its body there flow whole rivers of living water.

This spirit flies through the midst of the Heavens like a morning mist, leads its burning fire into the water, and has its shining realm in the heavens.

And although these writings may be regarded as false by the reader, yet to the initiated they are true and possible, when the hidden sense is properly understood. For God is wonderful in His works, and His Wisdom is without end.

This spirit in its fiery form is called a *Sandaraca*, in the aerial a *Kybrick*, in the watery an Azoth, in the earthly Alcohol and Aliocosoph. Hence they are deceived by these names who, seeking without instruction, think to find this Spirit of Life in things foreign to our Art. For although this spirit which we seek, on account of its qualities, is called by these names, yet the same is not in these bodies and cannot be in them. For a refined spirit cannot appear except in a body suitable to its nature. And, by however many names it be called, let no one imagine different spirits, for, say what one will, there is but one spirit working everywhere and in all things.

That is the spirit which, when setting incorporates the purity of Earth, and when brooding has embraced the Waters. This spirit is named Raphael, the Angel of God, the subtlest and purest, whom the others obey as their King.

This spiritual substance is neither heavenly nor hellish, but an airy, pure and hearty body, midway between the highest and lowest, without reason, but fruitful in works, and the most select and beautiful of all other heavenly things.



This work of God is far too deep for understanding, for it is the last, greatest and highest secret of nature. It is the Spirit of God, which in the beginning filled the earth and brooded over the waters, which the world cannot grasp without the gracious interposition of the Holy Spirit and instruction from those who know it, which also the whole world desires for its virtue, and which cannot be prized enough. For it reaches to the planets, raises the clouds, drives away mists, gives light to all things, turns everything into Sun and Moon, bestows all health and abundance of treasure, cleanses the leper, brightens the eyes, banishes sorrow, heals the sick, reveals all hidden treasure, and, generally, cures all diseases.

Through this spirit have the philosophers invented the Seven Liberal Arts, and gained thereby their riches. Through the same Moses made the golden vessels in the Ark, and King Solomon did many beautiful works to the honour of God. Therewith Moses built the Tabernacle, Noah the Ark, Solomon the Temple. By this Ezra restored the Law, and Miriam, Moses' sister, was hospitable; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and other righteous men, have had lifelong abundance and riches; and all the saints possessing it have therewith praised God. Therefore is its acquisition very hard, more than that of gold and silver. For it is the best of all things, because, of all things mortal that man can desire in this world, nothing can compare with it, and in it alone is truth. Hence it is called the Stone and Spirit of Truth; in its works is no vanity, its praise cannot be sufficiently expressed. I am unable to speak enough of its virtues, because its good qualities and powers are beyond human thoughts, unutterable by the tongue of man, and in it are found the properties of all things. Yea, there is nothing deeper in Nature.

O unfathomable abyss of God's Wisdom, which thus hath united and comprised in the virtue and power of this One Spirit the qualities of all existing bodies! O unspeakable honour and boundless joy granted to mortal man! For the destructible things of Nature are restored by virtue of the said Spirit.

O mystery of mysteries, most secret of all secret things, and healing and medicine of all things! Thou last discovery in earthly natures, last best gift to Patriarchs and Sages, greatly desired by the whole world! Oh, what a wondrous and laudable spirit is purity, in which stand all joy, riches, fruitfulness of life, and art of all arts, a power which to its initiates grants all material joys! O desirable knowledge, lovely above all things beneath the circle of the Moon, by which Nature is strengthened, and heart and limbs are renewed, beauty in its perfection preserved, and abundance ensured in all things pleasing to men! O thou spiritual substance, lovely above all things! O thou wondrous power, strengthening all the world! O thou invincible virtue, highest of all that is, although despised by the ignorant, yet held by the wise in great praise, honour and glory --- wakest the dead, expellest diseases, restorest the voice of the dying!

O thou treasure of treasures, mystery of mysteries, called by Avicenna "an unspeakable substance", the purest and most perfect soul of the world, than which there is nothing more costly under Heaven, unfathomable in nature and power, wonderful in virtue and works, having no equal among creatures, possessing the virtues of all bodies under Heaven! For from it flow the water of life, the oil and honey of eternal healing, and thus hath it nourished them with honey and water from the rock. Therefore, saith Morienus: "He who hath it, the same hath all things". Blessed art Thou, Lord God of our fathers, in that Thou hast given the prophets this knowledge and understanding, that they have hidden these things (lest they should be

discovered by the blind, and those drowned in worldly godlessness) by which the wise and pious have praised Thee! For the discoverers of the mystery of this thing to the unworthy are breakers of the seal of Heavenly Revelation, thereby offending God's Majesty, and bringing upon themselves many misfortunes and the punishments of God.

Therefore, I beg all Christians, possessing this knowledge, to communicate the same to nobody, except it be to one living in Godliness, of well-rove virtue, and praising God, Who has given such a treasure to man. For many seek, but few find it. Hence the impure and those living in vice are unworthy of it. Therefore is this Art to be shewn to all God-fearing persons, because it cannot be bought with a price. I testify before God that I lie not, although it appear impossible to fools, that no one has hitherto explored Nature so deeply.

The Almighty be praised for having created this Art and for revealing it to God-fearing men. Amen.

And thus is fulfilled this precious and excellent work, called the revealing of the occult spirit, in which lie hidden the secrets and mysteries of the world.

But this spirit is one genius, and Divine, wonderful, and lordly power. For it embraces the whole world, and overcomes the Elements and the fifth Substance.

To our Trismegistus Spagyus, Jesus Christ, Be praise and glory immortal.  
Amen.

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**Concerning the True Medicine of the Most Distinguished Man,  
Alexander von Suchten, Doctor of Medicine and Philosophy.**

**An Elegy to Charles of Salzburg.**

The Song begun was left unfinished, for he, who was to all as the Sun's light, perished.

The Knowledge of Medicine, by which Podilavius, Machaon, Apollo, and Hippocrates were famous, is not to be sought from Galenus, Avicenna, Mesnis, and other writers of this stamp, but from Magic; and he, who shall have rightly perceived the same, shall at length cure all diseases admitting of cure from death. But Magic has three Books:

Firstly, Theology; Secondly, Medicine; and Thirdly, Astronomy.

Whence the Magus knows and worships Trinity in Unity, and imparts the power he receives from God to suffering mortals. And those, be they Theologians, Astronomers, or Physicians, who shew not by their works what they profess with their mouths, are Caco-Magi and Pseudo-Prophets. By their fruits shall ye know them!

XVII. Positions by which it is clearly demonstrated what a Physician is, and what his Medicine, also by means of what remedies diseases are expelled from human bodies.

1. All diseases, whatever their nature, have their origin, or lie hidden in one of the principal members.
2. Diseases can only be expelled by the generation of good blood in the diseased member.
3. Good blood is generated by the nourishing of the sick member by means of digesting heat.
4. By sickness natural heat is impeded, whereby nourishment digests less.
5. Unless food be digested, blood is not generated.
6. Natural heat, by which everything is digested for sustaining and multiplication of individuals, is the heat of the Sun and Moon.
7. If the heat of the Sun and Moon existing in human bodies be impeded by any diseases, whereby it does its office less effectually, it is to be comforted with the heat of the Sun and Moon of the greater world, or with those things in which is the most potent virtue of Sun and Moon, applied by art.
8. The heat of the Sun and Moon of the greater world cannot comfort the heat of the Sun and Moon of the lesser world except it be conjoined with the same, i.e., be

converted into a simple spirit, like the spirit of life, which is done by dissolving it in nutriment.

9. Nutriment, or that matter remaining in the stomach after the separation of superfluities, is a crude and undigested thing, convertible by natural heat into the substance of our bodies.

10. The heat of the Sun and Moon is extracted, by a wonderful and occult art, from those things through which matter is most simply generated by the great and good God, from the Spirit of the World, for the restoration and conservation of human nature. The same is entirely unknown to Galenus, Avicenna, and all the other physicians of our time, who seek medicines in apothecaries' shops.

11. The spirit of the World and the spirit of our bodies are one and the same spirit. Therefore the heat of the Sun and Moon, generated from the food itself of this spirit, is a thing more decocted and digested, and consequently more perfect, and is called, by Plato Nature of the World, and by Pythagorus Philosophers' Primal Mind, Divine Intellect, Image of Divine Intelligence, Visible Son of God; Orpheus, a most ancient theologian, calls it Jupiter; Dionysius, a disciple of St Paul, names it a Visible Image of God.

12. For that heat is a most perfect spiritual entity, the greatest among all God's creatures, and the nutriment in the stomach is the imperfect, corporeal matter, undergoing transmutation.

13. Therefore we have here a task which, in some measure, has reference to both, viz., Solar and Spiritual Heat, and Material Nutriment, which medium is also called by philosophers the Fifth Essence.

14. The heat of Sun and Moon, Fifth Essence, and Nutriment, when thus mixed in our bodies, produces the purest blood in which is heavenly virtue, freeing us from all disease, which nothing else in the whole world can do. For there are in this compound the virtues of all celestial and terrestrial bodies, so that the whole world is present in one drop of this same medicine.

15. The Fifth Essence alone, by the aid of the physician, brings about durable health, which physician, however, is not Galena, nor Avicenna, nor Rhasis, nor Mesne, nor Serapio, but the same heat of Sun and Moon, the treasure of the wise, and inestimable glory of the whole world.

16. The Fifth Essence is neither known by apothecaries nor sold in their shops. Therefore, apothecaries prepared not medicines, but rather poisons, with which they corrupt the complexion of the human body.

17. The heat of Sun and Moon is not to be met with in the Schools of Bologna, Padua, Ferrara, Paris Louvain, or Wittenberg. Therefore, Doctors of Medicine graduating there are not physicians, but impostors and cheats, who, entering the temple of Apollo, not by the door but through the roof, occupy his seat, even as did the Scribes and Pharisees the seat of Moses.

Therefore, not without cause do those whose intellect is obscured by the precepts and traditions of fools, and are hence unwilling to follow the wise, knowing the secrets of Nature, and curing so-called incurable maladies by natural means, accuse them of having a devil. For if they owned that these cures had been effected by means of that Medical Science, the very threshold of which they have never crossed, then doubtless all men would know them to be no physicians, but impostors and shedders of human blood.

Christ, Theologian, Astronomer, Physician.

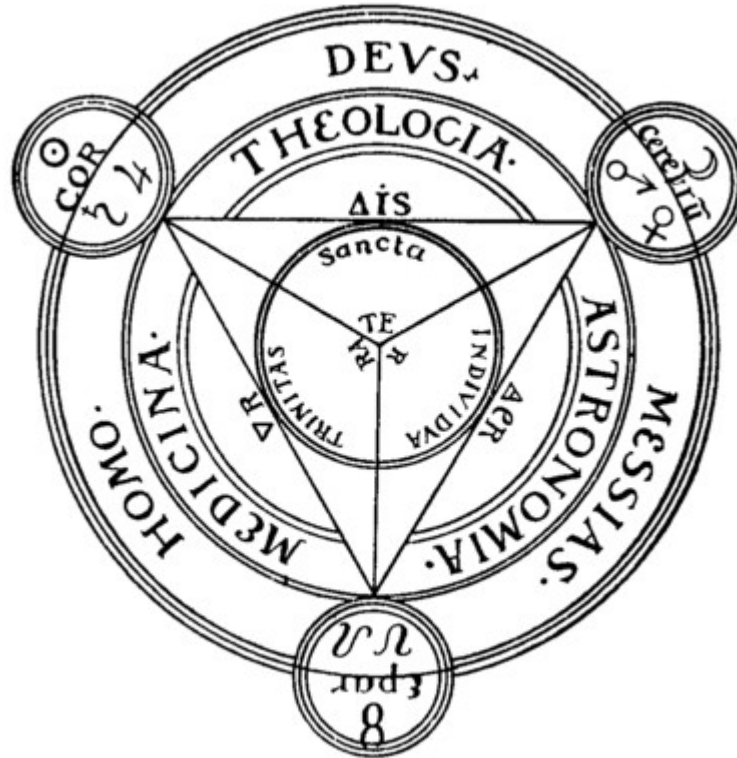
To Christ alone be Glory.

Amen

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## Man, the Best and Most Perfect of God's Creatures

### A More Complete Exposition of this Medical Foundation for the Less Experienced Student.



Aristotle says that every form of every nature, animal, vegetable, and mineral, is produced by the power of matter, intrinsically, except the Human Soul, which, being of a different and higher nature than matter, is given, extrinsically, by the Prime Motor, God Himself. It is this thing concerning which, all theologians and physicians disputing, nevertheless mostly conclude the Soul of man to be not produced from a germ, but, as it were, to be inspired and poured into the foetus in its mother's womb, by God the Author of all life.

But, since two different things cannot be mixed or joined into one, and the Soul being a certain Divine light and substance, emanating immortal from Divine springs, so produced, incorporeally, that it is dependent on the virtue of the Agent, not on the bosom of matter, the same is a primum mobile, and, as they say, spontaneous and self-moving: And, on the other hand, the Body is wholly earthly matter, having its origin in gross, rank. Elementary matter, mortal of itself, unfit for motion, and therefore far inferior to the Soul; wherefore it can never be united to the Soul, so different from itself, except through a third, a medium participating in the nature of each, a quasi-body and quasi-soul, by which the Soul may be added and joined to the Body.

But such medium they suppose to be the Spirit or Soul of the World, i.e., what we call Fifth Essence, because it consists not of the four elements, but is a certain fifth one, above and beside them. Such Spirit necessarily requires, as it were, a binding chain,

whereby Celestial Souls may bestow on grosser bodies strength and wondrous gifts; as also God and Man cannot be united except through a Medium, our Savior Christ, participating in the two natures, Celestial and Terrestrial, Divine and Human. But this spirit is of the same form in the greater world as in the lesser, i.e., the human body, our spirit, which arises from the former, and is with it one and the same spirit.

For, as the forces of our soul are through the natural spirit applied to the members, so is the virtue of the World's soul diffused through all things by the same spirit, or fifth essence. For the life and forces of all inferior species, which philosophers are wont to call souls or lives, are distributed by that ethereal or celestial spirit throughout all the elements, as it were, by the members, into the body of the Universal World, first by God Himself, then by intelligent beings, then by the stars, and lastly by the Sun, as it were the Heart of Heaven. And again, this Spirit being taken away, bodies return to that whence they came; and thus the Human Soul, according to the Platonic School, proceeding from Highest Heaven, from God Himself, is, by proper media, joined to our viler body. In that first descent, also, the soul is enfolded in the ethereal and ardent corpuscle which they call the ethereal vehicle of the Soul, while we name it the Spirit of the World and Fifth Essence. Through this medium, by command of God, Who is the Centre of the greater world, the Soul descends and is poured into the heart, which is the center of the lesser world i.e., the human body), and from thence is diffused through all the parts and members of its body, when, joining its vehicle (or chariot) to natural heat, through the spiritual heat born in the heart, the Soul is immersed in the blood, and by it equally diffused in the members. Thus it is patent how the Immortal Soul is enclosed in this viler body, viz., by means of the ethereal vehicle. But when the bonds between the Celestial Soul and natural vital spirit are loosened by disease, then the Soul, withdrawing from the members, flows back to the heart, the first receptacle of Soul and Life. From the heart, the Soul, leaving the vital natural spirit, flies away with its vehicle into the Heavens, when, being followed by guardian genii and demons, they lead it before the Judge. Then, according to the Sentence, God joyfully conducts the good souls to glory, but a raging demon snatches away the bad to punishment. And the Body returns to the earth whence it came. Thus man dies. Hence it is plain that the daily preserving of the Soul in the body --- that is, our life --- and the avoiding of diseases, and that the greatest dissolution of Soul and Body, called death, depend on the vehicle of the Soul, viz., the Celestial and our natural Spirit, and so the same has been by various authors called by different names. Some term it Spirit or Soul of the World, others Celestial Fire, others again Vital Spirit, Natural Heat, by which nothing else is denoted than that oft mentioned Spirit of things celestial and inferior, the gluten of Body and Soul. On examining the thing more fully, this is simply the heat and humour of Sun and Moon, for we know the administration of the Heavens and all bodies under the Heavens to be appointed to the Sun and Moon; the Sun is the Lord of all virtues of the elements; the Moon, by virtue of the Sun, the mistress of generation, of increase and decrease. Hence Albumansar says that life is poured into all things through the Moon and Sun; and therefore they are called by Orpheus the vivifying eyes of Heaven. Whence also the saying --- the Sun and man generate man; for the Sun sits as a King among the planets, in magnitude, beauty, and light excelling all, illuminating all, dispensing virtue to them as well as to inferior things, and abundantly bestowing light and life, not only in Heaven and the Air, but also in the earth and profoundest depths of the Abyss. Whatever good we possess is from the Sun whence Heraclitus deservedly calls it the Fount of Heavenly Light, and many of the Platonic School have located the World's Soul principally therein, which

Soul, filling the Sun's whole globe, pours its rays (or spirit) everywhere, throughout all things, distributing Life, Sense, and Motion to the Universe itself. And as in animate beings the heart rules the whole body, so does the Sun rule and govern Heaven and Earth and all that in them is. But the Moon, the Earth's nearest neighbor, by the velocity of its monthly course, is joined to the Sun and other planets, and receiving their rays and influences as in an espousal, and, as it were, bringing forth, communicates to and shed upon its near neighbor, the earth, all life and motion.

From these two founts arises that mundane, natural, and vital spirit, permeating all entities, giving to all things life and consistence, binding, moving, and filling all things, Immense Renewer in Nature's charge, through whom, as a mediator, every hidden property, every virtue, all life, are propagated in inferior bodies, in herbs, in metals, in stones, in things inanimate, so that, in the whole world, there is nothing wanting in a spark of this spirit. For it is in all things, penetrating through all; it is diffused in stones (being struck from the same by steel); it is in the water (which smokes in ditches); and in the earth (which heats springs and wells). It is in the depths of the sea (becoming warm when agitated by the wind), and in the air (which we often perceive to grow hot); also all animals and all things living are nourished by heat, and all sentient beings do live by reason of their latent heat. Whence Virgil says this inward principle nourishes heaven and earth, the sunlit plains, the glowing orb of the Moon, and the Tithonian Stars. The same is elsewhere called: That Vigour and Celestial Origin. Therefore this spirit, when whole and undiminished in our bodies, and not impeded by things extraneous, is our natural heat, by which everything is digested for the sustenance and multiplying of individuals.

For it digests man's food, generating good blood in all his members. Now, with pure blood there is a strong, pure, and healthy vital spirit of the heart, and thus the whole body is healthy. But if, by some impediment, it does its office less fully, there arises bad decoction of nutriment, whence generation of impure blood. By this the heart's vital spirit is weakened, whence arises old age and, at length, full extinction, consumption, and dissipation of that spirit, which is natural death. Therefore, to avoid this, the said spirit and natural heat, thus diminished, or impeded, must be increased and comforted that it may better and more strongly perform its functions. But as agents act not with inferiors but with equals, so also must this comforting take place through the spirit's equal, viz., through the celestial heat of Sun and Moon and other planets, or with those things in which the virtue of Sun and Moon are most potent, abundant, and least bound up with matter. For these things act more quickly and effectually; they generate their like more promptly, and from them is more easily obtained that Spirit or Celestial Fire whose properties are heat, not consuming like the elementary, but fructifying all things; and light, bestowing life on all things. But the properties of elementary and inferior fire are burning, consuming all things, and filling them with barrenness and darkness. Therefore is the same excluded, as also all other inferior and elementary subjects. For all these things of natural composition, and not freed from grosser matter, are subject to corruption and transmutation. Now, medicines ought, all the more, to be durable and free from corruption, since they are to cure the human body from corruption; otherwise they would do more harm than good. I add that it would be vain to preserve the corruptible body by a putrid and corruptible thing, or to attempt to heal an infirm nature with a thing infirm, or yet to fashion a thing by deformity. For the corruptible, infirm, and weak added to its like increases the corruptibility and does not diminish it. Thus we see many, and even



most, of the physicians of our time in vain attempt to heal, and secure immunity from disease, by means of the crass and corporeal compositions of their medicaments. But this speculation goes farther. For all diseases which are spiritual, not corporeal, also demand spiritual medicines. Therefore, to those wishing to preserve that vital spirit in the young (which is the humid and warm radical), to restore the lost powers in old men and to bring them back, as it were, to youth, and to educe to their highest perfection the powers of man's life, I would say that such will do well to seek, not the Elemental, but that Celestial heat of the Sun and Moon, dwelling in a more incorruptible substance, under the Moon's intermittent orb, and to make this similar to our heat or spirit; so that, prepared as medicine and sweet food, when taken into the mouth it may immediately penetrate the human frame, greatly holding to itself every fleshly thing, increasing, restoring, and nourishing the incorrupt virtue and spirit of life, digesting the crude and undigested, removing the superfluous, making natural water abound, and augmenting, comforting, and inflaming natural heat or fire.

The above will be the duty of the true physician and sane philosopher. For thus will he be able to preserve our body from corruption, to retard old age, retain florid youth in full vigour, and, if possible, to perpetuate it, at least to preserve it from death and destruction. But here we speak of natural death philosophically, which is only a natural consumption of moisture and heat, as is demonstrated by a lighted lamp; not theologically, of that fatal death and last end of Nature destined by God for each one, by which we are compelled not only to pay our debts, but also, by reason of our sins, to suffer punishment. For we know that, for his sins, man must once die, Job saying: "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee; Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass", --- which text plainly sets forth that these bounds, once constituted by God, cannot be passed by human aid or skill; for which cause also Adam was driven forth from the paradise of Joy, lest, after the Fall, he should become equally as immortal as before by eating of the Tree of Life. Neither is it credible that, outside Paradise, God should have given Adam anything whereby he and his descendants might live for ever, when by the very expulsion he forthwith deprived Adam of access to the Tree of Life. Therefore no aid can be found, still less invented, beyond those last bounds set us by God. On the other hand, there is a remedy against many infirmities, and against the weakening of radical moisture and innate heat.

For Adam, created by God full of understanding and perfect knowledge of natural things, doubtless knew those which were capable of prolonging human life and securing immunity from disease. Doubtless he also taught the same to some of his descendants, and they again to others. Hence many of the fathers lived to the age of 700, 800, and more years; but some did not live so long, this secret not being revealed to all.

Therefore it is conceded that (on this side of that limit of death) there may be found something to restore our sick body. For just as man, through disease and other causes, often fails to reach the appointed limit of life, so, on the other hand, by removing these impediments, he may prolong life to the very utmost limit set him.

But some may affirm that such a medicine cannot be found in the whole sphere of this nether world, because all things created, being either elements or composed and congenial with them, are therefore corruptible, and hence that this medicine and

incorruptible root of life can nowhere be found. Those speaking thus learnedly, without having ever entered the Sanctuary of Nature, fail to consider there is in the elements something besides corruptible qualities. For the elements and their compounds, in addition to crass matter, are composed of a subtle substance, or intrinsic radical humidity, diffused through the elemental parts, simple and wholly incorruptible, long preserving the things themselves in vigor, and called the Spirit of the World, the one certain life, filling and fathoming all things, so that from the three genera of creatures, Intellectual, Celestial, and Corruptible, there is formed the one Machine of the whole world.

This Spirit by its virtue fecundates all subjects natural and artificial, pouring into them those hidden properties which we have been wont to call the Fifth Essence. We do not say that Medicine is quite as incorruptible as Heaven (or I could not in the stomach be converted into nutriment), but being generated from matter above all others and incorruptible with respect to them, and simply formed by the separation therefrom of all corruptible elements, it could be kept, if necessary, 10,000 years.

For this cause skillful physicians advise us to use less incorruptible (indigestible?) food. This thing has the same bearing with respect to the four qualities of our Body as Heaven has with respect to the four elements. For Heaven is called by philosophers the Fifth Essence with respect to the four elements, because Heaven is in itself incorruptible, immutable, not receiving foreign impressions, unless acting on the elements by God's command.

Thus the whole thing we seek is, in relation to the four qualities of our body, a Fifth Essence, incorruptible in itself, made by art. It is not hot and dry like fire, for it cools hot things, diminishing and expelling fevers; nor does it cool humid things like water, for it burns, which is repugnant to the element water. Nor, again, does it moisten hot things, like air, for it corrupts not like air, which is easily decomposed, as we see in the generation of spiders and flies; nor is it cold and dry like the earth, for it sharpens and warms. But it supplies to each a contrary quality, like unto the incorruptible Heaven, which, according to necessity, furnishes the hot, cold, moist, or dry quality, and just as Supreme Heaven does not by itself alone preserve the world, but through the virtue of the Sun, Moon, and other Stars, so also does this our Heaven, or Fifth Essence, wish and deserve to be adorned by a splendid, wondrous, and occult Sun, from which it has incorruptibility, virtue and heat.

But this is the root of life, i.e., the Fifth Essence, created by the Almighty for the preservation of the four qualities of the human body, even as Heaven is for the preservation of the Universe. Therefore in this Fifth Essence and Spiritual Medicine, which is of Nature and the Heat of Heaven, and not of a mortal or corrupt quality, is indeed possible the Fount of Medicine, the preservation of life, the restoration of health, and in this may the cherished desire for the renewal of lost youth and serene health be found. For, briefly, in the whole world there is no better medicine than this. Even as in every genus there is something holding the first rank in that genus, so also this medicine, being prepared from the most efficacious and incorruptible matter under Heaven, viz., from the Soul and Spirit of the World, containing within itself the virtues of all things celestial and terrestrial, will hold first rank among medicines, and man, by using the same, together with other food, in moderation, may attain to the age of the Patriarchs. For of this composition, combining as it does the virtues of all

things, there may truly be said that in one drop the whole world is present. It is this most famous medicine which philosophers have been wont to call their Stone, or Powder. This is its fount and fundament, and the Medicine whereby Aesculapius raised the dead. This is the herb by which Medea restored Jason to life. This is the secret substance brought from Colchis by the Argonauts under Jason with so much journeying and pains, and hence called the Golden Fleece; partly because this Science excels in virtue all others, as the Sun does the stars and gold the other metals; and partly because that Fleece was a Book written with golden letters (according to the testimony of Suidas, Historiographer of the Chemical and Medical Arts) and containing a full account of the preparation of the Medicine. For in that Book is the first material for the creation, restoration, and preservation of our most true Medicine.

Chemistry can be easily understood by the intelligent, and chemistry, i.e., altering metals, may properly be including in the teaching of the theory of the True Medicine aforesaid, both flowing from the same fount, namely, the World's Soul, which, being as it were, the only life of things, and the author of generation, will contain within itself the seeds of all inferior natures.

In harmonious order it rules, vivifies, and fecundates. But, for younger disciples, it has pleased us to describe somewhat more fully the principles of chemistry, which each one may easily prove for himself. For, when he has considered the matter, he will perceive that God would be compelled, perpetually and each moment, to create new creatures, lest the species of all things in that beautiful house, the universal world, should perish entirely, had He not, when breathing the breath of life into man and all other beings, at the same time given them the command: "Increase and multiply in the earth". By which breath and command He imparted unto them not only natural life, or a living soul, but also the power, which may be called the generative spirit, whereby every genus may preserve and perpetuate its race eternally. For everything which may generate is necessarily alive, as, on the other hand, that having life, unless prevented, will generate. Therefore, at the Creation the generative spirit began the order of continuous production which shall only cease with the world. Hence God commanded Noah to build so great an Ark that it might receive and save from destruction some of each species and both sexes, which, after the Deluge, should again propagate their kind.

And everyone attentively observing the universal world will doubtless perceive this perpetual order of generation everywhere, not only in these crass, inferior, elementated bodies, but also in the simple celestial bodies and in the elements themselves. Elements generate their own kind, as we are taught by the infallible rule of daily experience. A fire converts the matter it consumes into its own nature, viz., fire, thereby augmenting itself. Air does likewise, easily corrupting things and dissolving them into air like itself. Earth, foul and dissolved, becomes water; the latter through heat made gross and dense, becomes earth; but evaporated by heat, is changed into air, and this again, by overheating, into fire. Fire, when extinguished, returns to air, cooled air becomes water, and that again, by coagulation, earth. But the natural order of generation is more plainly perceived among inferior and composite bodies, which philosophers have divided into the three orders: Animals, Vegetables, Minerals. For these have their own seed, implanted by Nature herself, by which they manifestly and visibly produce similar fetuses, thus augmenting their kind by propagation, From horse, man, bull, are respectively generated horse, man, and bull. Likewise all

vegetables, herbs, trees, shrubs, cast their own seeds on to the ground, which, in course of time, produce species similar to themselves. Indeed, the minerals and metals lying hid in the very center of the earth have also undergone the same changes, although their seed and generations are not visibly shown, as in the preceding orders -- for, by reason of the great mass of the earth concealing the hidden, contained seed, the same is by many believed neither to grow nor to generate.

But the attentive observer of Nature, its origin, increase, and incrementation, will certainly not dispute its possession of vital spirit and generative power, by which it not only originates and has nutriment, life, and consistence, but also must be admitted to possess the power of generating its kind. For everything increasing, originating, growing, and receiving nourishment has vegetative life, hence propagating power. And the reason of the generation of minerals being so patent to the eye as that of vegetables and animals, is the earth's great and abundant fecundity, its vast mass, by which that spirit is restrained and impeded as in a prison and chains, by which it can less perform its functions and generate its kind. The same when freed by art from its terrestrial house and sepulcher, doubtless, like others, sharers of generative virtue, will be able to bring forth fruit by its seed, and thus metal will produce metal and gold generate gold.

From this it is manifest that the generation of metals, and especially of gold, is not only permitted by God, and possible to Nature, but also to human art. Consequently the Art of Chemistry is not fictitious, not detestable, not base, as today it is falsely called by many, but true, admirable, holy, and well proven. For by natural means seeding out the invisible, impalpable, generative spirit, elsewhere called the Seed of Metals, it so treats the same that it bears fruit similar to itself, etc. Therefore, many philosophers, moved by this argument, have sought that golden seed in gold itself; and having found what they wished, have cut out, or extracted, the same from a mass of gold. As it were, from the stones placed by Nature about it, which, being thus separated, and afterwards applied by them to anything of a similar nature --- i.e., any metal --- has immediately changed the same into gold and silver. Hence they have proved by experiment that gold can generate its like, but have thereby gained no lucre or emolument. For this spirit, or seed, of gold, when mixed with any of the other metals, can convert into gold only a quantity equal to the gold whence the seed was extracted, and not more. Hence the process was a tedious and most difficult one, requiring much time and a large outlay. That, therefore, this generation and manufacture of gold might be carried on more easily and abundantly, with less expense and yet more profit and utility, the Ancient Sages were compelled to relinquish common gold, and, with the spirit of which we in this place treat, viz., the generating spirit of all creatures, were forced to seek a method of making gold elsewhere; in respect of which they spared neither labour, nor time, nor expense, and at length arrived at one thing in which all their wishes were fulfilled, for they obtained a nature, or body, or certain compound, in which the metallic, gold-producing spirit was unlimited and unstraitened, not limited in quantity proportionate to the matter, but so intense, exuberant, possessing more of form (essence) than of matter, that, by artificial fire, it may be reduced to its greatest purity, and may be so treated, diffused, extended, and multiplied that, after completion, it is a thousand thousand times stronger than bodies naturally perfect, i.e., gold and silver. --- For the more form a thing has, the more entity, virtue, and operation it has. Those things in which the idea (which is the form) is least merged into the body, or matter, have the most potent

virtues, because being the most formal (spiritual), they can with very little matter effect very much. This matter thus formed and taken possession of by all sons of this science, lest it should become known to the unworthy, and equally that it might be known by the worthy, we read of as described by the sages in divers enigmatical ways only to be understood by the initiated. The following are some of the principal circumlocutions designed indirectly to make known this great secret: What is the strongest creature in the whole world, the most conservative, most penetrative, most volatile, the most unalterable and fixed in fire? The thing that fire has not touched is accessible and known to all men, of much superfluity, to be found everywhere, and by all. It is a part of man, begets and is begotten by man, is heavy in weight, soft (or at least not hard) to the touch, not rough, sweet to the taste but of a sharp nature, sweet to the smell but at the same time having a fetid and sepulchral odour, pleasant to sight and hearing, yet of obtuse sound, not the less fire for being almost wholly earth, nor yet simply water, neither very acute nor obtuse but mediocre in quality, revealed by reflection, various in colour, white, black, and last red, most easily fusible, and also of metallic fusion, without much sound, in action animal, vegetable, and mineral. It is a thing which the earth produces and which descends from Heaven, both active and passive, masculine and feminine, consisting of Soul, Spirit, and Body.

It is the one subject of everything wonderful in Heaven and Earth, without which neither Alchemy, Medicine, nor Natural Magic can exhibit their complete aim. It is also the first and last, greatest of all creatures, by most commonly called red, or Adamic Earth. From these and similar attributes, or circumstances, and in no other way, may this matter be known and prepared by a proper, natural method, at length excelling in that naturally desired by all, and pursued by all with great eagerness, viz., daily and healthy life, without all infirmity, until natural death. And it will further afford gold, silver, pearls, gems, and such precious things, as well as all that is necessary to the honest sustenance of life, abundantly and affluently. Thus the object of Chemistry is identical with that of Medicine, the same Spirit, same Heat, same Quintessence, the same Soul, Medium of Nature, which permits one thing to be converted into another; finally there are the same uses, rewards, and emoluments for the disciples of either science who shall have known how to separate this Quintessence from its defilements and impurities, and to reduce it to pure simplicity. For he who shall have been able, from its impure and manifold elements, to convert it to purity and simplicity, discerning the nature, virtue and power of these elements in their number, degrees and order, without division of substance, the same is truly a Physician, natural Magus, and consummate Philosopher. For by the same heat of Sun and Moon, the same Spirit of the World, by which human bodies are healed from infirmities and accidents, he can restore imperfect or impure metals to True Health --- which is Conversion into Gold --- and his he will have thoroughly discovered the whole virtue of Nature's occult operations, and will easily obtain a perfect knowledge and grasp of all natural and celestial secrets. On the other hand --- if ignorant of all these things --- he can attain to no knowledge of such wonderful agencies.

Hence it is plain that this art, and most secret of Nature's secrets is in vain attempted and sought by those who daily join themselves to princes and magnates, and immediately attempt Hermes' Stone, the Sacred Stone, Philosophers' mercury, all kinds of furnaces and burnings, strong waters, King of Antimony, perpetual fire, and many more inept things of that sort, and, with this gullible art in their mouths, [promise whole mountains of gold; knowing, nevertheless, not a single word of Latin,

and still less having tasted a single drop from Nature's hidden founts. For unless one be instructed in the discipline of the great arts, he can become but little proficient therein. Wherefore the above has been collected from Natural, mathematical, and Supernatural Precepts, etc.

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*Here follows the Practice --- which, however, is wanting owing to the sudden death of the Excellent author, A.V.S.*

## **A Dialogue**

**By**

**Alexander von Suchten**

Doctor of Chemistry and Famous Philosopher.

Introducing Two Interlocutory Personages, viz., Alexander and Bernhardus.

*Alexander:* That is the cause of my departure. I therefore beg you to give me the good counsel you have already been asked for by me.

*Bernhardus:* Why do you, an old Physician and Chemist, allow yourself to be misled by the popular cry? Know you no the way of the world, that he who praises not himself has no consideration? The popular cry should not have moved you to leave wife and child at home, wandering about and seeking in other lands what you might perhaps have found sooner and better at home. For old acquaintance sake, I will not refuse you the desired counsel. For, as you say, we were good friends in Italy, at Padua, Ferrara, Bologna, and Rome, when seeking there what we did not find. But, before I speak further with you, tell me what god you have experienced and learned at Basel, Cologne, in Switzerland, on the Rhine, in Silesia, in the marches (Brandenburg), and in Denmark, where you were with the Paracelsian doctors?

*Alexander:* As I came to them, so I left them; what they told me I had already read in Paracelsus, where he speaks of Flowers of Antimony, of Matter of Pearls, of Juice of Coral, of the virtues of hellebore, of Potable Gold, and of the Quintessence. But I thought to hear from these learned persons what Paracelsus means by those names and terms. For I had long remarked that his Vitriol and Tartar were not sulphuric acid and common tartar; and so on with the other names. But I saw the good gentlemen still read it literally. Hence I did not learn from them the mysteries hidden by Paracelsus under the said names. Each one has his preparations, highly praised by himself; but I ask not for preparation, knowing that in the things prepared by them there are not the secrets sought by us. I have spent much time and labour over the substances they occupy themselves with, which they, as Chemists of the new School, hold in great honour. But I think nothing of all that, as they also will find out in time. Hence you can easily guess what I have learnt from them.

*Bernhardus:* But I hear they do much with their Chemical medicines?

*Alexander:* Yes, as luck would have it, sometimes much, sometimes little; as also happens with us Galenian doctors, Paracelsus writes that Medicine is a certain art, which a physician must be as fully master of as a tanner of his trade. He says not it is easier to learn than the tanner's trade. But such perfection have I found in none, and

they all speak of different things and long labor. What shall I, then, think of these professors? I know you have earnestly occupied yourself with the secrets of medicine of the last 27 years, and I pray that you do not refuse your old true comrade what you, in that long period, have learn concerning these hidden matters.

*Berhardus:* Vitriol, Tartar, Coral, Pearls, Jewels, are not that upon which the medicine of Paracelsus is built. For the first philosophers and inventors of medicine have spoken concerning weighty things in parables and other figures of speech Thus also Paracelsus, who, in his teaching, has invented some names, having received others from the Ancients --- excepting some in which Medicinal Virtues, but not perfections, are found. Marvel no that Paracelsian doctors take the similitude for truth.

*Alexander:* But I have left home to discover the same, yet have found no one to teach me. I well know there is something in Vitriol, also in Tartar, Antimony, Mercury, but find not in them what Paracelsus ascribes to them.

*Bernhadus:* Perhaps you know not the proper preparation of these substances.

*Alexander:* Bother the preparation! I see others do as little with their preparations as I with mine; therefore, there must be another reason for it.

*Bernhardus:* Have you read the chapter in Paracelsus concerning Dropsy? Therein you find the simples which may help to cure your brother of this complaint.

*Alexander:* Certainly, I have read it more than once, but what simples are there in it other than Mercurium Columbinum, Crocus, Sulphur, the Element of Fire, and Diaphoretic Gold? I would not put Mercury sublimated, precipitated, sublimated, etc., into my brother's mouth, neither would I Sulphur; and when I apply Columbinum, or Gallinaceum, and other poultices, according to our custom, they are of no avail. What Element of Fire is I know not. I do know that Diaphoretic Gold, as Alchemists make it, with Mercury, acids, oil of salt, and with urine, is a poison – and tat the Diaphoretic Gold of Paracelsus mus be something else. Are Crocus and Sal Martis burnt iron, which us used by the doctor for restoring health?

*Bernhardus:* I plainly perceive that since you have taken a wife, are laden with domestic cares, and are practicing according to the Galenian method to keep a family, you have ceased to reflect on these matters.

*Alexander:* I must make shift with Galenian Medicine until I can get a better master. Nevertheless, I always am working and seeking the arcane, but I have hitherto had little success; why, I know not, for I am not wanting in diligence.

*Bernhardus:* I will tell you, God is a Searcher of all minds, and Medicine is in His hand: He grants it according to our heart. When we were at Padua I know you took the opinions of Galenus for Gospel, that you graduated in the same, and that you then went with some other doctors to Friaul, there to try the new medicine. But what happened to you and your comrades? You thought you had collected from your professors the golden fleece of medicine, --- no disease could resist you. Then you found that your fleece was nothing but asses' figs, and the peasants who ate the same died, or were ripped and lamed. Do you remember what a quarrel you thereupon had



with your preceptors? But what answer did you get? That you were only a young doctor; that Practice was not so easily learned; that you must exercise yourself therein, and go on killing people, and at last you would become a clever doctor. That is also the experience of others who get their medicine from the universities. Hence it is a Gift of God, and comes not from Padua, Paris, or Wittenberg. He Himself has created and compounded medicine, not Galenus, not Avicenna, not Paracelsus, but He alone, and from Hi we must learn the Truth --- not from this or that author. Each one has written according to the measure of Truth he has found. We may, therefore, take them for guides, but not for the way itself, as we did when spending our youth so uselessly at the High Schools. Since Galenus knew and described medicine, and his professors made a physician of thee, tell me, when thou seekest information from others, what does Paracelsus concern thee?

*Alexander:* Everyone knows that Paracelsus was a learned man who has written many clever things, but he invented not Medicine himself, having received it from Hippocrates and others. Therefore, God has bestowed upon him great understanding, whereby he has brought Medicine into a right order and one method, through which it has acquired a reputation no possessed by it before. Hence Galenus is so highly considered by the learned, and alone taught in the Schools. The reason for my having go into the Medicine of Paracelsus is this: I have long been a Chemist, seeking that which others seek, and yet I cannot attain it, but find in Paracelsus that, by Alchemistic preparation, medicine should be made to act. I have also in High Germany heard of incredible cures effected by Paracelsus --- as his Epitaph also testifies --- and, therefore wished to make use of my chemical studies in preparing medicaments, thinking to discover the secrets of medicine of I might not make gold and silver. For I cannot deny that, since we have mighty principles and authors of our medicine, and yet can do so little in dangerous sickness, we must be, for some cause, deficient in medicine.

*Bernhardus:* Yes, truly, a great deficiency. You write and chatter much, and when at the patient's bedside, you cannot drive away a fever. You purge, anoint, and poultice in vain, putting hi off with fine words and dieting, until Nature herself overcomes the disease; then you have excellently shown your skill. But if he dies, killed by your quackery, the disease was incurable. What shall I say of other maladies ore serious than fevers? As you understand and treat the one, so you so the others. Tell me, on your conscience, can you, with your Galenian method, drive away a fever?

*Alexander:* I cannot do so with certainty. A doctor is but the minister of Nature, not her master.

*Bernhardus:* We know well that Nature herself is our medicine, and that she helps the sick person when the impediments are removed. With respect to these impediments we must assist Nature, but I have never seen one who could cure a fever, without fail, in a certain fixed time.

*Alexander:* I have known one, but cannot sufficiently wonder at the medicine.

*Bernhardus:* What think you is the cause that you Galenians cannot do so?

*Alexander:* That our theory has a false foundation I cannot assert, but must confess that the result does not correspond with the principles.

*Bernhardus:* Were the principles good, the result also could not fail to be so. But your principles were invented by phantastic, unlearned scatterbrains, who knew not Nature.

*Alexander:* You must not thus despise the famous and praiseworthy doctors; they are, after all, very learned men.

*Bernhardus:* I despise no one, but it is my duty to rescue the Truth. As the Greeks say: I am a friend of Socrates and Plato, but still more so of Truth. If Nature have not taught their principles, they are learned but with their own sort.

*Alexander:* Not only with their own sort, but at the courts of Emperors, Kings, and Princes, and with many honest men.

*Bernhardus:* Your citing mighty Potentates only shews they know nothing about Medicine; if they did, you would soon have other news.

*Alexander:* High Potentates of Christendom have other things to do; hence they have learned person to serve and help them.

*Bernhardus:* Yes, certainly help them --- from this life into the next. I could tell you something about Princes, did I not wish to spare the heads of those who have driven them from one illness into another, and, at last, even killed them. I myself have been present when a young prince was sick, and not knowing what to do, one of them said: Let us proceed according to the method and we shall be excused. How like you this advice? Your method must be right, should every prince give up the ghost under it. What says Paracelsus of the physicians of the Emperor and great lords? Does he not declare that they know less than peasants, rather helping their princes to death than to life, and that, having such physicians, it is impossible for them to reach old age? Have you never heard a prince lament: This multitude of physicians has destroyed me? Also, what said the Emperor Adrian when about to die? The concourse of physicians frequently changes the Emperor! But what sort of doctors were these? Just the same who the Burgomaster of Rome drove away and forbade the city. The truth about medicine was not discovered at that time, when the phantasy concerning humours was believed in.

*Alexander:* From the beginning of the world this Medicine has been held in high honour; that it should now be brought into contempt and replaced by another is difficult to believe.

*Bernhardus:* Adam, our first father, who had knowledge of all arts, also received that of Medicine from God, and it was kept secret by the learned (as the great gift of God) until Noah's time. When God destroyed the world by the Flood, the art of Medicine, with many other controlled arts, was lost. No one remained who knew them except Noah, called by some Hermogenes, or Hermes, to whom Antiquity ascribes the knowledge of all things celestial and terrestrial. The same Noah, before his death, described Medicine, skillfully concealing it among another matter. After his death this

knowledge returned to God, and thus, through the Flood and Noah's death, was taken away from the Human Race.

*Alexander:* Who can believe God to have been so ungracious to man as to have taken from him this knowledge of Medicine?

*Bernhardus:* Tell me, does God think more of our Souls' salvation than that of our mortal bodies?

*Alexander:* Doubtless most of that of our Souls.

*Bernhardus:* Why, then, has he concealed Salvation during the 5000 years before Christ was made man? When Christ was revealed to the world, then men heard the news of their Salvation, and there fell to the ground hundreds of idols, raised by men according to their own imaginations, although they knew not what was their souls' salvation. For the notion of the Deity is naturally innate in man, which is even a better idea than knowledge; by which is incited the natural desire of good, reasoning, and judgment. Thus do idols spring from the imagination of men. And, forasmuch as human reason, the origin of philosophy, of which Erastus and writers of his stamp boast much in our time, need not necessarily be without deceit and guile, it has always fallen short of the truth until God assumed human reason through the mind, and His Word became flesh and man. It is not possible for our Reason --- although mind --- to grasp the Truth, until our intellect has been lighted by God's Word, and Reason receives Divine Illumination through the mind, which then took place when the Word became flesh and dwelt in us. Before that time Theology was man's vain suppositions (I speak not of the few enlightened by God through the Holy Ghost before the incarnate Word), and he understands not his soul's salvation. If God has concealed the same from humanity for 5000 years, is it incredible that he should withhold the body's salvation --- i.e., Medicine --- for 4000 years?

*Alexander:* If Medicine, as you say, has only appeared in our own time, whence comes the medicine which has been practiced during the last 4000 years?

*Bernhardus:* Whence came the idols which, before Christ, were in Europe, Africa, and Asia? Our human reason has speculated them out, and thus also has it happened with Medicine. After Noah's time, men, harassed by diseases, sought refuge, one in herbs, another in animals, a third in stones and metals, and thus one thing after another was tried, without full knowledge of the same, which had some appearance of virtue. But there was as yet no doctor. The sick were carried to some public place, those who had had similar complaints shewing them the remedies used by themselves, which the patients tried on chance. Such was Medicine until the time of Apollo, i.e., 1915 B.C. This Apollo was a clever and learned man, and carefully noting those things which proved efficacious in diseases, he began to visit the sick, and thus became a public physician, to whom, after his death, a temple was erected and divine honours were paid. In such honour was medicine then held which today begs its bread. Aesculapius succeeding his father, also treated the sick with skill and knowledge inherited from his father, and to him there was a temple erected, as to a god. After his death the kings commanded that all medical discoveries and observations should be written down and publicly exhibited on the walls of the Temple of Aesculapius. 457 years after came Hippocrates Cous, who was commanded

to arrange the experiments in the Temple of Aesculapius, which he did; and, from these experiments, first invented methodical Medicine. Hence from him Medicine, as now taught in the schools, derives its origin. When Empirical Medicine thus came into great honour in Greece, many physicians arose, as Diocles, Chrysippus, Coristinus, Anaxagorus, Erostratus. 500 years after Hippocrates came Galenus, a plausible man who described the Hippocratic Medicine, painting it in beautiful colours, inventing causes and symptoms of diseases, ascribing virtues to herbs, and teaching the cure of feverish illnesses by cold, that of cold ones by heat. Thus did Human Speculation, from experiments, deduce the Science of medicine --- yet, at bottom, it was no Science, but mere opinions, accepted as Truth itself. But God, who is not always wrath with man, has, in our own time, chosen Philip Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, to rekindle the light of Medical Science, and to expose the deceit practiced in his day. Therefore, this Theophrastus is the True Monarch of Medicine, and will remain so until the end of time. Therefore, it behooves us to thank God and his chosen man, and not lightly reject or revile what we do not understand. This science is above human knowledge, a gift and miracle of God. He errs that would grasp the same with human understanding, for, without the Revelation of the Holy Ghost and Inspiration of God, no one will obtain it --- be he bachelor, master, or doctor.

*Alexander:* How can Paracelsus have rediscovered the true medicine, since he has written so many contradictory things about which his very disciples are not agreed? One says his Art is in Antimony, another in Mercury, Gold, Pearls, and Corals, or in Vitriol, Tartar, and many other poisonous things, that destroy men's lives. I know princes and lords who are terrified at the very mention of Paracelsian doctors.

*Bernhardus:* Only those who do not understand the writings of Paracelsus call them contradictory. But Holy Writ also must suffer the same imputation; as, for instance, Sebastian Franck exclaimed with regard to it: But is it true? However, I cannot deny that much is attributed to Paracelsus which he has never written. So also he himself, in a Theological Treatise, confesses that in his youth, when seeking the first principles of Medicine, he had written things afterwards repudiated by himself, and doth warn us against the same, which (he says) had in time come to be accepted as true and perfect books. What you advance against his disciples is not the fault of Paracelsus. But what think you is the cause of their disagreement?

*Alexander:* I would hear it from you.

*Bernhardus:* You know that Christian Theology is one and united; whence come so many Sects among Christians in Europe?

*Alexander:* There have always been Sects in our Religion. I hold God permits this the better to prove the Righteous; but what has that to do with Medicine?

*Bernhardus:* The fact of there being so many heretics in our Religion is a sure sign and argument that the instigators of the Sects understand not theology. Thus also in Medicine --- the letter is the cause of all errors, yet no one will see that the letter is dead. What has Paracelsus written other than the letter, the right understanding of which comes from God? If it comes from ourselves, the medical heretics are there.

*Alexander:* Many laud Paracelsian Medicine. Who shall say which of these understand Paracelsus aright?

*Bernhardus:* What says Christ, when asked by what false prophets shall be known?

*Alexander:* "By their fruits shall ye know them", Christ replied.

*Bernhardus:* Thus also shall a physician be discerned by his works, not words. By works Paracelsus proved that he had received Medicine from God, and was a physician born, whom also hypocrites hate.

*Alexander:* But what think you of the Medicine derived from the Experiments arranged and methodized by Hippocrates --- is it good for nothing?

*Bernhardus:* I say not so; they are to be praised who have made known to us herbs and natural simples. But philosophy is not necessary for the sick, as Serapion testifies. For the causes of serious diseases, as Apoplexy, Paralysis, Podagra, Dropsy, are all not natural but metaphysical, having their own Medicine as regards the fleshly body and vital parts, as heart, lungs, liver, etc., and for them Medicines enough are found -- - but what is taught concerning the causes of disease is all mere opinion. Since Noah's time no one has understood the causes of so-called incurable diseases, but Paracelsus alone. Therefore, to Hippocrates and Galen, but also to Paracelsus, let due praise be given according to the respective merits of each. With regard to the internal organization of man, Galenus was blind, as are also his disciples. Paracelsus has been the first Medicus Microcosmi (physician of man's body). Hence, he rightly calls himself Monarchus Medicorum, at which title Erastus the Calumniator is like to burst.

*Alexander:* Paracelsus ascribes the cause of diseases to the Stars, administering such poisonous Medicines against these Stars that the Galenists doctors are aghast.

*Bernhardus:* The inner man is astral, hence he must have astral medicine. What Medicines have you in which there is not poison, of which people die who would otherwise live? Take, for instance, wine. Is that not a necessary and useful thing? And yet how great poison there is in it!

*Alexander:* Those who swill wine every day find no poison in it.

*Bernhardus:* They have to thank their strong constitution for that. When weakened they will soon find out whether there be poison in it. Know you not that the less poison there is, the less Medicine, and the stronger the poison, the stronger the Medicine. But you Galenians will not recognize poison, speaking of phlegma, melancholy, and cholera --- wherein is nonsense --- knowing not that the poison in medicine and food does everything.

*Alexander:* I have long noticed that the excrements of food and drink produce many diseases in us. Paracelsus has also written much concerning Tartar. But what the excrements in us are composed of, how they become a disease, what transmutes them into another substance, I know not, and cannot learn from his writings, much less understand the fabricator of the disease, the instrument with which it works, and the subject out of which it is made and multiplied.

*Bernhardus:* The true doctor must know more than of melancholy and cholera; with them the patient is not served. We thank God, are better acquainted with man, and with what constitutes his sickness and health. Therefore we may well laugh at Erastus, Bernhardus Dessenius, Croneburgius, Lucas Stengeleinus, and other pseudo-doctors like them. Did not Christian love, and the misery and need of the sick, so compel us, we had rather be silent than mention the true Medicine to such blind, stubborn persons.

*Alexander:* It is our duty to assist our neighbor where we can. Medicine, which, next to God, should be man's refuge in sickness, is despised in our time. The peasants, observing that doctors understand it not, prefer to die than to entrust to them their bodies. Be not afraid because some rail at the truth. Help those who seek it. Let the choleric and melancholic dogs bark; they cannot harm you. Not everyone may understand the truth, yet it must be taught, should but one in a thousand receive it. Therefore, for our old friendship's sake, I beg you to instruct me concerning the simples enumerated by Paracelsus in the chapter about Dropsy, what they are and where to be found. Also shew me how to get to the bottom of the matter, since Galenus knew the true cause of disease, and the Stars of Paracelsus are beyond me.

*Bernhardus:* Paracelsus prescribes three things for the cure of dropsy. The same cannot be explained in a few words. Natural Magic is extinct in our day, hence also its terms are not understood. I will tell you as much as necessary for this time. In order that the ignorance of doctors concerning the cause of dropsy may be plainly shown, let us examine the cure set up by Erastus in vol. iv of his Disputation against Paracelsus! You will then perceive the hideous labyrinth of doctors, and what a coarse fellow Erastus is, wholly ignorant of man's creation and composition. Therefore, say on about what you would know; this afternoon I will devote to our colloquies; tomorrow I have other things to do. What says Paracelsus concerning the cure of dropsy?

*Alexander:* He divides the same into Diagnosis, Purgation, and Strengthening. The disease is to be resolved into water, without which it cannot be cured. But how shall the medicine resolve into water a disease consisting of water? I have myself seen more than a pailful of water taken from a dropsical patient. If the disease be water, what is to be digested?

*Bernhardus:* The water can and ought not to be digested, but that which is not yet water, and which clings to the nutriment of the blood. That is the excrement of food, called Tartar by Paracelsus. This Tartar is the disease to be resolved by digestion.

*Alexander:* How does this resolution take place?

*Bernhardus:* Through digestion.

*Alexander:* What is digestion?

*Bernhardus:* It is a medicinal power, separating Tartar from Nutriment, bad from good, disease from health. In this separation Tartar --- which is a mucilage or viscous matter --- melts into water. For Tartar in its first matter is nothing but water.

*Alexander:* In what form does this medical force act?

*Bernhardus:* Its action is like the Sun. Thus, Medicine is a Sun, and is called the Earthly Sun, or Sun of the Lower Firmament. That Tartar melts into water is well known to all experts in Natural Medicine, but when melted in water it still remains Tartar, even as salt cast into water remains salt. Hence as Astrum (Star) must be there

*Alexander:* What is an Astrum?

*Bernhardus:* That you will learn when we speak of medicines to be taken from the excrement.

*Alexander:* I understand that the Tartaric Phlegm is the matter of disease, and that this phlegm is an excrement of food. Does this matter proceed alone from food?

*Bernhardus:* No; also from the air, poisoned by the vapours of the Earth, Water, or Firmament, which in us becomes a Tartar.

*Alexander:* Does Tartar come from every, or from one particular, food?

*Bernhardus:* Herein lies not a little philosophy. The Humorists are not worthy to learn it. However, I will discover to you somewhat of this secret. The Tartar of Dropsy is the excrement of various foods, as bread, fruit, and all kinds of roots and herbs. This Tartar is, in its essence, cold.

*Alexander:* How should his Tartar be cold when we in preparing it see that it is nothing but water, and sharper, more burning, than salt?

*Bernhardus:* Every essence is water, and externally hot from the resolution of the elemental body; therefore this Tartar is cold fire. Now, these Tartars which come into us through meat and drink are divided into four genera. One kind is in the fruits of the earth; another in the food obtained from water, such as fish, etc. The third is in the flesh of animals and birds. The fourth is from the firmament. Each kind has its place in the body which it possesses. Had philosophers rightly apprehended these excrements, Melancholy and Cholera had never been imported into Medicine. They were good, lazy fathers, judging things by external. It is not written on everyone's forehead what in him is. Virtue must be sown ex radice centri, not by its superficies.

*Alexander:* Can one detect the kind of Tartar present in the patient, or must it be assumed?

*Bernhardus:* In Medicine what cannot be understood should not be assumed, for Medicine is subject to its works, as Theology is to Faith, which, however, must be confirmed by works.

*Alexander:* Where does one find the Tartar of Disease? Is it found in Urine?

*Bernhardus:* It is present in urine, but is imperceptible.

*Alexander:* Why?

*Bernhardus:* Urine there is not Tartar alone, but many other things in which Tartar is hidden.

*Alexander:* How is it detected in Urine?

*Bernhardus:* The art of separation distinguishes the parts from one another, viz., Fumus Salis (Smoke of Salt), called gore by Paracelsus; water from food; superfluous salt; Sulphur; finally we find Tartar in its four kinds. He who can distinguish them perceives of what kind the Tartarus Morbi is.

*Alexander:* I have never heard of this separation, nor do I know how it is done, but I admit that this art is most necessary to a physician.

*Bernhardus:* He who is unacquainted therewith will remain a Melancholic or Choleric doctor, for he cannot thoroughly understand the matter of the disease, and therefore it is impossible for him to know wherewith the “fabricator of diseases” plagues us, breaking the machine of the Lesser World (human body) and driving out life. Now, no one can deny that Galenus, Avicenna, and all other doctors writing before Paracelsus, knew nothing of this Tartar, and a clever physician of Heidelberg would be equally ignorant. It is a great impertinence to belittle a thing one does not understand. It is just as of a cobbler wished to teach a tailor his trade. I tell you that he who can find and judge this Tartar in Urine is more worthy in Medicine than if the four volumes written by Erastus against Paracelsus had wiped his posterior extremities. I mention not other secrets far greater than this.

*Alexander:* You said just now that each genus of Tartar possesses a particular portion of the human body. In what part is the Tartar we are now speaking about?

*Bernhardus:* In the part subject to Venus and Mars.

*Alexander:* What and whence is this philosophy? I have never yet heard of this phantasy.

*Bernhardus:* I believe you. Had you attended the School of Physic as long as that of Sophistry, you would not call it phantasy.

*Alexander:* How shall I understand this?

*Bernhardus:* Those are the places within us in which the spirits of the kidneys, mother, and gall rejoice and exult.

*Alexander:* The astronomers say dropsy comes from Saturn. What did you say about Venus and Mars?

*Bernhardus:* Although some astronomers subject dropsy to Mars, yet Saturn is the cause of disease when we come to the cause. I speak here not of the cause, but place.

*Alexander:* What is the place (locus)?



*Bernhardus:* Open your eyes and search in Astronomy, and you will find it --- also from the following description ---

*Alexander:* Before proceeding to the means of cure, tell me, are there other excrements in food and drink besides Tartar?

*Bernhardus:* Food and drink have three excrements, viz., (1) Water, (2) Salt or Tartar, (3) Sulphur.

*Alexander:* I understand the water. But what are Salt and Sulphur?

*Bernhardus:* Salt is the earth found in every creature. Sulphur is a solid, burning when cast into fire, and is the fire in wood, in fishes, in stones, in metals.

*Alexander:* According to Paracelsus, there is in a body not more than three substances, Mercury, Sulphur, and Salt. You say they are excrements. If there are but these three in food, what then is excrement?

*Bernhardus:* Now you ask me not a little thing. Rather tell me from Galenus what nutriment is.

*Alexander:* What should it be but the most subtle and purest (essence) in food, which “is assimilated to the body”, as Galenus says.

*Bernhardus:* A peasant, not a doctor, might put it so.

*Alexander:* One must speak according to one’s understanding.

*Bernhardus:* Behold, is it not lamentable that all the lot of you know not what becomes flesh and blood in us? Why speak you of diseases and their origin, not knowing the least thing in Physics? All your writing and chatter is nought but a plausible deceit; how long have you befooled us! Think you, the world will always remain blind? O excellent man, that have not yet learnt the alphabet of Medicine, not to speak of anything more! Shame on you for opening your reviling mouths against the beloved man through who God has restored to us the Science of Medicine! What would you say to a cobbler boasting that he could make the best shoes and never having seen the leather they are made of? Would you not rebuke him? What shall be said of you, writing great books and chattering in your lecture-rooms? It is easy to preach about colours to the blind. You have never seen Medicine, and know not whether it be black or blue. I speak here of the Science of Medicine, not of local remedies --- called by you specifics --- that is, of things good for stomach, liver, etc., etc., aperients and so forth. These are not the things that dignify the physician, and whence he has his name. But you have set your specifics in the place of Medicine, and adulterated them by your own compositions. Is it not true that the Sisters of Ulm restore more sick persons with their specifics, than you by your method?

*Alexander:* I know Princes of the Empire who have been treated and cured by Galenian doctors.

*Bernhardus:* They use Simples as given by God. What the doctor and apothecary concoct often does more harm than good. But one dare not say so for fear of being called an idiot. Both are most honourable gentlemen who would fain blind these that see. Yet their wise Worships know not what is the nutriment in bread and wine. But, not knowing this, you also know not what are excrements, and what is the matter of many diseases. You see there must be something, you know no what, and therefore it must be Cholera, Melancholy, Phlegm, or Blood. Were you skilled in Physics, you would therein find --- not Cholera and Melancholy --- but excrements, comprised by Paracelsus under the name of Tartar. But, being ignorant of Tartar, you know not on what the Medicine must act, nor what that is which separates Tartar from Nutriment. Hence, as you will hear, the Resolution of Tartar is a mystery. I have thus described Tartar, what it is, into how many kinds divided --- to which certainly dropsy belongs -- that you may understand Paracelsus's saying: Dropsy arises not from the element Water, but from the Earth.

*Alexander:* I have often wondered at that saying since the disease is dropsy. Now, I see that Tartar --- the disease in man --- proceeds from the products of the earth used as food by him. But I should have thought that our nature would remove the excrements and feces.

*Bernhardus:* That it does when well, but when infected, or impeded by outward accident, it cannot perform its office, and the excrements remain in the chyle. Hence in stomach and liver proceed stomach and liver complaints, in the kidneys diabetes, calculus, putrefactions, in the joints Podagra, Arthetica, etc.

*Alexander:* Is everything we eat and drink mingled with these excrements, i.e., Tartar?

*Bernhardus:* Everything. God has so ordered it that no food is free from this poison.

*Alexander:* Can the excrements be separated from food outside of man's body?

*Bernhardus:* The grossest can be separated, viz., those falling out of the stomach into the intestines --- not the others. Hence also the juice of herbs should be extracted, the rest thrown away. Look at rectified spirits, how subtle they are, yet in them is still the Tartar which Nature alone separates. This Tartar, by reason of its subtlety, is most similar to Tartar of the Firmament, a strong kind, whence arise plague, pleurisy, and various fevers.

*Alexander:* Is the water in dropsical patients resolved Tartar?

*Bernhardus:* In a patient who has been tapped, and in whom the water reappears not, in that water is resolved. But where the water reappears in the patient, the Tartar remains in him.

*Alexander:* But what is the water?

*Bernhardus:* Our blood and flesh, and the nutriment of the food, together with its liquid excrement.

*Alexander:* How are these changed into water?

*Bernhardus:* Through water. Thus, in Tartar is (1) its own Elemental Water, (2), Astral Water which is the cause of disease. These two waters unite in Tartar, like male and female semen, producing a poison fatal to our flesh and blood.

*Alexander:* How is this fatal result produced?

*Bernhardus:* The Salt in flesh and blood being the medium of the other two, when the former is in health flesh and blood remain whole; on the separation of salt destruction begins. The same can be converted into all kinds of salts. According to the transmutation of the disease. Thus, in dropsy, the microcosmic salt is melted, by the above poisons, to water; now flesh and blood lose their being, and are changed into water, their primary matter. The Nutriment (which is not yet blood) is not water, but a viscous liquor, a medium between primary and final matter, i.e., between water and blood, or flesh, or whatever else was to become of the Nutriment. This medium is also resolved into water.

*Alexander:* How comes it that Nature resolves some Tartars, driving them out with the water, and others not?

*Bernhardus:* In the Tartar resolvable by Nature, the elemental poison alone does the mischief. This your laxatives and herbs may expel. Hence you may cure such dropsy. But when the elemental poison is united to the firmamental, then Nature's laxatives have no power, and --- the water reappearing after tapping --- you call the disease incurable. Hence it is evident that you understand not medicine and the causes of diseases.

*Alexander:* I have seen some dropsical patients cured, and also many die. Now, I understand that elemental diseases are cured with elemental Medicines. But firmamental ones alone with firmamental remedies, of which we Galenists know nothing. I understand also what Paracelsus calls elemental disease. I would know something more concerning Tartar before we come to the Medicine for Tartar.

*Bernhardus:* How can I treat of all the mysteries of Tartar in a single disease? Tartar is a wonderful creation of God's --- in it is the mother of all creatures. The upper Heaven procreates from it wondrous things on earth, and the Astra Microcosmi (stars of the lesser world, i.e., human body), many diseases, of which I will now say nothing. Would that physicians knew Tartar --- not only its transmutations in food and drink --- but also what God has created from it in Nature! They would then behold great wonders, daily before our eyes but not recognized. Hence many despise Paracelsus's writings through ignorance, not knowing Tartar more than the peasant who says Tartar is the crust in wine barrels. The time has come when this, and other, blindness must be exposed, to the praise of God and weal of the sick.

*Alexander:* In the future I will pay more attention to Tartar and its diseases. Tell me, now, how is it resolved and expelled?

*Bernhardus:* Paracelsus names two Medicines, an external and an internal one. The former is to digest, mature, and resolve the disease, expelling the inward, viscous Tartar.

*Alexander:* He says the Medicines to expel Tartar are dung, and come from dung, as: Columbinum and Gallinaceum; what these things are I know not, e.g., Rebis!

*Bernhardus:* The learned are wont, when treating of Nature's secrets, to wrap up the truth in other matter. Here he gives the Medicine its right name, i.e., Rebis, adding Columbinum and Gallinaceum to mislead his enemies.

*Alexander:* I doubt whether external poultices are able to resolve Tartar, which lies so deep in the body.

*Bernhardus:* Poultices, liniments, etc., are not to be rejected; although they resolve not the Tartar, they promote the action of the medicine.

*Alexander:* Must Rebis be applied externally, like Gallinaceum and Colubinum?

*Bernhardus:* Know that man is divided into inner and outer man. Each has its Medicine, and, since the outer man is but dust and ashes, and of a like nature is the Materia Morbi which plagues us, so also must the Medicine consist of things similar to these --- called by Paracelsus stercora (filth). Not that the Medicine is filth, but it arises in filth, as the inner in the outer man; and, even as death divides the inner and outer man, so does art separate Medicine from filth.

*Alexander:* What is this dung from which the Medicine to cure Tartar is taken?

*Bernhardus:* You may learn this from Paracelsus who says: External and Internal Medicine are similar; both have a head; one helps the other. From these words it follows that Columbinum and Gallinaceum are not the external Medicine, for, how are they similar to Mercury? And how have they a head?

*Alexander:* I don't know what he calls Mercury. Mercury is commonly called Quicksilver.

*Bernhardus:* Mercury is a general term; it exists in all creatures, and is water.

*Alexander:* Here he means metallic Mercury.

*Bernhardus:* Not at all, although it may appear so. That is not our Mercury which is found in Quicksilver and all other metals. The matter (primary) of Quicksilver and metals is water --- frozen water, like crystal. Thus, also, there is water in metals. A mineral, sulphureous, igneous Spirit pervades this water and transmutes it into a metal. Chemists call it a generating spirit, and say: Dry water and the generating spirit are Nature's principles.

*Alexander:* I see I must have a better knowledge of metals to thoroughly understand this Mercury.

*Bernhardus:* Many, both Ancients and Moderns, have written about the metals. Read them.

*Alexander:* I have read them long ago. They differ. I fancy they have had but little experience. By reading and speculation Truth cannot be attained. Seeing and handling is necessary. You have seen and experienced a resolution of metals. Hence you can inform me correctly. Seeing is Believing! As the Proverb says: The ocular witness of one is better than the hearsay evidence of ten.

*Bernhardus:* I admit you cannot discover the truth about Tartar without knowing what Mercury is. But what shall I tell you about secrets which are said to be unfathomable?

*Alexander:* Let a thing be hidden ever so long, it must come to light at last.

*Bernhardus:* It is said: Time brings Roses. Time also reveals nature's secrets. Time has given me knowledge which I will here impart to you. Basel, Cologne, Denmark, Silesia, and where else the great Paracelsian doctors dwell, wish to reveal nothing before the time. I like not these long prefaces. They affirm that our Autumn is not yet come, and therefore are our fruits sour. That is not bringing Paracelsian Medicine to light.

*Alexander:* I have heard many learned men say the same.

*Bernhardus:* Wherefore much talk and no instruction. Who would guess we had tasted a drop of Paracelsian Truth?

*Alexander:* I should think more highly of it, were the students first taught the right foundation on which Occult Medicine stands. But one chatters of Antimony, another of Gold, Pearls, Coral, etc. I know Antimony is a strong emetic and purgative, as also Hellebore. I know that Pearls comfort, as also Melissa, Crocus, etc. Here in dropsy Mercury cures, but so also does Coloquint. Although I am acquainted with this, yet my knowledge is no knowledge, since I am ignorant of the basis and cause. Hence those who are instructed should lecture and write concerning the foundation, that young doctors might understand Paracelsus' books. If that be not done, the Paracelsian tree, which began to flourish Anno '58, will bear no fruit for many years.

*Bernhardus:* You are right. Our opponents believe us to have no other foundation than what we know concerning the three principles, S., Sulphur, and Salt. But these learned gentlemen are so misled by their envy and hatred, that they judge of unknown matters as a blind man of colours. The lost art of Medicine --- recovered by Paracelsus --- had an externally sure foundation, against which the gates of Hell cannot prevail, let alone the trashy books which Erastus, with his blind, stubborn adherents, has vomited forth against God and the truth. The true principles will remain as we teach them, but it is untrue to say that they are our foundation. I well know this house stands on the earth, and the earth is its foundation. But what the earth stands on, and what its foundation is, every peasant does not know, also not Dr Fortyle at Heidelberg, although he be a good Dialectician and Rhetorician, and well read in Aristotle. He who is acquainted with the basis of our three principles, knows our foundation, not Galenus and his spawn, Erastus. Be not surprised that many followers of Paracelsus are ignorant of this foundation. Remember rather the text: "Many are called but few chosen". Medicine comes not from seeing and hearing, or much reading, but from God, through inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is in God, and comes from Him. From Him we should speak and write, not from ink and paper, as many of our followers do.

*Alexander:* I have read in Paracelsus that many would adopt his practice, did he not beg them not to attempt this until after long experience.

*Bernhardus:* We wish to fly before the time, hence we must drown with Cato in the deep sea. What think you, who shall explain the mysteries of Paracelsus? Truly we consider ourselves great philosophers, and yet our knowledge is nothing but vanity. Hence the proverb: The world is ruled by opinions. The present time is not ripe for the knowledge of these mysteries, for it has never tasted rest. When the time comes --- before the Day of Judgment --- in which the secrets of all hearts are laid bare, at that time, says Paracelsus: I order my writings to be judged.

*Alexander:* I understand not this passage concerning rest. Be that as it may, I know neither doctor nor master is born so. All must be learnt. In this is labour and trouble until one has understood what one would learn. Then one has rest from learning.

*Bernhardus:* Happy is he who is at rest. He has conquered all labour and trouble. E now lives in knowledge; therein his heart abides, which in time was troubled and bound fast in woes. The physician must be at rest who expound Paracelsian to youth. Whether the doctor is at rest who spends much time in preparing Vitriol and Tartar, I leave to the judgment of every learned man. Our aim should be a very different one. Hence you must not take my speaking of these things in a manner beyond your comprehension amiss. What I know of these secrets I have acquired with great pains and labour.

*Alexander:* I would have instruction from your experience, not from this or that author. When we were young comrades in Italy you would be subject to no sect, but you said with Horace: "A stranger I, whithersoever the winds may bear me; No lord claims my allegiance". Hence I would listen to your views, not those of Galenus or of any other contained in Books and Writings.

*Bernhardus:* It would not be easy to do without books, but what is contained and hidden in books can only be expounded by those who have penetrated into the hidden meaning and spirit of the same. We all know that our Christian New Testament has been written by men full of the Holy Ghost. But when men, possessing little of the Holy Spirit and much of their own, approach these mysteries, what harm and trouble they cause in the world! Thus also must happen, in our Faculty, to those who --- knowing how to prepare Oil of Mercury or Vitriol, etc. --- would meddle with the medicine of Paracelsus. Hence I would beg every reasonable man not to attempt to discover the mysteries of Medicine with such vain and mechanical work, but to reflect on the names of the mysteries, what Oil of Mercury, Juice of Coral, Resin of Gold, really mean, for they must not be taken literally. Behold the disciples of Galenus, how many thousand books they have made out of a single one of his! Were we to do so, the literature of Paracelsus would soon grow up.

*Alexander:* I believe Galenus is easier to understand than Paracelsus; hence easier to write about.

*Bernhardus:* What he says concerning the properties of Simples is plain. Also his phantasies concerning these properties are not hard to grasp. But it is different with the Books of Paracelsus. He writes concerning Nature's Secrets and God's Wondrous

Works. Everyone cannot understand, nor write about, these. They must, indeed, be simpletons who imagine that Tartarus Auri is gold, Mercurius precipitatus quicksilver, etc. They give it to patients, saying they have it from Paracelsus, an excellent physician. O, you simpletons! These are secrets only to be understood by those who have received understanding from above. Hence no one will do much with Tincture of Mercury, Potable Gold, etc., until he has discovered their real signification. Since you also regard Science more for use and profit than for her own sake, think not that God will grant your wish! Therefore, I again beg of those called to these things to leave details and seek the foundation. They will thus gain a knowledge of the mysteries requisite for expounding the Books of Paracelsus, which should not continue in darkness, but be explained by us. I will be the first to tread this path, and, in the due measure that He shall grant me knowledge, so shall I interpret the same.

*Alexander:* A Parisian doctor, L.G. (calling himself Leo Suavius), has written a treatise on the Book De Vita Longa. How like you his interpretation of Paracelsus' terms? He finds no difficulty in common names like Mercury, Vitriol, etc.; hence, I suspect, he has not yet discovered the secrets of Medicine.

*Bernhardus:* This good Leo Suavius has wished to communicate to others his opinion, derived from a study of Paracelsus, for them to accept or reject according to their own private judgment. He has made the first attempt to expound the magic words in Paracelsus. For this he is to be praised, but no one is bound by his opinion. As regards Medical Simples, perhaps he has never tried them, and believes the same to possess the virtues described by Paracelsus.

*Alexander:* I used to think in this way. Now I find it is different. Mercury puzzled me much before I found out that a secret was contained in the name. Some days ago I read in a Treatise (by Castner, of Hamburg) that Mercury is an Arcanum the like of which the world cannot shew. Hence I would fain know what it is.

*Bernhardus:* To come to the point! Listen to what I am about to say! You are a Chemist, and skilled in experimental work. Hence you will easily understand me. Had you been an armchair doctor, my speech would sound strange in your ears. Therefore will I here speak to you and your like, yet, not otherwise or father than is meet, and God's Word permits. What says Paracelsus of Mercury in that Chapter?

*Alexander:* That it is the internal Medicine, having power to expel the resolved Salt. It is to be separated from its ore when dead, for when dead it is mercury, when living Quicksilver.

*Bernhardus:* How understand you this preparation?

*Alexander:* Mercury --- i.e., Quicksilver, is to be extracted from its ore, and a precipitate made from it with Hydrochloric Acid.

*Bernhardus:* What is the ore of Mercury?

*Alexander:* Red mineral earth. Some call it Cinnabar; some say it is the Minium of the Ancients.

*Bernhardus:* When Mercury is extracted from this ore, is it dead or living?

*Alexander:* Living.

*Bernhardus:* Is it living in the ore, or is it made living by melting?

*Alexander:* Water makes it not alive, hence it is so created in the ore.

*Bernhardus:* Behold paracelsus speaks not of such Mercury, but of that which in its ore is dead. Extraction from the ore neither kills it nor makes it alive. Hence it must be wither dead or living in the ore. The Mercury we mean must be dead, not living. Is not Erastus ashamed to accuse Paracelsus of purging dropsy with Hydrargyrum (Mercury), since Paracelsus publicly says it is the dead Mercury; speaking not of Hydrargyrum, i.e., Quicksilver --- as Erastus lies --- but of Mercury, which is no Hydrargyrum?

*Alexander:* Erastus, like others, thinks Mercury is Quicksilver.

*Bernhardus:* Erastus, who sets up for a learned man, ought to understand this matter better than common people, ignorant of letters and science. For those who wander about, boasting of great arts, and promising to enrich others, whilst they are themselves beggars, are commonly a low sort. One is a goldsmith, another a tailor, a third is a cobbler, or runaway monk, or student. Some know a little Latin, some none at all.

*Alexander:* Such artists have often caused me much loss.

*Bernhardus:* It serves you and all others right, who think to discover the great mysteries of God from such indifferent folk.

*Alexander:* Although they be unlearned, God often gives more grace to simple, common folk, than to the literate. It has often happened so. God's grace is not restricted. He is a Searcher of hearts, and according to them does He shew his mercy, not according to external appearances, which we men alone regard.

*Bernhardus:* I have never seen roast pigeons fly into anyone's mouth. When God gives understanding and grace in Magical mysteries, He also gives understanding in other Sciences belonging to magic. One finds not understanding with such people, let them therefore not boast of Grace! They poke about in Alchemistic books, saying Mercury is Quicksilver --- to be calcinated in Aquafortis, precipitate --- or boiled for four weeks with gold in a phial. Then it is an excellent medicine for all diseases, aurum vitae! Such a philosopher is Erastus (he did not get much from Paracelsus), who gave Oil of Vitriol to Excellent Councillor D. Alesius, thus sacrificing his life.

*Alexander:* He is a right learned man; the world has not his like; it is meet that he be spoken of respectfully; for he is a professor at Heidelberg, is well read in Zwinglis and Arrius. But what do I hear? Does he use Vitriol? I have never found any good in it. The Abbot of Fulda died of it. It ran through his penis into the bed and burned the sheets. I have also heard of a Queen who died shortly after it was given her by the physician.



*Bernhardus:* He has killed the good Alesius with it, and also others whose names I will not mention.

*Alexander:* Since he uses the Simples of Paracelsus, why is he so bitter, writing so many lies angst him?

*Bernhardus:* Paracelsus has no greater enemies than the Galenian doctors, who think that they have only to look at a book to know the contents thereof. But the learned asses reflect not that Paracelsus wrote in the Magic style. Hence their brain is so full of raillery that Magic knowledge cannot enter. Therefore they cry: "Magic is Sorcery! Beware, it is the devil's work!". Whereas Magic is no Sorcery, but the greatest wisdom in God's works, and a penetrating into Occult Nature. So Erastus has read much of Oil of Vitriol! He understands not more than a layman, who knows that Vitriol is Copperas. Forsooth, a fine doctor! With respect to Mercury, he pretends Paracelsus means Quicksilver thereby, although he must have read in "The Book Concerning the Disease of the Gall" how violently Paracelsus wrote against Mercury.

*Alexander:* I know all, and think not other than that Mercury is Quicksilver. But Paracelsus might have prepared it medicinally so as to neutralize the poison.

*Bernhardus:* He is publicly against it in the Book Concerning Consumption".

*Alexander:* Since Mercury is nothing but Quicksilver, why does he use the name?

*Bernhardus:* Why call a thing other than it is?

*Alexander:* We know that gold is killed Quicksilver, and Quicksilver living gold, but when speaking of gold, we call it gold and not Quicksilver. If Paracelsus did the same we should know what he meant.

*Bernhardus:* The Ancient Philosophers have named this matter Mercury; Paracelsus has retained the same, writing not for the common people but for philosophers.

*Alexander:* Who are the philosophers?

*Bernhardus:* Those who know Nature better than bookworms. A Philosopher, hearing the name of Mercury, knows what it is; but he who knows not, holding mercury of physicians to be Quicksilver, is a Sophist. Hence, Erastus is a Sophist, not having even learnt what Mercury is; but he is proud of knowing Greek, and that he can speak of Hydrargyrum. Paracelsus says in many places that Mercury is not Quicksilver. Erastus has doubtless seen this, but suppresses the fact in order to prejudice Paracelsus. Here the reasonable man perceives why Erastus and his like rage against Paracelsus. The devil seeks ways and means to preserve his Kingdom in this world. But, as the Apostle says, when perfection comes imperfection will be destroyed. This will also happen here when all sects shall be annihilated.

*Alexander:* Has Paracelsus not made Medicine from Quicksilver? What else is the Mercury of which he writes in this Chapter?

*Bernhardus:* Just the same of which he says that it lies in the ore and is separated from the same, dead.

*Alexander:* What is the ore?

*Bernhardus:* A mineral in which the Philosophers' Mercury has been created by God.

*Alexander:* I thought Philosophers' Mercury was artificial, and you say God has created it.

*Bernhardus:* God has created Mercury like other creatures. Art can do no more than extract and separate Mercury from its ore. Although God has created it, He has also created the physician who converts it into medicine. For as it is found it is rather a poison than a Medicine. Hence the physician should know the art of separating the poison from the medicine. Paracelsus here speaks of this separation, saying it is to be separated dead from its ore, for dead it is Mercury, but living Quicksilver.

*Alexander:* Quicksilver has also an ore from which it is extracted. Does Paracelsus mean this ore or another?

*Bernhardus:* In the ore of Quicksilver there is not the Sulphuric Spirit which kills Quicksilver; therefore he does not mean the same ore.

*Alexander:* Gold, Silver, Copper, Iron, Tin, Lead, all come from ores, each metal having its own ore in which Quicksilver is dead. Does he understand these ores to be the ores from which Mercury is to be extracted?

*Bernhardus:* No. For metal-yielding ores possess not the Mercurial Sulphuric Spirit, but that of their respective metals. Paracelsus speaks here of the Quicksilver of Mercury, i.e., of the Quicksilver by which Sulphur of Mercury is killed.

*Alexander:* I know no other Sulphur which kills Quicksilver but the Sulphur which is in the ore of metals.

*Bernhardus:* Hence you have paid but little attention to this passage in Paracelsus. Take and read the paragraph. What say you to it now?

*Alexander:* I had not looked for Mercury here; I have often read the passage, but skipped over it.

*Bernhardus:* Have you not read in Alchemistic books that there is a medium between Mercury of the metals and common Mercury?

*Alexander:* I have never seen it expressly stated that the medium Mercury is to be found in this ore.

*Bernhardus:* The reason for this is because there is in this ore much poison which, used by those ignorant of Alchemistic processes, might do serious harm to the sick. Hence it is not to be called by its name.

*Alexander:* I know many Alchemists who prepare this Medicine, but all differently. Some use it for physic, others wish to make Gold and Silver of it.

*Bernhardus:* There is a great art in its preparation. First, it must be separated pure from its ore, and then digested in its full strength. This digestion is known to very few of those even who can separate it from its ore. Before digestion it is crude Mercury, and the crudity is poison, of which beware. When first discovered the way of separating this Mercury from the ore, I thought nothing more was wanting, But, from experiments, I found it to be crude Mercury, and that I had not penetrated into its Arcanum.

*Alexander:* Although I have never attempted the separation from the ore, I see that this can be done. But how it is afterwards to be digested and brought to perfection I know not.

*Bernhardus:* This digestion is effected only by the Tincture of the Sun and Moon, which digests not this Mercury alone, but transmutes all other metals and expels their poison.

*Alexander:* These tinctures are beyond my comprehension --- much has been written concerning them, but methinks, by those who have never set eyes on them. I do not see how a physician in our time is to have these tinctures and perfect medicines therewith, seeing that few know more about them than about the Mercury of Paracelsus.

*Bernhardus:* The tinctures cannot be spoken of too highly, but they can be easily understood by those who rightly use their understanding. But we are lunatic Alchemists, as Paracelsus says, threshing empty straw. God has given the tincture to the physician to purify unclean things, to transmute them into gold, and to expel from men all diseases arising from the influences of the stars. Hence it purifies not alone metals but also our blood. For it is the very essence of our life and the Anatomy in the Greater World --- an eternal unquenchable fire --- ignis non urens, ignis coelestis --- fructifying all things, restoring the dead to life. I will inform you further of these tinctures when treating of the Sun mentioned in this chapter. Here you shall learn of the dead Mercury, which is to be digested by these tinctures after separation from the ore. The same is the medicine which administered in dropsy expels the resolved salt. The other two medicines, viz.: --- the Element Water and the Sun, shall be explained afterwards.

*Alexander:* Therefore this Mercury is to be our purge, expelling water in dropsy.

*Bernhardus:* Before the water overflows the heart. It is to be administered when the influence is greatest, i.e., when the dropsical stone is in its greatest virulence.

*Alexander:* But --- if I understand this passage aright, nor purgation, but digestion by external medicine must take place. I will ask you concerning the external medicine later on. Please inform me now more fully concerning the generation of Mercury.

*Bernhardus:* Much has been written concerning this generation (as usual in our time) by those knowing little about it. But occult things are not to be fathomed by

speculation, but by experience in the Art of Alchemy. Hence their writings are nothing but a misleading of youths who trust in them.

*Alexander:* I cannot sufficiently lament the labyrinth such books have led me into.

*Bernhardus:* Concerning the name Mercury, know that it is a matter of Gold, Silver, and of all the other metals. But the understanding of this is not according to the letter, especially not as regards our laxative Mercury. It is not a component of metals, but that which it was before its heaven --- i.e., Sulphur --- decocted and prepared it in its ore, the same is the substance and matter of all metals.

*Alexander:* The philosophers say all metals are formed from Quicksilver.

*Bernhardus:* That is false, for Quicksilver is a metal in gold as well as in silver, etc. But since it is living, it is not reckoned a metal in Adept Philosophy.

*Alexander:* Since Mercury is the matter of metals, as you have just said, what sort of thing is Mercury?

*Bernhardus:* Just the same as the substance out of which Quicksilver, Gold, Silver, Lead, Copper, etc., and our Medical Mercury, are made.

*Alexander:* Has this matter no name?

*Bernhardus:* The inventors of this Art have called it Mercury. Their successors, interpreting Magic literally --- have supposed Mercury to be nothing but Quicksilver, which is the opinion of all book sages to this day.

*Alexander:* This matter must doubtless be in minerals. Paracelsus says metals are formed from water --- is it water?

*Bernhardus:* All these things are of water. But water is the first matter --- and the most remote --- of metals.

*Alexander:* What is mediate, and immediate, matter?

*Bernhardus:* Although one should not speak more clearly concerning these things than is taught in Magical Books, yet --- since some of these books treating of this generation have doubtless been lost --- consider it necessary to explain this matter to preserve youth from false Alchemists. Therefore, listen.

*Alexander:* I have occupied myself much with alchemistic books, but have never found that they inform us concerning the origin of metals. I have therefore lately concluded that it is all trash.

*Bernhardus:* The same was my experience when trusting to books. But when I found it different in water, I let Aristotle, Albertus, and his like be, and followed after the truth, of which I thought more than all their books. You will also understand this secret by paying attention. The primary matter of Quicksilver and of all metals is, in the beginning, as an oil growing out of saltpeter in the hills. Now, all salts are nothing

but water mixed with a little earth, which earth gives the water a taste. For according to the kind of earth is the taste of salts. There is one kind of earth in common salt, another in saltpeter, another in vitriol another in alumina, etc. In dissolving salts these earths are found and become visible. The salt growing out of saltpetre is dry, melts not when thrown into water, but is like glass or crystal. Chemists call this Mercurial Salt. Albertus was of opinion that the white earth in alum was most nearly related to this Mercury. But that cannot be, for aluminous earth has the nature of salts, but Mercurial earth that of stones. Mercury is composed of two things, water and earth.

*Alexander:* You mean here common water?

*Bernhardus:* Nothing else. But the earth is not common earth; it is the subtlest and purest of elements. It has many names which are daily in our mouths. But none save the Magus knows its true name. I should like to explain to you somewhat of this mystery, but you are too deep in the letter which blinds your eyes. Yet at the time of the New Birth I will not forget you. Understand that this earth is the subject into which flow all the influences of the whole firmament, the powers, virtues, and action of all the stars, an eternal dwelling of all earthly spirits, bad, good, sweet and sour, black and white, not alone the subject of all metallic forms, but also of all mineral ones in all things created by God under the Moon's orb. Now, I will speak here of metals alone to the exclusion of other things.

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## Extracts from the Book of the Three Faculties

by

Alexander von Suchten

To come at once to the point, I will begin by saying that the nearer man was to the Creation of the World the greater was his desire for knowledge of Him who had created him, with heaven and Earth, and all that therein is.

This desire was so strong that it left him no peace until he had found what he sought. At that time there was neither Theology, nor Astronomy, nor Medicine. Man knew no more than he had heard from his father Adam, how he had been created by God and placed in Paradise, had sinned therein, and had been expelled therefrom into the trouble and misery of this world.

How, then, should man know his Creator? In Heaven God was far removed from mortal eyes. Man could not behold Him in flesh and yet live. What should he do to find his Creator? Whilst meditating thus he observed --- doubtless by Divine inspiration --- that the master can be recognized by His Masterpiece, in the great world and the little world (which is man) made out of the great world --- or rather taken from and separated from it. Thus, man acknowledged the Master in His works in that great world wherein he saw a small grain grow into a great tree. He reflected further that the world must once have been different from what it is now, and that the seed grain which grows into a tree must once have been something else than a grain. He could not understand these things with his human reason, but continued to seek, and invented many arts, among them "The Art of Water". For he beheld how everything was, by fire, destroyed and reduced to what it had been, i.e., to earth. He therefore thought of separating things by means of water, not to destroy them, but to see whether hidden properties might be revealed to him by this separation. Thus, after much pains, he at length discovered The Art of Separation. Then he wished to know how everything in the great world was put together, and so divided that world into three parts --- Animals, Vegetables, and Minerals, i.e., one part he gave to the animals; the second to things growing out of the earth; the third to things growing under the earth. Then he began diligently to investigate one class after another. Man he assumed to be the noblest and most intelligent creature of God. By further using his Art of Separation, and by comparing one thing with another, he found that the primary matter of man and the primary matter of the great world are one and the same thing.

But this primary matter of the world and of man is a Crystalline Water, of which the Holy Writ says: --- "Before God created Heaven and Earth, the Spirit of the Lord brooded over the Waters". Thus water became a primary matter of both. But where remains the Spirit of the Lord, which brooded over the waters, after the two worlds, i.e., heaven and earth, and man had been created from the same? I reply, in the primary matter of man and of the world. God, who is Perfection, has wished to dwell in man. But here the following question might be put: how did man know --- since the primary matter of man and of the world is a crystalline water --- how could man know whether the Spirit of the Lord had remained in this primary matter of the world, or of

man? I reply, he knew it by the Art of Water, for Water was his teacher. This teacher shewed him how the world dies, how the Spirit departs from it, how the body is without Spirit, and the Spirit without body. He saw how the Spirit returns to the body, and the body revives. He saw by the decay of the world that it did not become again what it had been before. Hence it became plain to him that God dwells not in that which passes away, but in that which is Eternal.

Thus far I have recorded (1) how God Almighty in the beginning created two things: the Great and the Small World; (2) How man was taken from the Great World and became a separate world; (3) How he discovered the Art of Water and learnt what was the primary matter of both Greater and Lesser World; (4) the qualities of each; (5) How the world is temporal --- man eternal.

Now I will speak of the things arising from the water --- i.e., primary matter, as well as how the first man discovered and divided them, taught them to his children, and described them.

But this I write from my experience, of which alone I make use, and of the Spirit given me by God. Did I write from Theology, Astronomy, or Medicine, I should have to employ their respective terms. But I am ere teaching according to the rules of no special art, but according to that Art which was before them all, and is the mother of them all, i.e., Magic, which in our time has gone into exile, and lies hidden, God knows where, but is quite unknown to men who, relying upon their understanding as upon the Holy Ghost, exalt themselves like Lucifer against heaven. But, banished from before God's face for our pride, we may one day confess that our human intellect is naught, that by the same we cause ourselves much trouble, irritating the Celestial forces, whence arise plagues and pestilence. When we pray God for light --- not by words but deeds --- He will again turn His face towards us, and, putting an end to our misery and unreason, will restore to us the Light of nature that it may shine in our understandings as the Sun in the Heavens, without which the Stars give no light. For our human light, i.e., reason, is by itself dark, and is illumed by this Sun, not by means of ink and paper, but by inspiration. By this Divine Sun alone can the magical Art be explained.

When man by experience had learnt that, as God out of water had made the Great World, i.e., heaven and earth, with all that therein is, and out of the Great World had made man in His own image, He found that in the small world, i.e., in man, Heaven and Earth and all things contained in the Great World had their counterparts. He also found that all bodies contained three palpable and visible substances: (1) Water; (2) Salt; (3) Sulphur. These three things comprise everything created by God --- neither more nor less.

When man learnt how, out of water, through corruption and generation, these three substances are born, he had not yet found his Creator, whose Spirit brooded over the water, as the Scriptures say. He therefore takes the three bodies, narrowly examines one after the other, reflects that God is a Spirit, invisible to human eyes, and that --- since He has created all things --- He must be a Living Power. Therefore man takes water, regards it, finds therein nothing but the four elements. Then again taking Sulphur, he finds also nothing therein but the four elements, that is, nothing stable. Lastly he takes Salt --- sees there is something more therein than in water and sulphur,

yea, he finds two things: (1) A water not different from the former; (2) A Sulphur differing from the former, i.e., a Sulphur which burns not. The third thing he found not, for it vanished from before his eyes. What should he do? It was gone. Where should he find it? He regarded the water, the sulphur, two fine, pure, white substances; but the third, which had lain among them and joined the two together, was departed, and it was the same he had been seeking.

Hence he became very sad, crying say and night unto the Lord, until he found what he sought. But who shall describe how it was found? Or what ears may listen to so great a mystery? Verily, in this is contained the Wisdom of all Celestial and Terrestrial things! Here is the same mystery as when, in the latter times, the Word was made Flesh, the chosen partakers of which see Heaven open with St Stephen, and the Son of Man sitting at God's right hand. And --- with St Paul --- they ascend into the Third Heaven. Hence it is permitted to none to reveal it. Through this mystery the Magi have known the Trinity, and the Incarnation of the Word, and have written concerning the same many centuries before the birth of Christ. But woe to the man who shall reveal this secret in any other way than it has already been revealed! Hence I am to be excused for being silent concerning this Arcanum, which God reserves for His beloved, and will in His mercy reveal to those honestly striving for the same.

To speak farther in respect of the third substance, wherein is the salt that is water and earth --- and of the Spirit of the Lord brooding over the waters: when the Almighty had thus enlightened Man, shewing him how God gives Himself into our hands and dwells in us --- in short, with Heaven and Earth, is in us and about us --- He thus shewed him the great love that He bears to man, that He is always bear to him, delivering him from all evil so soon as Man knows His name --- i.e., knows where He is and when and where to find Him. Yet is this not in phantasies and thoughts, not in books, but in Heaven --- i.e., in Man himself --- not in subtle speculations, but with diligence and labour, in the sweat of his brow. Who can measure the joy of man when he had obtained a knowledge of his Creator, or comprehend the Grace communicated to him by God through such knowledge; for what could he desire on earth that would thereby not be given him? He had for his bodily, human needs Medicine to restore his health. He had his daily bread, peace upon earth, and, after this life, Eternity. That was the fruit of the field he tilled in the sweat of his brow, that the reward of his Lord; for he served Him not by words, but deeds; not by speculation, but by his handiwork in the sweat of his brow. And as the service was, so the reward --- i.e., in works, not spiritually and phantastically --- as happens nowadays to many who, in armchairs and warm rooms, comfortable imagine remedies against diseases until they produce a phantastical recipe for their patient, which, however, does not help the sufferer. Thus does the Master of Lies recompense his followers. But the Master of Truth hates such chatter, and adorns his children with iracles. It is a great scandal that a sick man, created in God's image, should seek that help from the creature which the Creator alone can give. But, as we know Him, so does He help us.

Therefore Man was right to rejoice at having found his Saviour and Creator, who supplied all his wants. Therefore Man also helped his neighbor in his need, fed him when hungry, comforted him when dying. Therefore also he found ways and means to preserve this Divine knowledge for his descendants, and wrote three books:

In the First he treated of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.



In the Second of Heaven and its Stars.

In the Third of the powers of the things growing out of the earth.

These three subjects being:

(1) Theology, (2) Astronomy, (3) Medicine.

By means of Theology he teaches and describes the Middle Substance among the other three --- i.e., the Spirit of the Lord.

Astronomy treats of the Water, over which the Spirit of the Lord brooded.

By means of Medicine he describes the third substance --- i.e., Earth --- which, through the Spirit of the Lord, was joined to, and made one thing with, water. Thus also Astronomy and Medicine, through Theology, are united into one --- i.e., are three in one substance.

In order to communicate his knowledge aright he was obliged to arrange his subject into the above triadic divisions. For had he comprised everything in one Science, great confusion would have resulted.

These three books were revealed by him to his children and kinsmen.

Thus did the knowledge of Theology, Astronomy and Medicine grow. Each one studied what he was fit for according to his capacity. Now, these people were called Magi --- i.e., wise men --- who were of more account than others; hence, also, were they kings, princes, priests, and lords. These did great wonders among the people, curing the sick, restoring sight to the blind, cleansing the lepers, healing the dropsical, giving alms to the poor.

The other people, who were not Magi, considered them more as gods than as men.

Thus came Theology, Astronomy, and Medicine into the world.

The Spirit, by inspiration of which these Magi wrote, remained with them alone; the books got amongst the people. When now the common man saw the wonders described by the Magi, he --- having possession of these books --- thought himself already a Magus, and wished to accomplish the works of one, especially in Medicine. But when it came to acts he found difficulties, and his ignorance of the hidden sense caused him to interpret these books according to his own imagination.

For instance, when he read: "Scammony purges bile", or "Wal-lwort (dwarf-alder) cures dropsy", etc. --- he sought until he found some herb "rumbling through the belly", and, jumping to the conclusion that bile was thereby purged, the same herb was in future his Scammony of the magi. Again, on discovering a herb of some little use in dropsy, he set it down as the wall-wort of the magi. A herb of some effect in fevers was the Chamomile of the Magi, and so forth.

Thus were Commentaries on Medicine written, and there arose a Sect calling themselves physicians, multiplying as weeds are wont to do. When now the Magi died out (perhaps God would have it so), true Medicine also died out with them; and after their death there remained this Sect, who ignorantly arrogated to themselves a knowledge of the magical Books. They, however, were not kings, princes, priests, or lords --- they were beggars, who by their chatter sought money and goods and honours with the people. The greatest chatterer was accounted the best physician.

These also wrote many books concerning herbs and diseases. In the course of time the true volumes of Wisdom got lost --- what could be done with them? They were too hard to understand! Thus it happens that in our own time we have none of them.

In a similar way was Theology treated. Ignorant men intruded themselves into this Science also. Possessing the written words, they imagined they knew God, and farther study was unnecessary! So these were Mouth-and-Belly Theologians, making much noise among the people. But they healed no sick, restored not the lame and blind. It was not their province, but that of the physicians, to wit!

The same thing happened in Astronomy. They beheld the Moon, Sun, and Stars rise and set, and, having made these elementary observations, straightway considered themselves Astronomers. Imagining many spheres and circles, they wrote many imposing volumes about them. Who could contradict or expose them? The Magi were dead, and the world was filled with lies; and so it remains to this day. How could God punish the world more severely than by permitting these false teachers, who knew not the true origin of the three Faculties?

Thus came Theologians into the world. They have received their spiritual understanding, not from the Magi, not from the Light of Nature --- by the light of which we may know Him and His creatures, as the Magi found Him --- but from Theology, in which they have darkened the secrets of God to the utmost, so that the knowledge of God, i.e., the treasure of the whole world, might remain with them alone, when it should be the possession of all those whom God reveals Himself. Why then should he not also reveal Himself unto us? Are we no men as well as they? I reply, there is an impediment in our sloth. It is much easier to sit in church for an hour, listening to another, or at home to read one book after another, than with all the resources of body, mind, and estate, in the sweat of our brow, to seek diligently after the Living Spirit of God --- breathed by Him into the lump of earth when Adam was created --- which opens our eyes, revealing the secrets of Holy Writ, of Peter, of Paul, and of the Apostles. Thus may we become theologians, useful to the world, and able to help our neighbor in his need. Thus also may we receive from the Spirit of the Lord in us health and peace, may know the Sin of Man, and how His Flesh transmutes our flesh into His Flesh and Life Eternal. But, say the Theologians, we have read the Scriptures and theological works, we possess the plain truth --- what more would you have? And they testify as to their doctrine, and as to whom has made theologians of them, by stirring up one country against another, and by causing misery in the world.

They have found a sign in the Church, viz., that of water. Had they sufficient understanding to know the meaning of this symbol, they would also know what their Theology was worth. But to this hour not one of them understands the mystery, which, according to their opinion, is a Jewish or Heathen thing. Thus, also, have they

rejected many Magical and Apostolical observances. Had they inquired into the causes of these observances, they would have discovered them to be Magical books, which give us as deep an, or even deeper, insight into God's Mysteries than written books. Such Magical books have been in the Church from the beginning. They are not hidden away in boxes, but are open to everyone; and are to be found among Jews and Heathens, Turks and Tartars, but chiefly among Christians. They are there for rich and poor, learned and unlearned, crying out every day, and teaching us the way to truth. But who hears them? Have we not ears to hear their cries? Priests, monks, and nuns go about amongst us, and know themselves what they do. The Ark of the Testament is covered; they know as much as you. But never heed them; they speak but as they have been taught. Look rather up on High, reflect why we are here, consider what He knows Who has willed that we also should have knowledge, and you will receive Salvation from God. Inquire not after them what they do; they must do this for their daily bread. Let their chatter be. You have Moses and the Prophets, Christ and the Apostles; hear what they say. They speak not with the mouth alone, but with hands and feet, with fire and water, with silver and gold, with salt, with silk, with velvet, with stone, with black, with white, with red, with yellow, with wax, and with oil, etc. Hear not alone what the mouth says, what the salt says. They also speak, but another tongue. Learn this, and then Scribes and Pharisees will not be able to lead you astray, nor cause strife among you; yea, you will have peace in your conscience towards God and your neighbor.

But if you hearken not to what we say, holding their works and books as sacred, you will be led away from one Sect to another, and suffer damage and shame in your bodies, wife, children, land, and servants. Our enemies will consume you, and thus shall be your reward for the wisdom falsely imagined by from the letter of our books. Therefore, hearken to our words. Learn to read these books, in which are no allegories, no metaphors, no parables, but the naked Truth. We are able to expound the Old and the New Testament, Not this or that peasant who has just come from the plough. Thus is it written in the Book of Ecclesiastes: "Happy is he who knowest her voice" (the voice of Truth).

Medicine has also its Revelations, which have brought it to honour.

(1) The books written by the Magi themselves. (2) The Signs which they, for our benefit, have chosen and appointed. For, when in the beginning the three Faculties were described, to each were signs given by which it might be interpreted, and for this cause: that if the Books were lost --- as afterwards happened to the one Faculty of Medicine --- something should remain by which Truth might be learnt. Hence to each Faculty certain imperishable signs are appointed.

Of all the theological books, the two Testaments alone remain to us. There are also theological signs (that we might have other books in case the written ones were lost), such as: the mass, Hymns, etc., of which we have sufficiently treated above. The Medicinal books, written by the magi, are all lost. We have the signs alone. These are: all herbs and trees upon the earth. These signs are now our books, written by God Almighty alone, Who, in His boundless mercy, has communicated to us such books; not that these books are our health --- just as in Theology the Church Ordinances are not our salvation --- but that from them we should find health and salvation, by a right knowledge of the God Who ordained them. Many self-styled clever people, seeing

that masses, singing, and organ-playing, wax and oil, and salt cannot save us, have rejected them. Why do not the doctors of Medicine do likewise? They see that Elder, Saxifrage, etc., do not cure Stone and Podagra, as the books relate. Why do they not forbid the earth to bear such fruits, since they do not what is written concerning them? It is not thus. God has created the earth and adorned it with its fruit, just as God's Houses have, by God's learned people, been adorned, which ornaments also will doubtless remain. The earth will keep its flowers, although Podagra be not cured thereby. Thus, the herbs and flowers are not the medicines, but only signs to point Medicine out to us, just as the Sacraments point God out to us, not that they are God, but appointed by God's Word, even as the herbs in the field are created by the same. It is written: "Chelidonia (Swallow-wort) cures jaundice". A book-learned doctor taking Chelidonia fails to cure jaundice therewith. Whose fault is it? That of God's creatures, or of the Magi, or of the doctor disappointed of his fee? Verily, although with Chelidonia jaundice cannot be cured, yet its praise will doubtless remain in the books of Medicine. Not in those studied by armchair students, but in the books written by God Himself. These are the earth, with its herbs and flowers, given us by the magi to teach us the Science of Medicine when their books were lost (which has now occurred). Thus Chelidonia indicates to us the remedy for jaundice; not that it is the remedy, but a Medicinal Sign. Thus also with other plants. But we wish to hear nothing of magic, writing stately volumes, according to our thoughts, concerning herbs --- taking the Sign for the thing designated, and filling books with the virtues of this or that plant. We give large sums for such books, go to Bologna, Padua, hear much chatter about Medicine, but see no leper cleansed, no dropsy or podagra healed. We spend much money, and at last get a red (doctor's hat) for our pains. But in time of need, when a cure is to be effected, all such chatter is not worth an empty nut.

What shall we say concerning the third Book of Wisdom, Astronomy? We have its Magical Books, although cruelly mutilated and sophisticated. We have also its origins, viz., Sun, Moon, Stars, and the whole Firmament. But this Faculty has fared like the other two. We confound the thing designated with the sign, i.e., the Firmament and magical Books --- not having yet learnt that a nut has both shell and kernel. But the kernel is not the shell, nor the shell the kernel. The Sun, Moon, and Firmament are the Signs which every peasant can see, but the thing designated is understood alone by the divinely taught man. He knows that there is another and different Heaven, Firmament, Sun and Moon from that which thy red hat can teach us. He knows that the Theology of the old world foreshadows its Messiah. He knows that God created two worlds, two Heavens, two earths. He knows also that one world has its Theology, Astronomy and medicine, and that the Astronomy of the Greater World indicates the Sun and Moon of the lesser (i.e., man); so also the Medicine of the Greater indicates that of the lesser.

Thus the outward world represents and explains the inner one. The former is the sign, the latter the thing indicated. Therefore, also, church ceremonies, etc., are not my salvation, but God dwelling in me through Jesus Christ and Faith.

The Sun and Moon I see above me influence me neither for good nor bad, but the Sun and Moon and Planets, with which God's Providence has adorned the heaven in me, which also is the seat of the Almighty, these have the power to rule and reform me according to their course ordained by God.

Wall-wort and Elder growing in the earth of the Great World cannot expel dropsy, nor the Strawberry plant cure leprosy. But the Wall-wort, Elder, etc., growing in the earth in our little world, they do so. But of this earth with its fruits, if this Heaven and Stars, of God and our salvation, one hears naught at Paris, Bologna, Louvain, Wittemberg, etc.. They have never tasted the sweetness of this Kernel, but have spread the bitterness of the husks over the whole world. I therefore conclude, having described:

I. How the Spirit of the Lord brooded over the waters before God created Heaven and Earth.

II. How, out of the same water, God created the Greater World, i.e., Heaven and Earth.

III. How, out of the Greater World, He created the Small World (i.e., man), a small Heaven and small Earth.

IV. How God has set His Seat in Heaven, that is, in the Heaven in man.

V. I have shown that man, with his human understanding, could not comprehend God; but having sought his Saviour in the sweat of his brow, he at last found Him. That from Him he learnt all Nature's secrets, writing an account of the same in books, and explaining the same to his children. That, by the dying out of his race, the common man had obtained possession of these books, and, in his ignorance, had retained the husk instead of the kernel. That through this many Sects had arisen, which continue to this day, and doubtless will remain to the world's end.

Therefore, those who would be professors of Theology, Astronomy, or Medicine, should learn magic before going to Bologna or Paris; that is, the Art of finding the Lord in His creatures, the Fiat by which the world was created; that is, the Seed of Heaven and earth, the Breath of God, which, breathed into a dead lump of earth, made of the same a living man.

This Art knows all secrets in Heaven and earth, and can teach us to know God, to understand the Incarnation of Christ and all things in Theology. It shews us our Sun and Moon, Planets and Stars, as they rule in us, making peace and friendship with one another, according to the teaching of astronomy. The same also reveals to us the true Hermodactylus, cure for Podagra; the true Ebulus, healing dropsy; the Coloquint, expelling ague; the Crocus, strengthening the heart, etc. This Art is our Theologian, Astronomer, and Medicus, a right and true schoolmaster, crowning his disciples with miracles, standing by them in all needs; yea, leading them out of this life to Him out of Whose mouth it came into the world.

Did but Theologians learn the interpretation of the Scriptures from this Art, and not from themselves, there would be no Sects, but all would be united, even as the Apostles were united when taught by the Holy Spirit sent to them by Christ. Even the Apostles could not fully understand Christ --- although he was daily with them, personally teaching them, etc. --- before the coming of the Holy Ghost. We also cannot understand the Sacred Scriptures except by interpretation of the Holy Spirit.

Let us not dare to expound these Scriptures, unless Christ eats and drinks with us, that is, is personally with us as one man with another. Although we have books, let us not boast that we understand them. Why did not the Disciples understand? They heard the Doctrine of Christ from His own mouth, which, verily, is much more than reading it in books; had they understood the same, what need had they of the Holy Spirit? But it was impossible to them, and much more so to us. The Spirit of the Lord must first open our eyes and enlighten our understanding; then shall we know the One God, and have one Religion like the Apostles. What man learned in the Scriptures has ever discovered from the literal words that there are Arts by which Man may be made a partaker of that Spirit which moved upon the face of the waters and was breathed into Adam?

We know that St Paul --- when he, as a Pharisee, together with many other learned Jews, persecuted the Christians --- could in no wise be persuaded that Christ was made Man. But, having come to a knowledge of God through the Holy Spirit, he believed the same. We also know that St Paul communicated this mystery to the highly learned Areopagite Dionysius, who believed, and became a Christian and an Apostle of the Gauls.

It might be objected that, since the same concerns our Souls' Salvation, this mystery should have been plainly described. It is not necessary to put the food into the raven's mouth. Let him fly to it! Thus, also, was it not necessary to reveal this mystery otherwise than through the three Faculties. But why this was not necessary I shall tell you as little as those have told who have gone before me. I may have erred in communicating to you as much as I have. It has been done for your sake, because I see you are a Christian man, earnestly seeking the Truth. For what I have revealed to you is more than I would to others. Accept this as an indication of my mind towards you --- for you have not deserted my brother in his need. Therefore have I thought it my duty to communicate to you, before all others, what God (without any boast of mine) has given me. Also, do not think I have written for anyone's hurt; above all, not to injure the learned, to whom I would do all the good in my power. I have written for the simple Truth's sake, and for your benefit, and therefore beg of you to accept it with a single mind. Most cordially commending myself, etc., etc.

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# **An Explanation of the Natural Philosopher's Tincture, of Theophrastus Paracelsus**

**By**

**Alexander von Suchten**

Doctor of Philosophy and Medicine

The ancient teacher Hieronymus says that it was formerly ordained among the Jews that no one under the age of 30 years might read the first Chapter of Genesis. Be this true or not, it is certainly not the custom among the Jews at the present time. Yet it is undeniable that man by a right contemplation and understanding of this Chapter, may gain a knowledge of many Arcana and secrets of creation. Not to mention other things, this Chapter is especially suitable to our Chemical Art. Indeed, of all books concerning the Theory and Practice of the Philosopher's Stone, I know not of one which, from beginning to end, could more plainly and graphically describe our Art, than the Almighty Himself has done in that whole process of His great Creation. Since, however, Theophrastus diligently, and above all others, in his book, *Tinctura Physicorum*, followed in the way prescribed by God, and in the aforesaid book has sufficiently described both the matter and Practice --- or handiwork --- both of the Ancient Philosophers as well as of his own new corrected opinion, I will in this place substitute no other practice, but simply give a short Guide for better understanding of his book in order that beginners in this Art (I write not for the learned) may, by diligent study, and God's Grace, attain to, not alone an understanding of the above Theoretical Firmament, but also the necessary manual skill in this Art from beginning to end.

Theophrastus, in describing this our philosophical work and creation (which is nothing other than a small world, since in it appear the participation and similitude of all things), follows the same method as Moses in describing the creation of the Great World. For, before Moses treats of the matter, he enumerates the three principles which indistinctly lay therein, but which, by God, were distinctly developed from the same. So also does Theophrastus, for, before giving the matter of his work, he indicates that, although it is one thing, three things lie hidden in it. These must, by fire or water, be extracted, and again be united into one being and substance, according to Christ's saying: "He who knoweth not to extract many things from one thing, the same knoweth also not to make one out of many". Now, Theophrastus says: "The matter of the Tincture is One Thing that, by fire, has been extracted out of three". This is to be understood as the general consensus of all philosophers. What Theophrastus here affirms, Geber also substantiates. There is one Stone, one Medicine, to "which we neither add, nor take from it, anything".

Bernhardus says: "There is a single root from which the two Mercurial Substances and our whole work are extracted or made".

Morienus says: "The first and principal substance of this thing is one, and out of it is one thing".

Agadmon, in the Turba, testifies also: “Therefore dismiss all plurality, for Nature is content with one thing”, etc.

Hermes, a father of all philosophers, also says in his Tabula: “Even as all things have been born from one, by the mediation of One, so also all things have been born from this one thing, by adaptation”.

Hercules especially agrees with Theophrastus, saying: “This Magisterium proceeds from one root, which afterwards is expanded into several things, returning again to one”. (See *Pandor.*, fol. 8,706.).

From all of which the Truth and foundation of this Art is apparent, for Truth is where there appears no contradiction.

Therefore also can false Alchemists be easily detected in this one point alone.

And since God Almighty Himself has created the whole great World, all Celestial, Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral Natures from one single thing and primeval root, how should Man be wiser than God, and for this work --- which, not less than the Great Outer World, contains within itself the seed and qualities of all creatures --- use more than one thing.

For the said Art --- according to the testimony of Gerrariensis, Chap. 22 --- should imitate Nature. The matter of Art will be the matter of Nature and, since the matter of nature is unique, viz., the origin and matter of metals, therefore, also, the matter of Art will be unique. The Book of Genesis relates that this primary matter was of a moist nature, or water, for, when diligently reading the text, although the three principles are first enumerated, viz., Heaven, Earth, and the Spirit of God; yet there soon follows the matter out of which God created Heaven, viz., water, which God took and divided into two parts of pieces, as you will hear. Hermes, or Mercurius Trismegistus, although an Egyptian priest, without enlightenment from God, may yet have derived great wisdom from writings perhaps left behind by Moses after Exodus. Hermes names not alone the matter from which all elements are drawn, a moist nature, but alludes pointedly to the division. (*Pymander*, Chap. I.). This Word (Spirit), moving over humid nature, cherished it. But ardent and light fire straightway flew out from the bowels of humid nature; also light, air, obedient to the Spirit, took the middle place between fire and water. Earth and water lay mixed with each other, so that the face of the earth might nowhere appear, being drowned by the waters. Then these two were separated by the Spiritual Word”.

Also Plato: “Water is the principle of the universe. For, from water are all things produced, and into water all reduced”. Hermes calls water the principle of all things. Theophrastus is herein of the same opinion, except that he does not expressly call matter water or moist nature. But he says it is composed of three substances, calling them here an Eagle, a Lion, and a Golden Glitter.

In *Liber Metamorphoseos* he terms them: Mercury, Salt, and Sulphur. That is just the opinion of Hermes and other philosophers, speaking of Spirit, Body, and Soul. (See *Key of Chemical Philosophy*, by Dornaeus, fol. 411). How, now, these three can, by the artist, by means of Vulcan’s art, be extracted and freed from their prison, and



again be united, will follow later. Remember, for the present, that he calls the one thing, from which shall be born the great and also the little world, a Red Lion. Had he desired to indicate it more plainly, he would have called it a moist nature, or water. He does this to prevent the unworthy from sharing this secret with the worthy. Other philosophers have exercised the same caution. For it is written, "This stone is hidden both from men and from demons". But it is called a Lion on account of its great strength and power. For as a Lion is the strongest and fleetest animal, mastering the other animals, and therefore compared to a king of beasts --- so also, amongst things created, there will not easily be found a fleeter, stronger, more penetrating thing, subjugating, occupying, overcoming, and ruling, without exception, man and others.

Hermes confirms such swift strength, saying: "This matter is the strongest strength of all strength". This is also experienced by those who know this Lion, and by proper preparation have been instructed how to use it upon other creatures. Then one sees after what manner this thing occupies, conquers, destroys, kills all things, even changing them from one form into another, nothing being exempted from its rule or unterrified by its roars. Hence by philosophers it is named the Animated Thing. Hermes says: "Behold, it conquers every subtle, and penetrates every solid, substance!". For this reason Dionysius Zacharias calls it a Governor, and Bernhardus a King. For there is nothing that can bear so much rain, wind, work, heat, or cold, while it can be conquered or killed by nothing --- except it be by water --- as those know who have had such monsters in their keeping. Therefore it may be rightly named a strong Lion, by reason of the temperate conjunction of the Elements. For those Elements are separated and purified, and alternately married in a suitable manner, there being generated from them a Tempered Substance, which the Violence of Fire cannot separate, nor earth's corruption vitiate, nor the muddiness of Water condemn, nor the contact of Air cloud. In order that one should not imagine such Lion to be a strange, rare thing, he, Bernhardus says: "This Lion is named by many but known by few". And it is true that it is at the present day carried about by all sorts of men in their mouths, although few, yea, only those whose eyes God has opened to Nature's virtues and powers, can recognize and use it. Yet in its substance, nature, and matter it is so common, often-used a thing that Bernhardus says: "The whole world have it before their eyes". Morienus asserts it to be so universal that Man could not live without it. Verily, "I declare to thee", quoth he to King Calid, "that this Thing by Divine Will has been greatly used in Creation, and nothing made by God can exist without it". Every person knows this thing, and whoso knows it not, he knows nothing else. I should like to see a child of 7 or 8 who is not acquainted with it, and is without a hearty appetite and desire for it immediately he beholds it. This inclination proceeds from man's inner spirit, which well knows that all power to preserve health and long life are hidden in his one thing alone. And, in order that this substance be revealed and made known, he gives you another hint and sign whereby you yourself may recognize it, saying: "Such matter is the Greatest Pearl and Noblest Treasure upon Earth according to God's Revelation and man's desire". These words are literally copied from the Lesser Rosary, which says: "For God has under Heaven created no more precious thing, except the rational mind". Examine one after the other all creatures, you will find among them all no more precious, better, more lovely, or nobler creature created by God. An intelligent man can easily find bottom here by diligently observing the above explanations, together with the Sympathy and Disposition (Diathesis) of God's creation with respect to man's natural life. I will let the above instances and the guiding of Theophrastus suffice, and now refer you to our Author's

little Book, *De Viribus Spiritualium*, where he speaks of the Spirit of Life. There you will find that the Spiritus Vitae, or man's life, is itself a celestial, invisible vapour; it is the temperament between the Elements, and is included in the Stars and all Heaven's influences as far as the firmament stretches. Cornelius Agrippa, in Book I, "*Concerning Occult Philosophy*", and the Spirit of the World, teaches how and by what means such Spirit is attracted from the Stars into nether corporeal bodies by their Magnetic Force.

Richard, the Englishman, also teaches the same fully in his *Corrector. Alchy.*, Part V, Chap. 8 and 9: "When you have now found which most abundantly partakes of this Influx and Spirit of life from other, the same you may use for your work, and apply it by right means and preparation, using its Spirit for the strengthening, preservation, and augmentation of you own spirit. This is more than enough concerning the matter".

Now he comes to the preparation, and to the before-mentioned three principles, saying: "That this Lion, by Nature's aid and the artist's art, may be transmuted into the White Eagle, and thus, out of one, two are made".

Here the Author has wished to signify that, in this Art, man must follow the rule left him by God, the First Chemist. For, God having created all Creatures and Elements out of one thing, viz., Water, it follows that He began by making two things out of the original one thing. The first He has taken up on high, making of it a heavenly water; the other was gathered together below, and by coagulation became Earth. St Peter, II, Chap. 3, briefly mentions these three principles: "By the Word of God the Heavens were of old, and the Earth standing out of the Water and in the Water". Esdras, Book 4, the last chapter, says: "For God hands the Earth over the Waters by His Word".

Thus also in this work the Artist must divide his process into two parts:

(1) By distillation conduct one part on high, making of it a clear, heavenly Spiritual Water, here called a White Eagle. For, as no bird is so keen-sighted, or soars so high as the eagle, so also we know of no water so volatile, so penetrating, as this, for it ascends to the Heavens; and, as the Lion's father and son, penetrates his bone and marrow, as we shall presently shew. Our Eagle is the true key to human renovation, and the bath of new Birth and Rejuvenation, as saith the Psalmist: "Like the Eagle shall thou renew thy youth". It is a white transparent Water of heavenly colour, according to Alanus and Bernhardus, and hence is by many called Heaven (*Coelum*) by reason of its lofty qualities.

This Eagle is the first part of the water which ascends on high, the *Ascendens* of Hermes mentioned in his *Tabula*.

Esdras, Book 4, calls it: "The Spirit of the Firmament". Other philosophers term it Water, Spirit, or Soul of the World, the Middle Nature which is a quasi-body and quasi-not-soul, and quasi-soul and quasi-not body. It is the ligament and vinculum of all Elements --- also, the one universal, generative Nature, dispersed through all the parts of the world".

And, since it has its center in the Supreme Circle (as being very light), whence also it came in the First Universal Generation of things, so when freed it ascends towards

Heaven to its Centre. Above it has been called Humor Lunae, or the Humid Radical of all Creatures.

Compare Aurelius Augurellus, Book I, "*To the Lion*", 10.

For this (Anima Mundi) is diffused everywhere,

And everywhere is active;

In the winds of heaven, in the earth, and the bosom of the wide waters.

They enclose the Soul, by which all things of earth do live. Thence the world itself derives its life. But, since the Sol is trammelled by no body, and the world, and all parts thereof, are in material form; therefore, between these two the Spirit is the intermediary, which is neither body, nor Soul, sharing in both these natures.

Therefore in this live and increase Sea, Air, and Fire. This, embracing all things. Is always the Bird (Eagle), always the root, ever bringing forth and perpetuating life.

At length, imprisoned in yellow gold, itself seeks the hand of the artificer, who may loose its bonds, and, by its virtue, become powerful.

(2) The other part of the water --- or of our Lion --- according to the teaching of Moses, became corrupted and dry. That is now the second part of our Art, viz., the investigation of the substance of the Lion, when the aforesaid Eagle has been hatched out from his body, by warmth, as from an egg, and has flown away. To speak plainly concerning it, it is the dry, waste earth, and the cursed earth in Gen. V. It has its first name of Lion by reason of its aforesaid strength and sharpness. For, as a lion has sharp teeth, biting through that which he seizes, so also is this earth so sharp as to be unbearable on the tongue because of its penetrating nature. It cannot be touched without offence so the tongue, as saith the philosopher. Elsewhere Theophrastus calls it "An invisible, consuming fire".

Bernhardus retains its name of King, and says: "Although Fontin, the aforesaid Eagle, is the King's Mother, yet is the King nobler than Fontin". For, although he always retains the name of Lion, yet is he changed from his first nature, is no longer a virgin, but has been fructified by the Spirit brooding over the water --- his original first substance --- and has borne a heavenly, spiritual fruit, viz., the aforesaid Eagle. Hence these verses:

A virgin, not one day old,  
By Nature's decree espoused a man,  
And, before she had reached the age of one year,  
To this man a child she bore,  
Yet she died before she was born.

And in The Song of Solomon, Chap. VIII, "I raised thee up under the apple tree, there thy mother brought thee forth; there she brought thee forth that bare thee".

Hermes calls the inferior substance gross or descending. For, being heavy, it has, and seeks, its center in the lowest circle, as it were, subject to the superior heaven and its influx, or the Soul of Middle nature, or Mundane Spirit. Above it has been called by its right name of Solar and Natural Heat of all corporal and natural things.

Now, as to the third principle, viz., the Spirit brooding, etc. It is, according to Theophrastus the Glitter of Gold. For this Earth is but the real fine Gold, left imperfect by Nature, to be perfected by Art, as Ferrariensis says (Chap. 64): “The terrestrial parts are nothing else than the occult gold of philosophers”.

Other sages define it as “The Soul of the World, whose colour is golden”. Now, since in the first Universal Creation, the third principle, the Spirit of God, has never been separated from the other two, but the two have remained in one as the Spirit above, and in the water, so also is it in our microcosmic, particularistic, and philosophical Creation. We cannot obtain this third principle, this golden flitter, this beautiful gold-red colour, separate by itself. “It shines not to the Spagyus”, saith Theophrastus, i.e., it conceals itself and is lost when one is made into two. What, then, becomes of it? According to Gen. Chap. 1, and the opinion of philosophers, it remains with the aforesaid water, and since that water ascends towards heaven, this Golden Glitter must accompany it in its center. Theophrastus, however, considers that it remains with the earth, perhaps on account of the Old Testament saying that the Soul is in the Blood, wherefore the Israelites were forbidden to eat it.

Now, it should be noted this Golden Glitter, as the third principle, is often called the Soul, and cannot be produced other than as a red, thick, stagnant blood --- sometimes called the Lion’s Blood by our author --- and Theophrastus ascribes it to that body which, in the first distillation, goes not over out of the retort (crucible). For herein, say Alchemists, is the whole art, that the gold go out of the retort. And this is true did they but understand the Gold and its Glitter aright. How the glittering spiritual Soul of this third principle --- when duly extracted from the Lon’s body --- hovers above the water, and there yet remain two in one, you will hear afterwards. For the soul cannot exist, out of its center, as an impalpable, invisible entity without a body. “For a spirit is neither visible nor palpable, except it hath assumed a body from some Element. Hence this spirit --- by reason of its noble nature --- receives a Body in the highest and noblest Sphere of the Elements, viz., in the Igneous Sphere. Yet, in the fire, this spirit loses not its nature, neither is it Fire, nor of an igneous nature; although it dwells in Fire, and by many is called Fire of Nature”.

Aurelius Augurellus hath these words in his second book: “But another elicits these various hidden parts from pure Blood, and has ordained the Elements to lead them forth;

“That thus these occult spirits might perchance be seen or touched with the hands, or enclosed in a vessel.

“For otherwise they would straightway penetrate the vessel, although imprisoned in hard atrament.

“By violence can no Spirit be forced to remain in any part of the Vast Orb, so greatly does it rejoice to dwell quietly in its own habitation:.

Such external Body is the Lion, or dry earth, which retains its redness, its outward aspect, its stagnant blood, which has no exit, the body being not yet open --- as one sees in those hanged or suffocated, who stifle in their blood --- as the Book of the Trinity relates in Figures. Raymundus Lullius says briefly, in *Testamentum Novissimum*, thus: “My son, Quicksilver is water distilled from its earth, and similarly earth is Animated Quicksilver, while the Anima (Soul) is Natural Heat which is bound in the primary Essence of the Elements of Animated Mercury.

Now that this jewel has been presented to you through the Faculty of Philosophy, you have a short guide to the teaching of Theophrastus. Having taken the right philosophical matter, you are now to extract from it two things contained therein, viz., the Eagle (Mercury), and then the Body (the Salt), which, as Everlasting Balsam, contains also the third thing, the Spiritual Soul, the Golden Glitter, or true gold seed. These you shall extract according to the counsel given in Ovid by Medea to Old Jason, who would become young again, viz., that he --- by Anatomy --- should divide his limbs, and, reuniting them in a warm bath, he should become younger and of great strength.

But that you may apply the theory, and learn the modus operandi whereby from Unity, two things, and from two, three are obtained. Theophrastus comes to the Practice. “It is the mark of a wise man first to know the causes before putting his hand to the task”. Theophrastus shews you two ways --- one Ancient, the other discovered and used by himself --- saying the Ancients had a very long way “before accomplishing the aforesaid separations and achieving their object”. In the beginning they, out of a Simplex --- or also out of a Subjectivum like God Himself --- and also Theophrastus, have made two things, viz., Water and Earth”. And he continues to say: “that Artists have to these two Simplices given the name Lili --- afterwards using the said Simplices and not one”. But know it is indifferent whether you, in the beginning, use one or two things. If our matter is found in one thing, it will equally well be found in two (Nature having already converted the original One into Two). Such simplicity of the subject Ferrariensis describes well, Chapter 12: “The first radical Element, whence all the Elements derive their origin, is Humidity, or Water, i.e., liquefaction”. Or, according to others, it is the earth.

Shortly after he says: “For the Beginning of the World there is One Sole Element, which is Primary Matter, from the Division of which, by reason of opposing qualities, were generated the four Elements, which were in it potentially”.

Aurelius Augurellus, Book II, says:

“Besides within there is ordained a double force,  
Which always acts and suffers,  
As a female and male when together ---  
Even as a chicken grows in the shell,  
By the action of the one and the suffering of the other in turn,  
And by cherishing heat externally applied”.

If you begin with one thing you must first make two of it. But, by taking two, such as Earth and Water --- Nature having educed this Binary from one --- you are saved the trouble, and have only to generate the third, which, as aforesaid, is always hidden in

one of these two. Thus Lion's Blood is the Bride around whom they dance, viz., the natural red Sulphur or Seed of Gold, ordained by God and nature to bear its like. But, being mixed and bound up too much with earth and superfluities, it cannot perform its office, except it be freed by one of Vulcan's smiths from all bolts and bands of its natural prison. Therefore have both the Ancient Sages and Theophrastus taken great pains to liberate these Captive Souls from their Eternal Darkness by the Descent to Hell of our Heavenly Eagle --- according to Isaias: Those in darkness and the shadow of death see a great light. Thus have the Ancients united the two things, and, after a month's putrefaction, extracted the spirit, that is, the water, with gentle fire by distillation. For this water will not stand a great fire, and if vexed with the same it becomes impatient, angry, and wrath to such an extent that it "knocks all of a heap", as Bernhardus says, the residual matter they treated with strong water until the same went over as a dry spirit. Compare Solomon's Song, II. C.: "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?"

Now, this dry spirit is the substance or body of the Lion himself, the sharp earth, the old, miserly, jealous man, who breaks not willingly into the treasury, or likes to give up his golden-yellow oil, and only by force will let his palace be plundered. It is called a dry spirit by reason of the quantity of dominating fire therein, which is none other than the true philosophical Sulphur, as Bernhardus relates in the *Book Concerning the Transmutation of Metals*. But sulphur is none other than the pure action of Air and Fire, heating and digesting, or decocting, Earth and Water proportionately and homogeneously to themselves. Richardus, the Englishman, also says: "Philosophers' Sulphur is a simple, living Fire, vivifying and maturing, and nothing but a hot and dry vapour generated from the purest terrestrial dryness in which Fire rules in every way".

Now, since all the oil or spirit does not go over at once --- in order that none of this gold seed or potable gold as the Lion's greatest treasure might remain behind --- they moistened the corpus mortuum (residuum) with spirits and, after a month's putrefaction, again distilled over as at first, thus obtaining more of the oil. This moistening, putrefying, and distilling they repeated until the earth was wholly dissolved, and had given up its entire treasure, all the gold having distilled over and become a Mercury, i.e., Water, which has its coagulation or its sulphur in its depths, as Geber says: "Our Mercury has in its depths fixed Sulphur, and nothing sinks in it except Gold". Dionysius well describes this process in this Practice: "After the Governor of the Firetown (oven, furnace) had retreated, his remaining warriors had long fought the enemy with fire, until they escaped the said enemy by retreating over the water and bridges which they had thrown up behind themselves".

That is the same thing that Aeneas did with the tree bearing golden branches. As often as he broke a branch off two grew in its place. Those are the lovely golden-yellow drops falling from the beak of the retort into the receiving vessel, one dripping down after the other, until the Lion has lost his whole heart, blood and strength. For that is the true Lion of Judah, sent by God to deliver His Peoples from their enemies and sins, in pain and torture to shed His Blood for them. The wound in His Side, whence flowing two long streams of Blood and Water, shall be a Fount of Purification to all those drinking therefrom. In these shall such water become the spring of a long, healthy life.

Bernhardus goes on to relate that the Ancients --- having got so far that nothing further distilled over from the earth --- they again purified the water and oil, removing all remaining bonds, until they at length reached the Pure Fount, and the true, beautiful, golden leaves of the Golden Book. Here are our Adam and Eve naked, for their eyes are opened, and now they see themselves, what was good and bad in their own substance. This is the Rectification whereby they cleansed these two of the accidental impurities of the first Distillation (for the unclean Spirits guarding the treasure in the earth love not to leave the same). This is the first process of our Philosophical Birth, the Returning into the Mother's Womb, whereby the Rule of God is followed, and the first precepts of chemists are fulfilled, viz., the Reduction into Primary Matter, into the Three Natural Principles, i.e., Animated Spirit, Mercury, and Sulphureous Vapour of Earth. Thereby are separated the Elements and the Pure from the Impure, and, finally, the Seeds of Gold are brought from the Darkness to Light, which is nothing less than the Generation of Nature in the Generation of Metals, and The Process with Double Smoke of Paracelsus. But the above method entailed heavy expenses and much time and labour, all of which the Ancient Sages could have avoided, and obtained the Lion's treasure by a shorter cut, had they enquired into the matter as diligently as Theophrastus.

Now, I wot there is no one who would not wish to know this shorter method; and that you may not have to complain of Theophrastus, he shews you another short way, admonishing you also to let the above tedious process be, and to take from the Lion nought but his rosy blood, and from the Eagle the white gluten. These two bodies you must coagulate together and bring into one body, as it were male and female seed.

Now, someone might object thus. Dear Theophrastus, that is the old story which I have heard long ago. The Ancients took nothing more than the Lion's blood and water, and coagulated them. Yet you tell me the same is a brief way to obtain the aforesaid two Mercurial Substances, with little labour and in a short time.

Well, that is true so far. Theophrastus is not so clear here as he might be. But you may easily imagine what the mode of preparation must be if you have diligently studied Theophrastus's other books and preparations, and are otherwise experienced in Chemical labours. You will then find that Chemistry, in the preparation of all arcana (secrets), has two methods, viz., Distillation and Extraction. Whatsoever is to be prepared by Chemistry and brought into its Arcanum, its Tincture, or Quintessence (in which is the power and virtue of all creatures), or is to be cleansed from impeding impurities, that must be done by Distillation or Extraction (which is the same as Solution). There is no other means. As Bernhardus says: "The King never goes forth except the Fountain attract him".

Now, having already heard that he rejects the tedious process of much distillation and purification by reason of its expense, etc., you perceive that he must have used the only other means, viz., Extraction by Solution.

According to Calid, son of Jazichus: "Solution is the Extraction of the Interior of Things to their Superficies, so that the hidden become manifest". Hence his (Theo.'s) meaning is this: When you of one thing have made two --- or have taken two things differently constituted by Nature --- let the old process alone; take from the Lion his blood only --- i.e., cut out his heart with his own sharp spear --- or as Bernhardus

says: “Slay the King with his own sharp, poisonous Mercurial Water”. In plain words: Extract but from the earth its Tincture or Arcanum, and the blood, the sunshine, the dry spirit immediately all distills over. By such extraction or solution more will be done in a few hours than the Ancient Sages could effect in six months. By the above process the whole work may be completed in ten or twelve months, in which time the Ancients could barely achieve the first step --- i.e., Reduction into Primary Matter --- as all those know whom God has enlightened, and thought worthy you know this Solution and Extraction.

But misunderstand me not! I speak here, not of the second solution of the earth, but of the first solution of the crude body.

How this solution and extraction is effected it behooves not to tell here more plainly -- - as our author says --- not to put the food right into the bad birds’ beaks. As the saying is: He who would reach the open sea must first pass through the narrow straits. That is the blessed place of which Esdras writes (Bk. IV, Chap. 2): The path to it is narrow, so that but one man can walk on the same. On one side is Fire, on the other Water. He who would inherit or possess these good things must first undergo much trouble and danger until he finds the narrow footpath between Fire and Water, and pass over. Now, having revealed this to you indirectly as far as may be, I would refer you to other philosophers. Remember Geber’s rule: “That no Solution should be made, except in its own blood, and that calcined things are more soluble than non-calcined. For, by calcinations, they are reduced to the natures of Slats and Alums, which alone are soluble”. If you are a true searcher after knowledge, the above will tell you more than too much.

Compare Aurelius Augurell., Book 3: “First, taking thin plates and filings of pure gold,

“Thou shalt crush and pound them into the form of fine powder, or river sand, with frequent blows:

“Until, at length, they become liquid, dissolved by putrid humour from within themselves.

“It will be well here sometimes to pour in large quantities of liquor of their own seed, but by no chance anything foreign”.

This is also the aforesaid short process of Theophrastus, whereby you, in a short time, and with little trouble and expense, may find the two said things (of which one is the Father, or Sun, or Red Water, and the other the Mother, or Moon, or White Water) which are necessary for the perpetration of the miracle of the One Thing, and for which good counsel you owe Theophrastus many thanks. Thus, by God’s help, is effected the first step of this process, which is done by the hand through Sublimation and Purification. By this the fleshly, corporeal Adam is killed, and Body, Soul, and Spirit, by the natural death, are separated from one another.

**Second Operation: Conjunction ~**



Now follows the second operation, in which are brought about, by rest and without labour, the fixation and stability of those things which are sublimated and purified. This is the Resurrection from the Dead, in which Soul, Body, and Spirit, after Purification, come together again; and --- on our philosophical Last Day --- will arise as a new glorified body and a new spiritual man without blemish and sin. In this conjunction of Resurrection are comprised the whole spiritual body and the soul, and thus form One --- even as water mixed with water --- and are not separated in all Eternity. For in them is no diversity, yea, a Unity and Identity of all three substances, Spirit, Soul, and Body.

Even so it is plain concerning the Identity and Unity of the trinity in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which in the Deity are One and the Same, with distinction and diversity in substance.

The aforesaid process would have been no use to the Ancients, or to Theophrastus, had they not known how to bring to fruition, in its due season, the seed thus obtained. But, in order successfully to effect this, they had again to learn from Nature, and more especially from God as a Preceptor, in Genesis, Chap. 2, for there it is written thus: Although God had caused the earth bring forth all kinds of grass, herbs and trees, yet they could produce no fruit or propagate and increase their kind, until God had first let rain again upon the earth, the water first separated and taken up to heaven by Himself. And daily experience teaches us that the earth, when dry, is barren, and that nothing can grow unless frequently refreshed by rain and dew. Hence God has again united the water --- which He, as the first Distiller, took up on high --- with the dry earth, the Inferior with the Superior. The Ancients, following this rule, have often united white water with the Red Lion's Blood, as with the Earth (for, coagulated, such blood is earth), according to the teaching of Hermes: "It ascends from the earth into heaven, and again descends to earth, and receives the strength of inferior and superior things". And elsewhere: "Red Sun is father, White Moon is mother; join them together in one life and disposition". Morienus: Make the Red Smoke hold the White Smoke in a strong embrace and in a strong vessel, without exhalation of spirits".

Theophrastus also means that, when you have obtained the two things by the short method, viz., the rosy blood and the Eagle's white gluten, you shall thereto add nothing foreign. Compare Solomon's Cong, chapter 1:7: "Tell me, I thou whom my soul loveth, where thou makest the flock to rest at noon, for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?". Take these two things alone, and of them again produce Unity --- of two Mercurial Substances make one --- like body and soul. Of two waters make one by coagulation. For Quicksilver, or our Mercury, is not coagulated by the coagulation caused by extrinsic mixture (except for corruption); but the same is, by its intrinsic Sulphur, coagulated to perfection. This is the Union of Heaven and Earth, the marriage of Adam and Eve, the Conjunction of Sun and Moon, the right Union of the World's Soul and Spirit with the Earth by the Union of their Centres, as Calid says: "Of all experiments there is none equal to that of conjoining two or more things whose centres are diverse, unless it be the conversion of their matter, and the mutation of their substance and properties from their original nature. Therefore, he who shall be able to change Soul into Body and Body into Soul, and to mix with the same subtle spirits, shall attain all things".

Compare Aurel. Augurellius, Book III: “Perchance here thou mayest seek the numbers and the weight of the things required by the for perfecting this work.

“Remember, therefore, there are of Things Primordial but Three.  
From these take two; and from these again --- if thou judge rightly – one more.  
The Triple Thing will then consist of Gold alone.  
The decocted substances will form one homogenous mass.  
For, joined together, they differ among themselves in nothing.  
Each ingredient fuses its mass with that of the others”.

By this influx our earth is made fruitful, producing in due time all kinds of animal, vegetable, and mineral natures. This is the warm bath in the beginning of may of Bernhardus, expressed of old in the following figure of speech: “The Water of the Air between Heaven and Earth is of all things the Life. For, by its moisture and warmth, it is the medium between water and fire. The Heavens opening rained and dewed these Waters upon the Earth, rendering it moist and sweet as honey. Wherefore also the Earth blossoms, bringing forth divers colours and fruits; and, in the midst, there has grown up a great tree, with silver stem, stretching to the ends of the world; on its branches have sat many birds which have all flown away towards the East; and the raven’s head has become white”. All the above means but the spiritual generation and new birth of our Adam, through Water and the Spirit, for the same, in its former nature and earthly tabernacle, could not enter the Kingdom of heaven. Our old Adam must first put on its original pure nature, and thus, born again through spiritual water, and changed into a spiritual man, may, through much tribulation, enter the Promised Land.

### **Coagulation and Imbibition ~**

But how can such things be?, asks the learned and wise Nicodemus. Art thou a Master in Israel, taking upon thyself the highest works in Physics, and knowest not that? Well, Theophrastus tells it to you plainly in Chap. 3, viz., that it is done through the Pelican (for this is the grave in which shall rest our deceased Adam until his resurrection), even unto the third and fourth time, until the whole Lili, both matters, earth, and water, are dry on the ground. The words, “for the third and fourth time”, are to be interpreted as indicating the frequent rainfall necessary for fruition.

The ancient philosophers in their Small World, following Nature’s example, have been wont to divide the white water (which they first produced from their matter) into two or more parts. The first portion they quickly coagulated with the Lion’s Blood, by circulation in the Pelican, according to the formula: “Nature knows Nature, Nature rejoices in Nature, Nature receives Nature, and yet there is but one Nature, One Genus, One Substance, and One Essence”. Song of Solomon, Chap. 3:4 --- “But I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother’s house, into my mother’s chamber”. To this coagulated, dry earth they have added the other portion of the water, moistening and drying by heat three or four times, until the earth has again received into itself the whole of its white water, and thus the whole Lili has become a dry body, Thus the ancients augmented the stone for fixation in the very beginning. Bernhardus says: “The king’s bath may be repeated. For the more frequently he be bated in such saline, Mercurial water, or sulphureous baths, the purer and stronger does he become. It is optional to do this three or four times in the beginning with coagulation, or only once. By

frequent moistening you will get more fruit, also the further advantage (by augmenting in the beginning) of not having to do so at the finish”.

For the highest degree of purification, wash seven times in Jordan, and you will have many cwts. of water as your reward. Compare Solomon’s Song, Chap. 1: “Draw me, and we will run after thee; the King hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee”.

For our multiplication (according to Raymundus) is nought but the reiteration of the process of our primordial creation. So also Bernhardus, in his book Concerning the Transmutation of Metals: “As in this process nothing extraneous enters into its first composition, so also the same multiplies nothing that is not if its first composition” But since all generations and corruptions in nature are caused by heat; and, especially since Nature, in the bringing forth of metals and earths, has no other instrument but a steady, gentle heat, therefore, also, all imitators of this art have be obliged to follow Nature. The steady warmth of the sun ripens every fruit, and the warmer the sun (yet not too dry and alternating with due rains), the better do fruits mature and turn out.

Hence the ancient sages have ever matured this our philosophical Seed by the heat of a sun shining steadily upon our earth and water, in which the other two are included, for “the virtue of fire and air cannot become apparent except in earth and water, virtue only acting through matter”. And, as the great world’s sun in summer gets hotter and hotter, until it has reached its highest ascension in the Zodiac, so also have all artists always augmented their “little Summer” in temperature until the matter, having been duly boiled and simmered, from black (through various changes of colour) became blood-red. We can assist our matter by heat alone. Hermes says: “Fire is the Regimen”. And Bernhardus also states: “That no one goes with the King to the bath but the stoker, whose sole duty it is to keep up the heat, and that his work is easily inflammable”. Ferrarianus is of the same opinion: “The whole strength lies in the fire. By this we discern and unravel the four Elements in that gross mass. By this we further join and combine things into one. By this we imitate the Sun, and perfect the imperfect”. In such warmth it attains maturity, ordained but never completed by Nature. For (quoth Theophrastus) Nature brings nothing complete to Light, but man, by spagyric preparation, must lead up to that ordained of Nature. Hence it is said: “Where Nature ends, there Art begins”. And: “Through God was our Philosophical Stone by Nature created, and to the same there is nothing wanting but purification and perfection”.

It also learns to fight with the fire, so that the same --- however great --- may gain no advantage over it. Compare Farrianus: “It rejoices in its own fire, just as anything, Vegetable, Animal, or Mineral, is better preserved in the place of its generation than elsewhere”.

### **The Foundation of Art ~**

The contents and foundation of this Art consist in dissolving gold and silver by the right means --- with water, or drying with fire of the volatile Philosopher’s mercury -- - until the same be changed into a powder which cannot be again reduced to a solid body. This powder --- if it smokes not when laid on the fire --- tinges every imperfect body and mercury with a lasting gold or silver colour. The gold colours not except it

be first changed by the white gold --- i.e., by their Philosopher's Mercurial Water --- into a black substance they call their earth and caput corvi crow's head), giving the same many names, which white gold is further changed into a vapour, and is our Fortified Spirit.

*Question* --- Whether in the Antimony of Philosophers or marcasita the Philosophers' secret is hidden? He white gold is the secret, for out of the antimony of our black earth is extracted the highest arcanum of Philosophers, which is in effect a ruby liquor, sweet, and red as blood.

The Salt of Metals is the Philosopher's Stone. Hence make salt of the metals without corrosives.

"Adam", said God, "in fixed and not fixed, in these two lie hidden all Secrets: Thou art the Lesser World".

Abel has written, that his father Adam gave names to all things.

Noah praises the oilstone (soapstone?) saying there is no stone possessing greater virtues.

Attain, therefore, in time a spiritual earth, not fleeing from fire: Because, among all elements the earth alone is fixed, and the Art of Alchemy wished that its Stone be fixed. Hence it is necessary that at the end of the operation all things should return to earth, i.e., fixation. Hermes' dictum is true: Its strength is integral, if poured into the earth. In such coction or digestion divers colours are to be seen, not less than in Great Nature in the earth.

For when the wet winter is passed, when the sun shines again, and the earth, during winter covered with water and snow, becomes dry, all manner of curious colours are seen, especially thee, viz., black, white, and red. Between these appear divers colours, as a yellowish colour after the virginal white or red; but this is not permanent. The other yellow remains longer, yet not so long as the black, white, or red. Crauser says, in Turba: "Know that it is a twofold thing to make white and red; the one thing is solution, the other decoction". The former takes place in winter, when the earth is covered with snow and water, a certain indication of Putrefaction, a sign of commixture and of the changing of one thing into another, and is the colour of death. Solomon's Song: "I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me!".

The time of its duration is unequal. In the Bible one finds that the waters of the Flood lasted 156 days.

Bernhardus says: "In 130 days the King puts off his blackness, and appears in his white shirt". Scala Phil. gives 140 days for such putrefaction. Vide Pandor., fol 36. After these follow the other perfect colours, as the white of complete coagulation. Thus, putrefaction takes place in humidity, but the end of putrefaction is dryness; and inceration is a gentle induration, the occultation of humour, the fixation of spirit, the collecting of things diverse, the Renovation of Homogeneity, the adaptation to fire of

things fleeing therefrom, and is the colour of regeneration and of semi-coction. It lasts also a long time --- according to Bernhardus almost 82 days --- which is a sign of fixation according to the Dictum of Lucas in the *Turba*: “When our Magnesia is white it lets not the spirit go from it”. Theophrastus sets no limit of time to such colours, as, in truth, none can be set, for it depends on the matter.

Compare Aurel. Augurell., Book III:

“Ye scarcely will anyone so exactly compute the years,  
As not either to diminish or add to their number”  
For suitable material will sometimes accelerate the process, and unsuitable retard the same.  
Or intense heat will by a little exceed the measure, but water by much.  
And time and place will vary”.

The time will vary according as the artist tends his fire diligently or not. For this our work is a true woman’s or cook’s work. They simmer and boil and roast until the spit is done to a turn; they wash and dry the linen in the sun until it is snow white. Also this white colour is like unto the earth when dry; then the corn soon gets white also, and is no far from maturity, viz., from the third colour, the yellow. As soon as the same appears in the corn it is cut; the winter is past, the rain over, the flowers have appeared, summer is come, and the turtledove is heard in our land. Thus also is the maturing of our matter, when its yellow colour appears, As regards its metallic nature, and the perfection of the same, we must bring that to a higher grade, says Bernhardus, viz., to its red colour, that it may thus communicate to other imperfect metals some of its superabundant perfection. For this redness is the sign of incorruptibility and complete digestion.

Just so Christ became more than perfect in the highest exaltation of His humanity through His rosy blood, in obedience, in fulfilling and satisfying the Law, and in love towards God, in order to communicate to us, His people, to its fullness, through the Holy Spirit, whereby we might become heirs and sharers of His Kingdom. In this our Elias goes up to Heaven in a storm and seated in a fiery chariot. Now go forth, ye daughters of Jerusalem, and behold King Solomon crowned by his mother on the day of his marriage and of his heart’s joy. Every diligent student will now, without further explanation, be able to find these colours. Consult the philosophers concerning the same: Bernhardus, Scala Phil., etc., etc.

Attention must, during such coction, be paid to the proper order of the colours produced, for with them change the qualities of the active agent, demanding a corresponding mutation in the passive reagent. For, in our solution, the water is first active, the earth then attracting the King, but in coagulation it is passive. This change of mode cannot take place without development of divers colours, which is expressed by philosophers thus: “Heat acting on moisture generates blackness, and, acting on dryness, generates whiteness, in which redness is hidden.

Solomon mentions such coction and colours in his Song, Chap. 5:10 --- “My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy and black as a raven. His eyes are as doves’ eyes by rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet

flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings, set with the beryl: is belly is as bright ivory, overlaid with sapphires. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold". The ancient Sages have also mentioned the same in parables, as when they saw a mist rise in the distance (possibly the mist that watered the whole earth). They saw also the violence of the sea and of the water-floods upon the face of the earth, that the same stank in the darkness (putrefaction). They also beheld the King of the Earth sink, and heard him cry with a terrible voice: He who delivers me shall live forever, and rule in my glory on my royal throne, and all things shall be given into his power (i.e., blackness). On the following day they beheld above the King a most beautiful morning star, and the light of day illumining the darkness (i.e., whiteness), the bright sun rising through brilliant clouds of various forms and colours (i.e., yellowness and redness). Then, in fullness of time, the King was crowned with three costly crowns, of iron, of silver, and of pure gold. In his right hand they saw a scepter with seven glittering stars, and in his left a golden apple, upon which was sitting a white dove, with silvery body and golden wings.

But particularly is the frequent imbibition (moistening) of dry earth with water described and indicated in complete parables --- (Philosophers have given this process of imbibition many other names, such as Exaltation, Fermentation, etc., but they are all one, viz., the subtilization of White and Red, and the augmentation of excellence and quantity). They beheld a man, as black as a Moor, stuck fast in a black stagnant bog, to whose assistance came a young woman, beautiful of countenance, and clad in bright apparel. Her back was adorned with glorious white wings and golden feathers, and on her knees she wore fine pearls. On her head she had a crown of pure gold, set with a silver star, around her neck a necklet of gold, set with precious stones, and on her feet golden shoes. From her proceeded the most sweet scent, above all aromas. She clothes man with a purple robe, inspires him with highest wisdom, and leads him to heaven. By diligently exercising yourself in suchlike parables, and --- at the same time --- paying attention to the works of Nature in the great generation, you will not only be able to await a plentiful harvest in due course, but will so increase the store of you philosophical oil, or tincture, as to be sort of vessels into which to pour the same; even as the widow of Elisha. Thus shall you be free from debt and feed your house in plenty; for your meal shall not diminish nor your cruse be wanting.

There is nothing said here of the fire whereby this artificial coction takes place. Perhaps it is the everlasting fire, of which many Alchemists boast, the fire used aforetime by the Jews for their burnt offerings, which burnt continually without becoming extinguished, which also was hidden by the Prophet Jeremiah before the first destruction of Jerusalem, and afterwards was discovered by Ezra. The same is said to have been thick and oily, like oil or honey, as Josephus describes it. If you can and will prepare I, good, If not, refer to the Turba, Chrysippus, etc., for they will give you a good account, saying that this fire may be prepared in many ways, always taking care not to let the active principle escape, or, as Bernhardus explains it: Not to let the bath take fire, and flee away like a fugitive eagle, thus causing a dissipation of seed and preventing generation. "For then the Elements will not combine, but will vanish by fire, on account of the strength of the spirit and of the dominating and operating volatile thing; so wilt thou become poor, and lose that which thou hast".

Hence the "triple vase" commonly used by Philosophers. And the "old hollow oak split through the middle", viz., the oaken sphere of Bernhardus, in whose middle is

the clear stone, in which stood the bath. All this was done to ward off the too strong rays of the Sun, that our male and female seed might, without hindrance, remain together to the birth: "For the separation of active and passive necessarily prevents generation".

Compare Solomon's Song, Chap. 2: "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye wake not my love till he pleases".

When Theophrastus further speaks of Hungary, Istria, the South, or Cyprus, he gives you to understand in which countries our matter ought to be sought, and he leaves it to you whether you will have two different substances which, as regards their genus, are of one and the same nature. Therefore, seek the one, the Lion, in Hungary; but the Eagle in Istria. But if you rule your work through one thing, thus proceeding from Unity to Duality, and thence to three things, then travel to Cyprus. There you will be refused nothing.

Bernhardus has traveled yet farther, saying that he fetched his man, viz., the chosen jewel, the golden book, from India. Christophorus Parisiensis also went far for the same, and says: "When you quit the town of Venice, go far to the right until you find a pleasant level country: there is our Mercury". Whether in liquid or coagulated form, it is best to obtain it from the above-mentioned places, by reason of its beautiful red colour. Although found also in Germany and other countries --- Theophrastus saying elsewhere that of the perfect Medicine enough is found in Germany --- yet the native article is not so good and strong as the foreign. "For the virtue is dispersed, and less united, therefore less strong. For here masculine and feminine are substantively the same, and in the one subject are combined different and contrary virtues, since our Lion is hermaphrodite".

If you use but one thing, make of the same two, but, lastly, of one of these three. Afterwards for these three build a tabernacle, and diligently take heed that the sacred Threefoldness be reduced through Duality to Unity, the Author of all consummate perfection. So from our New Earth and New Heaven (the old Earth and heaven having been destroyed by fire, together with their works) you will have a New World, the Holy Place, the New Jerusalem, as a bride for the bridegroom, wherein all tears, lamentation, and sorrow shall be no more, whose gates also are adorned with all manner of precious stones and pearls, the streets are of pure gold like unto a beautiful mirror, and the names of the dwellers therein are all written in the Book of Life.

There all things are new, for the former things have passed away; and, as Hermes briefly says: "Thou shalt have the World's Glory and all thy desire".

Finally, as regards the utility of the Medicine thus prepared, the same is sufficiently described in other books. That this medicine is of great use with respect to the health of the human body may easily be gathered from the aforesaid Medicinal Foundation. For this our philosophical Son, a Son of Sun and Moon, which rule the whole world, as a learned Astronomer has traversed all planetary spheres and the whole firmament in his colours. He also is born out of the Adamic clay (which is an extract of the Fifth Essence --- quintessence --- of all creatures and of the whole world), ascending to Heaven and descending thence to Earth, and thus acquiring all power and might both in Heaven and Earth. Hence he is a Lord over all Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral

Natures, and can act according to his pleasure, and the same with his influence --- especially on man as the Microcosmus --- if applied to man's Spirit of Life in an appropriate affinitive Vehicle.

But, as regards his other powers and influence over the metals, a means is necessary whereby to reduce, punish, and humble his rebellious people. Theophrastus here indicates as this means. Our Stone is first to conclude unity and friendship with the same, i.e., they are both to be fused together.

Aurel. Augurellius says likewise, in his third book:

“First mingle a little of the prepared medicament with the yellow metal, and thou wilt presently see the same take to itself the strength of the Blessed Powder.  
Or, when thou shalt have collected again, by great and difficult art, the teeming seed from the pure gold,  
Then quickly mix with it an equal portion of purple powder,  
And warm the same with gentle heat, simmering for two months;  
In which space of time thou mayst behold produced the whole series of colours,  
Which, otherwise, thou hadst marveled to see in three years.  
As often as thou repeatest the operation again and again, so often shalt thou increase the virtue and quantity of thy powder”.

But he conceals the important point, for this fusion suffices not, if such molten matter be not heated during the proper time in a vessel with philosophical coction. For by this means the operator obtains full power over his Lord the King, thereupon reducing the subjects to obedience, as related by Dionysius Zacharius, a knack unknown to many operators, who have consequently not known how to set about the projection. For, although our Stone of itself colours, yet, according to Theophrastus, it does this less than when the Medium of Incorporation and Ingression of the Stone --- i.e., Fermentation --- is added.

Different philosophers have used different Media, each according to his own opinion. Farreanus, Berhardus, Roger Bacon, etc., etc., having some applied augmentation by means of repeated solution, others by fermentation. Use which you will; either will lead to the desired result. (Vide *Pandor.*, Fol. 252). But here I call a Ferment a Stone already complete in its elements in comparison with the metals; Even as the ferment of dough overcomes the dough, converting it into itself, so also this stone converts metals into itself, just as dough is changed and converted by its ferment, because it derives its origin its ferment, because it derives its origin from the same, and not from anything foreign. Thus, also, the Ferment of metals is of their own substance, changing into itself. And since metals are generated from mercury and Sulphur, therefore, also, this ferment is generated from them; and because this our Ferment is of the form, nature, and digestion of gold, therefore, it will reduce metals to the nature and digestion of gold. For the form of individuals of the same species is one alone.

As regards its third use, our Stone matures all immature precious stones, and brings them to their highest perfection. For this I refer you to others, being of opinion that such great gifts are given by God to man more to assist his neighborhood by works of charity than to enrich himself. Would that man recognized the resources of Nature and God's wonderful wisdom in the implanting of such powers in His creation! Then, by



means of this Igneous Sulphur or Lion's Blood, or Philosopher's Stone, he might attain the highest Rubinical Gradation of all Jewels, as well as the White Eagle, making large pearls of small ones; and finally, might perform all philosophical works by the processes Theophrastus describes as digesting or putrefying sublimating or distilling, calcining, extracting, fermenting, etc., These are the steps by which you may attain to wisdom and to Solomon's throne, on the right hand of which are found long life and the tree of life, and on the left, riches and honour. That is, says Theophrastus, the object of our art, viz., long life and the honourable maintenance of the same in this vale of tears.

Now will I briefly recapitulate to you the whole process: Take first thy golden Man, thy red Adamic earth. For this earth is the middle nature between Mercury and metals, and the third composed of the same principles, Quicksilver and Sulphur. By noiseless metallic liquefaction of this earth the matter of its metallic ore acquires, virtues, and properties of the aforesaid principles, so that from it may be generated each and every metal, according to diversity of digestion; and to it is there nothing wanting but purification and complete digestion. This Red Adam lay in a warm bath that he may go to sleep. If he will not fall asleep, give him a good, strong, sleeping draught of his saturated liquor, which he loves to drink. Then, during his sleep, cut open his right side that the fair white woman, concealed within him, may come forth. When, now, this maiden has become marriageable, bring her to Adam --- lying on his bed and sick with love --- as his bed and sick with love --- as his daughter, sister, and wife. Whereupon Adam will know the woman, and she will become pregnant. Take then this pregnant woman --- letting the man go --- and guard her well for ten months, until the day of her parturition. She will then bear her first-born son, whom she has conceived from her father's spirit, a young spiritual Adam, to whom no other man is equal in deeds and miracles, who --- if daily fed with his young mother's milk --- when he reaches man's estate, will subdue all his brethren, will deliver them from death, and bring them to eternal death, and bring them to eternal joy in the kingdom of Honour, in which all creatures under heaven will rejoice with joy unspeakable. And, finally, the whole world will become full of gold, and pearls, and precious stones. For Solomon's vineyard bears him 1000, and to those that keep the fruit thereof, 200.

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## Corollary Concerning Hyle

To say what Hyle is, is not puerile. Hyle is the primary matter and the Philosopher's Stone. Azoth is the seed of all metals, when it is extracted from magnesia and Silver.

Hyle is the Beginning of all things, a confused mass and primary matter, which is neither moist nor dry, not earth nor water, not light nor darkness, not air nor fire.

Philosophers' Mercury is nothing else but a water or fire, both Elements having long been digested together with natural heat, resulting in a dry water, This Mercury is not common, but the Stars in the Firmament by their influence cause it to grow in the earth, the Quintessence of the Stars influencing the terrestrial Quintessence. You can drive them both into a water, and extract them therefrom, and they are to be observed in the Rainbow or Sun's reflection.

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## Another Corollary

by

Conrad Poyselius

Take the strongest red subduer of men (cinnabar, red Mercurial earth) you can obtain, as it comes out of the earth. The Istrian, Candian, Hundraian, or Spanish kinds are the best. Distil the same three times, yet not too quickly, and put aside this thrice distilled spirit. Then of Red Royal Alum put several pounds into a vessel and calcine to blackness or greyness; pound also, and dissolve in warm water. Then extract the water per Alembicum, or evaporate in an open vessel till dry. Calcine again the residue, and again extract until it yields no more salt. Dissolve this salt, and coagulate for the third time until it ceases to yield a residue. Of this oil take one pound, place the same in a Waldburg or Hessian crucible, and set in a blast furnace until it fuses; add more oil if necessary. Allow it to fuse 24 hours in such furnace (if the crucible stand fire so long, even to three days); then take out and place in another crucible; fuse again, a repeat this operation a third time, The result will be a hard, green stone; pound the same, when warm, to pieces, place in a retort, and pour upon the stone of the above thrice distilled spirit three fingers' breadth. Set it, well closed up, upon hot ashes for three days and nights. Then the Vegetable Spirit, or White Eagle, will extract the Green Lion's rosy blood, and the superfluity and impurity will remain behind, partly as a scum and partly as a black, stinking oil or pitch. The scum swims upon the Aqua or Spiritus Vitae, and the red blood upon that, like oil upon water. Pour the essentiated spirit into a glass, away from the scum and black residue (weigh the glass first).

The residual Stone can be further dessicated until it have an oily or dry consistency. Use the same for Calculus, Asthma, and other Tartaric diseases. The aforesaid Green Lion's Blood is the true Philosopher's Oil, above all aromas, always fixed and unalterable in fire. After remaining in the fire for a whole year it is still undiminished, looking like melted wax, as Geber testifies, saying he had seen nothing stable in fire except the viscous humidity, which is the root of all metals, and the true primary matter of Minerals, Animals, and Vegetables, as you, with God's help, will yourself experience.

Now, observe, when you have placed your Red Lion in the aforesaid weighed glass, distill the Eagle off in a bath, or over warm ashes. Collect the spirit by itself, putting away the phlegm, and you shall have the Lion's Blood in the form of a fixed, stable, white salt. The Eagle goes off unwillingly, invisibly taking over the Anima or Soul in form of a sweet volatile salt, losing also its original scent. If you now will continue, and reach the desired goal, by God's help, take of the residual salt one part, and of the animated spirit three parts. Place in the aforesaid glass, in such a way that the third part of the same remain empty --- as described by Poyselius in *Splendor Solis*. Seal hermetically, and, in God's Name, place in a vapour bath, giving it such warmth as an egg, or a child in the womb, requires. You will then behold within 40 days how the soul, lying in his spirit, again assumes its body, and is the only medium for the reuniting of body and spirit. When the matter begins to get black, then the conjunction goes on between the two, for this blackness is the body, or fixed salt, the passive thing, dominated by spirit and soul, and can be fused by no force of fire. As Bernhardus says: They wondrously love each other, and, although, in the beginning,

the fixed body may be overcome by the spirit and soul, yet it is so strong, and of so incombustible a nature, that they cannot kill it, but when it finds the soul and spirit pressing it so hard, the Lion feels its old strength, and takes away from them the dominion. Before passive with respect to Soul and Spirit, it is now active as regard these, converting them into its own nature, and producing a true and clear substance, called the true, white Magnesia. But every intelligent artist may imagine for himself what various colours must be exhibited before this result is attained, how also it must be brought from one extreme to the other, viz., from white to black, and vice versa, which can only be done in several months. For Bernhardus says: "And I saw black clouds, but they lasted long; and, for the fire's sake, you must not alter the temperature until necessary, when it shall have coagulated into a grayish, white ash. Then you may increase the fire until the yellow appears, continuing to augment the temperature until you behold the desired perfect redness". But it is unnecessary here to state the whole procedure. Read with diligence the *Tinctura Physicorum Solis* of Poyselius, Raym. Lullius, Bernhardus, Chrysippus, Farriarinus, Chris. Parisiensis, Morienus, *Rosarium Majus*, *The Epistle of Arnold de Villa Nova*, Marlinum, the *Book of Three Words*, the *First Part of the Breaking Day* (not in print), and the second part thereof (in print), There you will find what is wanting here. Praise God, and succour the poor.

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## Here Follow Certain Notable Facts Concerning the Philosopher's Stone

Rebis is making one thing of two. That is, philosophers' gold and silver --- i.e., the Philosopher's Stone --- make a sulphur called philosophers' sulphur, and the secret of secrets. Gold generates gold, i.e., when Medicine is to be prepared, then it is projected over gold or silver, and it is projected over gold or silver, and it is the required Medicine. Then, the whole is projected over other, imperfect, bodies, and thus like generates like.

Philosophers' Mercury --- i.e., water out of the salt of metals --- is none other than a body dissolved in water. Aqua Vitae (Water of Life is the same as Permanent Water, and is a spirit extracted from a body; it is called Aqua Vitae and Quicksilver, and of it are all things are made.

The spirit and soul are extracted from the body. The body was dead. Restore to it its soul! Then will it live and not die eternally, and then from these is made the stone which perfectly coagulates Mercury. The matter of the Stone is Philosophers' Salt, and Philosophers' Salt is Sulphur of imperfect metals.

The matter and form of the Stone: The form of the Stone is the same sulphur is the same sulphur of gold or silver reduced to oil, with which the matter is incinerated, as aforesaid.

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## **The Four Degrees in the Regimen of Fire**

19. The first degree is that which permits of the hand being held to it, or is a temperature equal to that of a midsummer's day.

20. The second degree is that which permits the hand begin held to the fire but a short time.

21. The third degree is that which produces no red glow, and causes not wood to carbonize in the heated sand.

22. The fourth degree is that which makes wood carbonize in the heated sand, yet produces not a red glow.

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## Concerning Salts

Take of Lime of Metals, 1 drachm, and of Aqua Vitae, without phlegm, 4 drachms; cause them to boil gently 48 hours --- or place in the Sun six days. After the sediment is deposited, pour of the clear liquid and distill. You will then have Salt of Metals, but not yet fermented; for it must be fermented with Oleum Lunae to whiteness, and with Oleum Solis to redness. Likewise: of all things in the world --- after first being reduced to ashes --- there can be made a fixed Salt, fixing and really tingeing every metallic body. All salts have the same efficacy as dissolved Mercury. Likewise, Incineration is effected thus: Take a white or red stone, at the same time somewhat congealed and powdered; place over a fire, and, when the said salt is a little heated, add a little of the powder, with sulphur or Oleum Solis and Lunae, continually, until the mixture be a sort of thick honey. Then take of the fire and colour; and thus so with all salts. Salts are softened by dissolution in fire, and then by alternate solution in and recrystallization out of clear water.

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## Concerning Common Salt for the Purification of Aqua Vitae

Take of Common Salt, prepared by solution and coagulation, and let it be many times dried; pour on it Aqua Vitae, and distill with a strong fire, the more the better, and it will be rectified, dissolving gold. It ought to be distilled with salt at least three or four times.

Also: Pour out common salt, coagulate, and dissolve in common fresh water, repeating this until it be purified, and be obtained in crystalline form. Also: Let Antimony --- and the other things not destroyed by combustion in the crucible --- be dissolved in spirits of wine and distilled four days. Then extract therefrom the Salt and Oil.

Note: Philosophical Fire --- which is called Nature and Soul --- can be extracted from all natural things, and is of their nature and condition, because, in earth is earth, in water is water, in air is air, in fire is fire; neither has it causes of corruption nor contrary qualities.

Also: Of every Salt can a Tincture or Elixir be made, because an Elixir can be made of all things in the world, as has been said above, and hence also of Tartar, which Salt is a natural thing.

Also: The Philosopher says: The Spirit enters not except by water, i.e., by Salt Water and the Regimen of fire, because whatever is dissolved out of Salts is done over a gentle fire, and whatever is dissolved by means of Salt Water remains, and is not altered. Hence, if you would be enriched, prepare Common Salt and Alkali, and reduce them into pure, sweet water, which is preparative and incervative water, in which --- if thou shalt have decocted the whitened spirits --- it will rectify and whiten the same, extinguishing therein all blackness.

To be noted: Prepare Salts; make them liquid and commiscible with bodies, and --- if thou wouldst be enriched --- prepare especially Sal Alpoli. For its property is to retain volatile things, and hence they are more quickly liquefied and collected. For, whatever has been dissolved out of Salts over a slow fire, should afterwards be distilled over three times with a very slow fire. The residue in the still should be removed and preserved, and the said water be again redistilled until perfectly pure water passes over. In the fifth distillation the water will be pure, and then it is finished, as the Philosopher says. When you obtain water from air, and air from fire, and fire from earth, then you have the whole Art.

From the above it is patent that salt enters not a body, neither are bodies mixed with it, unless the salt be made liquable, nor are those complexionable unless the saltiness be purged away. Then will it be an Elixir, a most limpid Condiment, like the Coagulum of Milk. For the dryness of salt is the calcinative and parcher of all bodies and spirits. But the property of water is mild, purifying and rectifying bodies and spirits. Take care, for it is a light sort, that thou mayst collect gold and silver perfectly pure, for it rectifies and perfects whitened spirits.



By boiling thou mayst obtain many things wherewith to coagulate Mercury and change it into perfect silver. Hence the Philosopher: If Quicksilver be joined to its own kind, it will doubtless flee away, but if quick when fleeing, suffering another union with water, it bears fire and hammer.

Praise God in thy soul for what I have said, and praised be God who hath placed His Wisdom in Salt! Work with the same and thou shalt prosper.

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## Here Follow Some Philosophical Rules or Canons Concerning the Philosopher's Stone

What we seek is here or nowhere.

1. Canon: The nearly perfect is easily brought to perfection.
2. Imperfect things by no art can put on perfection, unless first purged from impure Sulphur and earthly grossness, which are mixed with Mercury and Sulphur; then are they accounted a perfect Medicine.

It is wholly impossible to render imperfect bodies fixed without the Sulphur and Spirit of the perfect ones.

4. The Philosophers' Coelum (Heaven) reduces all metals to their primary matter, i.e., to Mercury.
5. Those attempting to reduce metals into Mercury without Coelum Philosophicum, or metallic Aqua Vitae, or Tartar of the same, are greatly deceived, since the impurity out of other solutions swimming in Mercury is perceived by their own eyes.
6. Nothing is perfectly fixed, except it be indissolubly joined to a fixed substance.
7. Fusible gold may be mutated, and changed into blood.
8. To render silver stable it must be reduced neither to a powder nor to water --- for this would destroy it utterly --- but it must of necessity be reduced to Quicksilver.
9. Silver cannot be transmuted into gold (except Physica Tinctura), unless it be reduced to liquid Mercury. The same is to be said of the other metals.
10. Imperfect bodies, as well as silver, are endowed with perfection, and converted into pure gold; and this is done with white or red sulphur by the virtue of a suitable fire.
11. Every imperfect body is brought to perfection by reduction into Mercury, after decoction with sulphurs in an appropriate fire. For out of the same are generated gold and silver; and they are deceived and labour in vain, who try to make gold and silver in any other way.
12. Sulphur of Iron is the best, for thus, joined to Sulphur of Gold, brings forth a certain Medicine.
13. No gold is generated, except it have first been silver.
14. Nature compounds and prepares its minerals by a gradual process: and thus at length from one root it procreates all metals to the last limit of metals, which is gold.

15. Mercury corrupts gold, changing it into Mercury, and rendering it volatile.
16. The Stone is composed of Sulphur and Mercury.
17. If the preparation of Mercuries be not taught by an experienced artificer, it cannot be learnt from books.
18. The preparation of Mercury for the philosophical menstruum is called Morification.
19. The practice of this great work remains our Grand Secret or Arcanum, and unless it be revealed Divinely, or by artificers, or in experiments, it also can never be learnt from books.
20. Sulphur and Mercury are the ingredients of the stone. Hence a knowledge of Mercury is necessary, to select the best Mercury for the speedy perfecting of the Stone.
21. A certain Mercury is latent in every body, but the art of extraction is most difficult.
22. Mercury can only be changed into gold and silver by an abbreviation of the long process.
23. Congealing and fixing necessitate but one and the same operation, in the same vessel, and with the same substance.
24. What congeals and fixes Mercury also colours the same, in one and the same process.
25. There are four degrees of fire to be observed in the process. In the first Mercury dissolves; in the second Sulphur dries up Mercury; in the third and fourth Mercury is fixed.
26. Things radically mingled in their minutest parts afterwards become inseparable, like snow mixed with water.
27. Different Simple Substances exposed to putrefaction give different products.
28. It necessarily behooves form and matter to be of the same species.
29. Homogeneous Sulphur is of that Mercurial Nature which produces gold and silver, not in the form in which they are perceived by the eyes, but in which Mercury is dissolved.
30. Without Philosophical Solution of Gold in mercury, there cannot be extracted from gold the certain fixed unctuousity which acts the part of a ferment generating gold and silver, The same is effected by a short method described by Geber.

31. Metals resolved into Mercury are again reduced to their original form by admixture of a small portion of this
32. Coelum, or Tartar of Philosophers, which reduces all metals into Mercury, is metallic philosophers' Aqua Vitae.
33. Sulphur and mercury consist of the same homogeneous nature.
34. The Philosophers' Stone is none other than gold and silver endued with a more than perfect tincture and excellence.
35. Gold and silver contain in themselves a superabundance of riches, which --- by preparation and digestion --- should be changed into a ferment, whereby the mass may be multiplied.
36. The greatest extremities in Mercury are two, viz., exceeding crudeness, and exceedingly exquisite decoction.
37. Philosophers hold it as an axiom that every dry thing quickly drinks up the humidity of its own species.
38. Lime of Silver altered quickly drinks up its Mercury, the fundament of the minerals of Philosophers.
39. Sulphur is the Soul, Mercury the Matter.
40. Mercury, placed with the sulphur of imperfect bodies, is coagulated into an imperfect body, being transmuted into that imperfect metallic species, the sulphur of which is coagulated and concreted
41. It is wholly impossible to make gold and silver with the sulphur of imperfect bodies. For nothing can excel that which it contains within itself.
42. Mercury is the feminine seed and menstruum of all metals, suitably prepared by the good operator's Art. For, by the projection of the great work, it receives and transmits the qualities of all metals, even to gold.
43. As Red Tincture is elicited by the ferment of gold alone, Mercury can be animated only by the white ferment of silver.
44. The Philosophers' work can be carried on without much labour or expense at all times, in every place, and by all, if only the true and sufficient matter be forthcoming.
45. The sulphurs of gold and silver stand the spirits of their species.
46. The sulphurs of gold and silver are the true seeds, feminine or masculine, of the Stone.
47. Everything conferring the virtue of stability and permanence necessarily possesses this virtue itself.

48. The tincture imparting perfecting to the imperfect derives this perfection from the fount of gold and silver.

49. Those are deceived who accept Venus as sulphur.

50. Nothing has been granted by Nature to Venus which answers for the great Spagyric work, or which will serve in the making of gold and silver.

51. Note: Gold converted into Mercury before conjunction with the menstruum, can be neither spirit, nor ferment, nor sulphur, and is good for nothing.

52. The work brought to an end by reiteration cannot again be made hot.

53. In abbreviating the work perfect bodies should be reduced to liquid Mercury and dry water, when they will easily assimilate the ferment.

54. The preparation of Mercury effected by sublimation is the more excellent, and by it (after revivification) is amalgamation more easily and better carried out.

55. The Soul cannot impress the Form, except by intervention of the Spirit, which is gold transmuted into Mercury.

56. Mercury receives the form of gold through the medium of the Spirit.

57. Gold resolved into Mercury is Spirit and Soul.

58. Philosophers' Sulphur, Tincture, Ferment, designate one and the same thing.

59. Common Mercury is the equal of and nearly approaches the Nature and Similitude of all other Mercuries.

60. Ferment renders Mercury heavier.

61. If Common Mercury be not animated, it is unsuitable for philosophical purposes.

62. The Soul is already impressed on Mercury properly mortified.

63. Gold may be prepared in a ferment, so that one part shall animate ten parts of Common Mercury, but this work has no end.

64. Mercury if imperfect bodies holds a middle place between common Mercury and that of perfect bodies; but the art of extraction is most difficult.

65. Since Common Mercury, by projection of the Stone, can be changed into gold and silver, it can be made equal to all Mercuries of the Bodies.

66. Animated Common Mercury is the greatest secret.

67. The Mercuries of all metals, by abbreviation of the work, are changed into gold and silver.

68. A humid and gentle heat is called by the name of Egyptian fire.
69. It is worthy to be noted that Luna is not the mother of common silver, but a certain Mercury endued with the quality of the celestial moon.
70. The Metallic Luna (silver) is of masculine nature.
71. Common Mercury, from cold, assumes the nature of a sterile woman.
72. The Mercuries of semi-minerals bear in their nature a similitude to Luna.
73. All things are produced from Sol and Luna, viz., from two substances.
74. Male and female --- i.e., Sol and Mercury --- coalesce into one.
75. Common Mercury, without preparation, is unsuitable for the work.
76. Four parts of Mercury and one of Sol --- i.e., of the ferment --- constitute the true marriage of male and female.
77. The solution is complete when Sol is resolved into mercury.
78. Without putrefaction is no solution perfected.
79. Putrefaction extends and continues even unto whiteness.
80. The great Arcanum is the maturing of the spirit, by which is prepared the menstruum, for in the same is Sol dissolved.
81. Mercury dissolves gold into water of its own form, i.e., into liquid Mercury.
82. Dissolution is the principle of congelation.
83. Gold transmuted into liquid Mercury, remains but a short time in that form.
84. Ferment dessicates Mercury, rendering it heavier and sable.
85. Sol (gold) is called the Philosophers' Fount.
86. Matter, by force of putrefaction, is converted into pulp or mud, which is the principle of coagulation.
87. The long method is the open secret of Philosophy, but it is a veil and an evasion.
88. There is a certain short method by which the Sulphur is removed from gold and silver, whereby every Mercury is permanently changed into gold and silver.
89. When matter attains blackness of colour, the second degree of heat must be applied.

90. Philosophers' Laton is the similitude of fire, for that alone perfects and excels all things.
91. Poison and stench are removed by fire, without other addition, and it alone cleanses all things.
92. Fire, by its penetrative and acute virtue, purifies and matures a hundred times more than water.
94. The Spirit is heat.
95. Matter, when brought to whiteness, refuses to be corrupted and destroyed.
96. All corruption of matter is marked by deadly poison.
97. The glass, or vessel, is called the Mother.
98. The virtue of Sulphur is not extensive, except to a certain limit of proportion, neither can it exceed an unlimited weight.
99. The question is to be observed, wherefore Philosophers call the matter of the Stone a Menstruum.
100. Sulphur merits the name of form, but menstruum that of matter.
101. Menstruum represents the small and inferior elements, viz., Earth and Water --- Sulphur, the two superior ones, viz., Fire and Air, as the masculine Agent.
102. Thou canst not hatch the chicken by breaking the egg-shell; similarly, thou canst have no result by opening the vessel and exposing the matter to the air.
103. The Calcination, by means of Mercury in a blast furnace, excels others.
104. The Philosophers' mode of speaking must be diligently noted. By sublimation they mean the dissolution of bodies into Mercury. By the first degree of fire they mean that which the second operation follows, viz., the inspissation (thickening) of Mercury with Sulphur. The third is the fixation of Mercury into a perfect and dissolved body.
105. Infinite is the number of the erring who admit not that Mercury, as regards its form, when mixed with amalgamated chalk of perfect bodies, is the subject and matter of the Stone.
106. White Medicine is brought to perfection in the third degree of fire, which must not be exceeded lest the work --- for whiteness --- be destroyed.
107. The fourth degree of fire produces a red matter, when appear divers colour.

108. It is necessary that whiteness, no yet brought to highest redness, should remain imperfect, both as regards the white and the red tincture. Therefore it is left dead until it ends in perfect redness.

109. After the fifth degree of perfecting fire, the matter acquires new virtues.

110. The work attains not perfection, unless the medicine have been incerated and rendered fusible like wax.

111. The process of creation is repeated three times on a quantity of the Binary Mercury, which produces the Stone.

112. The inceration of white Medicine is effected with white water or Mercury animated by Luna; but the inceration of Red Tincture with Mercury animated by Sol.

113. After inceration it suffices for the matter to remain in the form of pulp or paste.

114. Repeat the inceration until it stands the perfect test.

115. If the Mercury, by which the Medicine is incerated, escapes as a vapour, the work has failed.

116. Medicine, rightly incerated, explains to thee the enigma of the king returning from the fountain.

117. Sol ---when converted into its primary water, or Mercury, by means of Mercury -- if it become cold, causes the work to perish.

118. Philosophers, taking matter prepared and concocted by Nature, reduce it to its primary matter, since everything returns to that whence it derives its origin, even as snow is inseparably resolved into water.

119. The Wise reduce years to months, months to weeks, weeks to days.

120. The first decoction of Mercury --- which Nature effects --- is the sole cause of its simple perfection, beyond which of itself it can rise very little; and it is meet to assist its simplicity by sowing our gold in its proper earth; this is none other than pure Mercury, which Nature has digested a little, and not perfectly.

121. But by this second decoction Mercury becomes multiplied in virtue tenfold beyond its primary nature.

122. But the Stone Mercury is produced by repeated decoctions and mixing with Sol. Therefore, for this cause, man and woman follow twice.

123. By addition of Sol to Mercury it is converted into sulphur, and then by decoction into the Philosopher's Stone.

124. He who contemplates Philosophers' mercury but for a few moments, the same neither knows nor understands it.



125. Every Mercury, of whatever origin, exhibits the matter of the Stone, when treated in the right manner.

126. Everything from which Mercury is elicited is a subject of Philosophical Medicine.

127. Those who understand the Philosophers' Writings literally greatly err when they assert their Mercury to be One.

128. One Mercury exceeds the other in greater heat, dryness, decoction, purity, perfection; it ought to be prepared without corruption or loss of form, and to be purged from superfluities. In this consist the treasure and mystery of the Stone.

129. If the preparation of Common Mercury were known to students of Philosophy, no other Philosophers' Mercury, nor Metallic Aqua Vitae, nor other Mercurial Water of the Stone, need be sought, since the preparation of Common Mercury includes all these things.

130. Every Mercury of Metals and Minerals may, by successive stages, be raised, through the qualities of all other Mercuries, to the excellence of the Solar Body, and thence also be reduced to the degree and virtue of any metallic body one may choose.

131. Common Mercury, before legitimate preparation, is no Philosophers' Mercury, but after preparation it is called Mer. Phil., containing within itself the true method and way of extracting Mercury from other metals --- it is, as it were, the beginning of the great work.

132. Prepared Common Mercury is held to be Metallic Aqua Vitae.

133. Passive Mercury and Menstruum should on no account lose the external form of Mercury.

134. Those who (for philosophical work), in place of liquid Mercury, use sublimate, or calcined powder, or precipitate, are deceived, and err greatly.

135. Those who --- for the perfecting of the philosophical work --- resolve Mercury into clear water, err greatly.

136. To compound and make Mercury of limpid water is in the power of Nature alone.

137. In the Great Physical Work it is necessary that crude Mercury resolve Sol into Mercury.

138. If Mercury be reduced into water, it dissolves Sol into water, and, in the work of the Stone, it is highly necessary that it be dissolved into Mercury.

139. It behooves the Sperma and Menstruum to have servile external forms.

140. According to Philosophers, we should imitate Nature. Were, therefore, Menstruum dry, solution would be hoped for in vain.
141. The seed of the Stone should be in form similar to metals.
142. It is highly necessary to choose that seed of Philosophical medicine which bears Common Mercury.
143. It is the mystery of all mysteries of the Stone to know Mercury to be the matter, menstruum, and form of perfect bodies.
144. Mercury, of itself, brings nothing of moment to gradation.
145. Mercury is the Element of Earth, in which a seed of Sol must be implanted.
146. The seed of gold effects, not only the multiplying of quantity, but also of virtue.
147. Perfected Mercury, for the generation of the work, has need of a female.
148. Each Mercury is derived from, and participates in, two Elements --- Crude, from water and earth; decocted, from fire and air.
149. If any one wish to prepare and exalt Mercury into a Metal, let him add a little ferment, whereby it may be raised to the required metallic degree.
150. The highest mystery of the whole Work is the Physical Dissolution into Mercury, and the reduction into primary matter.
151. The dissolution of Sol should be effected by Nature, not by handiwork.
152. Sol, when joined or married to its Mercury, will be in the form of Sol, but the major preparation will be in chalk.
153. It is an open question among Sages whether Mercurius Lunae contained with Mercurius Solis can be obtained in place of philosophical menstruum.
154. Mercurius Lunae has a masculine nature. But two males can generate as little as two females.
155. When eliciting the Elixir, the purest substance of Mercury must be chosen.
156. He who wishes to be employed, let him be employed in the solution and sublimation of the two Luminaries.
157. Gold imparts a golden, silver a silvery color. But he who knows how to colour Mercury with Sol or Luna, the same attains to the Arcanum.
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## Here Follows

### An Anonymous Treatise Concerning the Philosopher's Stone

My noble and dear Son, in order that I may communicate to you, in the briefest manner, my knowledge of the right, true, philosophical Stone, now know and understand that this Stone is composed of two things, Body and Spirit, to wit, male and female seed, that is, Mercurial Water and Corpus Sols, as may be read in all philosophical works.

And it is the general opinion that Mercury --- free from foreign admixture --- should first be dissolved in a spiritual water, called by philosophers primary matter of metals, Liquor Lunae, Aqua Vitae, Quintessence, with which water, or primary matter, the metals are delivered and freed from their rigid, frozen bonds, and are dissolved into their primary nature, like mercurial water itself. Hence philosophers, in their books, have illustrated their meaning by saying that ice dissolves into water by means of heat, because it was water before its coagulation. For everything is reducible to its primary condition. Therefore, also, philosophers have written that the species or forms of metals cannot be changed into gold and silver before being first reduced to their primary matter.

With respect to this regeneration of metals, observe well, my son, that the same can take place by means of the primary matter of metals --- i.e., mercurial water alone, and through nothing else in the world. For this water has the greatest affinity to metallic nature, so that --- after equal mixture --- it can never be separated from the same.

Therefore have philosophers, in the *Turba* and other books, indicated this water, saying: Nature rejoices in Nature, Nature preserves, improves, unites with, reduces, and exalts Nature. Hence it is necessary to know how to prepare the Blessed Water, which water is a fiery penetrating spirit, a philosophical water, and the hidden key to this Art. For, verily, without this water all Alchemy is vain. Therefore, my son, remember that the whole Fundament of the Philosopher's Stone consists in bringing to a new birth the primary matter of metals --- i.e., Mercurial Water, the perfect Corpus Solis --- that it be born again by water and of the spirit, just as Christ says: "Except a man be born again by water and the Spirit, he cannot see the Kingdom of God". So also here in this art, I tell thee, my son: except Corpus Solis be sowed, all else is vain, and there will be no fruit. Even as Christ says: "except the Seed fall into the earth and die, it shall bear no fruit". When, now, Corpus Solis has been born again through water and the Spirit, it grows up a purified, astral, everlasting, immortal body, bringing much fruit and multiplying after the manner of vegetables.

Concerning this Roger Bacon says: I declare unto you that if the Astrum (Star) turn its inclination to, and impress it on, this clarified gold body, I can nevermore lose its virtue and power. For the body is perfect, composed of, and agreeable to, all the elements. Therefore, my son, let him not attempt this Art who knows not of this new birth in nature, and this bringing forth of metals through the water and spirit of primary matter. For, believe me, all else is useless, vain, and deceiving. Hence

philosophers have written that: "Everything brings forth its like; and what a man sows that shall he reap".

Therefore says the Philosopher Richard, the Englishman: Sow gold and silver, that they, by means of Nature, may bring forth fruit.

Hence, my son, for thy work seek no other body but gold, as others are all imperfect. For gold is the most perfect of bodies, enlightening and vivifying all others, stable in fire, possessing a fixed, incombustible root; and, as Bacon testifies, one can alter nothing in the nobility and perfection of gold, it being free from all natural ferment, and no substance in the world is more perfect. Therefore, says Isaac the Philosopher: "The Stone can only be extracted from a perfect body, the most perfect in the world. For, were this body not perfect, how should we extract therefrom a Stone having power to give life to all mortal, to purify all corrupt, to soften all harden, and harden all soft bodies? Verily, it were impossible to extract to excellent a Stone from an imperfect body! Although many attempt it, yet they are fools". Therefore, my son, understand that the red, philosophical, Sulphur is a gold, as Richard testifies, and King Calid also states: "Our Sulphur is no common Sulphur, but is of Mercurial nature, stable, fleeing no water". Other Philosophers also bear witness that their Red Sulphur is gold.

Now, my son, the Sages say in their books that common gold and silver are not their gold or silver, since theirs are living, while the common are dead, and therefore incapable of imparting to others the perfection they themselves are wanting in. now, my son, those words of the Philosophers are true; it is impossible for common gold or silver to perfect other imperfect bodies, except --- as I have said before --- the Corpus Solis and Lunae be born again through the Water and Spirit of Primary Matter, and arise as a transfigured, spiritual, clarified, externally fixed, subtle, penetrating body, which afterwards shall have power to perfect and multiply imperfect bodies. Therefore have our Philosophers said: For this reason are such labours undertaken on our Stone, that its tincture may be improved, for our Stone must be much more subtle and decocted than common gold and silver. Bernhardus says: "We therefore take this body as created by nature. But it is necessary to more than perfect the masculine body by natural art in order that in its more-than-perfection it may render the imperfect perfect, by its superabundant fertility in weight, colour, and substance. And, if its perfection were not greater in degree than that imparted by Nature, what use would our time of nine-and-a-half months be?". Hence Arnoldus de Villa Nova, in his Epistle concerning our Stone, says: "The power and virtue and nature of gold and silver are in the Stone, else no gold or silver could be made. But the gold and silver in our Stone are better than the common, since the former are living. Hence Philosophers call the Stone their gold and silver, because the same are in it potentially and essentially, but not visibly". Euclides says: "A perfect thing is unchangeable. For example, bread. Bread, baked and kneaded, is perfect in degree and nature, has attained its final form, and of it can be made nothing but bread. Thus also with philosophical gold. Hence it is impossible to perfect other bodies with common gold, except the perfect Corpus Solis be again dissolved into its primary matter, whereupon it is converted by our Art into a veritable Ferment or Tincture, philosophers saying the process is not finished until Sol and Luna are joined into one body. My son, understand here the Luna Metaphorica, not the literal, since philosophers explain Luna to be of a cold, moist nature, giving the same definition also to Mercury. Hence

by Luna is understood Mercury, or Mercurial Water, or primary matter, which is the Philosophers' Luna, or Liquor Lunae of the *Clangor Buccinae*.

Now, my son, you have a short explanation why it is impossible to do anything in this Art, except we reduce perfect bodies, by philosophical fire or mercurial water, to their primary nature, which primary nature is a Sulphureous Water, and not Quicksilver as Sophists assert. For the primary matter of metals is not Quicksilver, by a sticky, sulphureous steam, and a viscous water, in which water are united in the three principles, Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury. Therefore it is necessary to know the Blessed Water of Mercury, or celestial, supernatural fire, by which bodies are dissolved and fused. This knowledge is the greatest secret and is revealed by God alone. For the Philosopher Bacon says: God Almighty has created man above Nature and all creatures --- although man is of Nature, excepting the Breath of God breathed into him at the creation --- and he shall be the lord of Nature's works. This Divine Spirit fashions the mind and thoughts of man, teaching him to perceive the first principles of Nature. The inspired Apostle, St Peter, tells us that the Earth and its work shall consume therein, and a new world shall be born, beautiful and good, as is described in the Apocalypse. Thence the Philosopher concludes --- like St Peter --- that the elemental world can only be destroyed by fire. Therefore, remember in this Art that fire is the instrument, according to Nature's example, and, next, understand further that this water, whereby Corpus Solis (gold) --- which, as Roger Bacon testifies, is a world perfectly created --- is burnt, destroyed, and melted, is not a common fire --- since common fire can neither burn nor destroy gold --- but a supernatural, inconsumable fire, which alone has power to burn gold and release it from its hard, rigid bonds. Also, my son, understand that this supernatural fire, possessing such power over gold and other metallic bodies, is alone the spiritual, sulphureous, fiery water of Mercury, in which Corpus Solis is fused and burnt; and, out of this melting and destruction, is again born and created a new world, and the Heavenly Jerusalem, i.e., an eternal, clarified subtle, penetrating, stable body, which can penetrate and perfect all other bodies. Hence Bacon says: "Just as a supernatural or elemental fire is that which disintegrates and fuses the elements of the whole world, and as the new Creation will be born from the mortal, molten elements, and will be an eternal Creation; even so has the Holy Trinity in the Celestial Stone also revealed to us a supernatural fire. My son, philosophers in their books have concealed this Fire, describing it in parables, and by countless names; in particular, they call it Mary's Bath, and a horse-dung, Menstruum, Urine, Milk, Blood, Aqua Vitae, etc.". Concerning this Fire, Bernhardus says: "Make a vaporous fire, steady, digesting, not strong, subtle, airy, clear, condensed, inconsumable, penetrating, and equable". And he continues: "Verily, I tell thee, all wisdom is in this fire, for the said vaporous fire performs all things". Hence he directs us to copy his words concerning this fire, word for word. Therefore, a wise man will easily understand that such words refer not to a common, but to a supernatural fire. Hence Maria says: "The Element Water makes white and melts bodies". Concerning the preparation of this fire --- which he calls menstruum --- Raymundus Lullius says in his books (which are *Testam. Test. Noviss.*, *Codicil*, *Anima Metallorum*, *Lux Mercuriorum*, *Liber Mercurius*, *Liber de Secretis Naturae*, *de Quintessentia*, and especially in *Elucidarium Testamenti*, Chap. 4: That it is not of men but of Angels to reveal this Celestial Fire, for therein is the greatest secret; and he indicates in figurative words that such Fire of the Sages is composed of horsedung and living chalk. What living chalk represents I will explain elsewhere. As to "horsedung", I have already indicated that it is the water of primary matter, for the

same is warm and moist. But it is not common horsedung, as many ignorantly imagine. Therefore the Philosopher Alanus says: "Philosophers have named the moist fire horsedung, in which moisture is retained the latent heat; and it is the property of the fire in the horse's belly not to destroy gold, but to multiply it by reason of its moisture". Alchidonius says: "Verily our medicine is to be hidden in horsedung, which is the Sages' Fire". And Alanus: "Dear son, be diligent in disintegrating, and the same must take place in gentle heat, that is, in tepid horsedung". So also Arnold de Villa Nova, Chap. 9 (Concerning Heat), says that "the heat of horsedung is its fire". And Alphidius: "Let it be boiled and buried in the warmth of horsedung". Alos Aristoteles: "The Earth, or body, will rejoice in no strength unless sublimated by horsedung". Hermes: "Roast and boil it in the warmth of the horse's belly". And Morienus: "If thou find not what thou seekest in horsedung, spare thyself further expense". Arnoldus: "And seek no other fire but this, for this is the Sages' Fire and Furnace. This water dissolves and calcines all metals, and fuses them white and red". Therefore say the Turba and Senior: Our water is the fire, and our water is stronger than all fire, making out of gold a pure spirit, which natural fire cannot do, although natural fire also belongs to it. For our water, penetrating the natural metal, converts it into primary water, and afterwards into an earth or powder, which burns gold more than natural fire. Hence gold more than natural fire. Hence Calid says: "It is verily a fire burning and destroying all things". But philosophers have concealed the preparation of this philosophical water or fire, i.e., Mercurial Water. Raymundus Lullius has written most plainly concerning the same: "And it will first be necessary to purify Mercury from its external moisture and earthy earthiness, but not with pernicious, destructive things, whereby its noble, fruitful, teeming nature would be destroyed". Avicenna, Arnold, Geber, Raymundus in the Codicil, and others, assert that Mercury is best purified by the sublimation of common, prepared salt. By treating the sublimate with hot water, the spirit of salt is dissolved out. Dry the sublimate, and mix with Tartaric Salt. Heat several times in a retort, when the Mercury will distill over vivified, and in this way will be somewhat freed from external moisture and impurities. This purgation, says Bernhardus, is not injurious, since the hot water and salt penetrate it not. But, my son, understand that Mercury cannot be thoroughly purified by external treatment, since it is a homogeneous, indivisible substance, "whose impurities penetrate its inmost being, and can therefore be removed by no sublimation". Hence another means must here be sought, viz., that of dissolving purified Quicksilver and loosing its natural bonds, and changing it into its primary, which is a sulphureous, spiritual water. Bacon and Raymundus Lullius both testify that unless purification and solution be effected, the menstruum will not be worth a fig.

When now Mercury is freed from its bond and resolved into its primary water, we can inwardly purify it, and, by distillation, separate the spirit from the water and earthy earthiness. Concerning which separation the philosophers have written mysteriously, and in particular have discovered the same figuratively in the distillation of wine. For in vinous distillation we see that the spirit of wine is mixed with much water and earthy impurity. But, by artificial distillation, the spirit can be separated from phlegmatic wateriness and earthy impurity, a residue remaining. From which residue, after calcinations, is extracted a white salt which --- added to the spirit, and repeatedly distilled --- produces a spirit mightily strengthened and sharpened by this salt of nitre. Verily the above is a figurative description given us by philosophers, which we should follow in the preparation of Mercurial Water. Since the same --- after disintegration

and solution, i.e., similarly to wine --- can, by sublimation, be separated from the water or phlegm, rectified, etc. And, verily, no one has written more clearly concerning the preparation of his Mercurial Water than Raymund Lullius, viz., in *Test. Noviss.*, also in *Liber Mecurorium* (Test. I), etc., etc., in which he plainly enough declares that, after putrefaction, distillation, and separation of philosophical spirits of wine, the spiritual water is again mingled into its earth, and distilled over the alembic, further explaining how the said philosophical wine, or menstruum, is sharpened and strengthened with a salt.

This Water Menstruum, or philosophical spirits of wine, therefore, dissolves its own body, or animated Mercury, into the primary matter, or water, by which it can then be indefinitely multiplied with the help of putrefaction and distillation. Arnold de Villa Nova writes concerning this water thus: "There is a crumbling substance containing a fatty mixture, from which substance the master separates Philosophers' Liquid, which is suitable for the work and exceedingly clear. Therein dwells the Fifth Essence (Quintessence) Metallically, and the same has affinity to metals, and in it is the Tincture to be brought together, as being a perfect metal, for it has within itself the nature of Quicksilver and of Sulphur".

I will here (although forbidden) quote *Rosarium Philosophorum* concerning the distillation of this menstruum, or water: "In the distillation of the spirit care must be taken, and the vessels in which thou purifiest thy spirit must be of glass, that the spirit find not a place to flow out, by reason of its quickness. For if the Red Spirit escape, the Artist labours in vain. Artists call the Red Spirit a blood, and menstruum; therefore take heed with thy vessels that thou collect the dry spirit with its blood by itself in a receptacle, without diminution of its strength, so that thou mayst store up the same for future use". But, in distillation, seeing is more than writing. Hence nobody should be a master before having been a disciple. Therefore be careful in the work. Place a receptacle beneath, and distil first --- with gentle heat --- the element of water. Set the same aside, substituting another receptacle; close well the joints, that the spirit escape not, and increase the fire a little. Then will rise in the helmet, and distill over, a dry, yellow spirit; keep the fire steady while the helmet is yellow. Afterwards, when the helmet begins to get red, increase the fire slowly, and deep it so until the Red Spirit and the Blood have quite distilled out, passing through the helmet like clouds in the air. When the Red Spirit has distilled over, the helmet will become white. Then cease quickly, and thou hast in the receptacle the two elements, Air and Fire, and thus hast extracted the right dry spirit, and hast separated the pure from the impure. Behold, thou hast now the primary matter of metals, having thus separated the pure from the impure! Behold, thou hast now the water in which all metals have their origin, which is of all metals the root! Hence are they dissolved into water, even as frozen ice is resolved into water, since the same clearly was water in the first place. Therefore marvel not at this, for all things upon earth have their root in water. Oh, how many are there that, working, never think of this root, which is the key of the whole work? The same immediately dissolves bodies, is father and mother, opens out and locks up, and reduces bodies to their primary matter. It dissolves bodies, coagulating itself with them, and the Spirit of the Lord is led forth upon the Water, i.e., the strength of the spirit is seen to be active therein, and this takes place when the body is placed in this water. And the philosopher adds: "Behold the base thing with which our Sanctuary has been opened! For it is a thing well known by everyone; ye, he who understands it not finds it seldom or never. The wise man keeps it, the fool

throws it away, and its reduction is easy to the initiated". But, my son, the freeing of this Stone, or Mercury, from its natural bonds, and its resolution into primary water, is the greatest and most secret of mysteries. And, without it, all else were vain, for we could not separate or extract the right spirit or Watery Essence that dissolves bodies. And this dissolving has been kept secret by all philosophers, and they have paced the revealing of the same in God's hand, and have cursed the man who should punish it. Hence they have spoken briefly and with subtlety of this resolution, that the same might remain hidden from the ignorant. But, thou, my son, observe that such resolution of Animated Mercury can hardly be effected without the proper means (coagulation). But, observe further, that here are not to be used sophisticated means, like those used by ignorant fools who, reducing common Mercury to water by sophisticated contrivances, vainly imagine they possess the true water. They sublime Mercury with all manner of corrosive salts and vitriols (whereby the sublimate generates Spirits of Salt), and, afterwards, dissolve the sublimate into water in a bath, cellar, and otherwise. They also make it into a water by means of Salmiac, herbs, soaps, aquafortis, with strange vessels, and such like sophisticated methods, which are, altogether, great phantasy, foolishness, and vanity; and then they imagine they can again separate such things from Mercurial Water, and thus obtain the true water desired of philosophers. But all is false, and they find not what they seek. And the cause of their failure is their neglect of the teaching of philosophers, who plainly declare that it should be mixed with no foreign matter. Bernhardus says in his Epistle: When Mercury is dried by Salt, Aquafortis, or other thing, it is no more suitable for philosophical work; for, dried by Salts, Alums, and Aquafortis, it dissolves not any more. But, thou, my son, remember what I now tell thee, and what philosophers have, in their books. Revealed to the understanding, that this water is to be prepared with no foreign matter in the world, but alone by Nature, with Nature, and out of Nature. These are to the understanding plain, clear words, which I will not in this place explain more at length, but will embody them in a Treatise. Yet as an aid to memory give you the following verses:

Take it fresh, pure, living white and clear,  
Then bind firmly both hands and feet  
With the very strongest cords,  
That it suffocate and die.  
In the closed House of Putrefaction,  
According to nature's example,  
Let the same Nature dissolve it  
Into the same Nature dissolve it  
Into pure and beautiful primary matter.  
Then shall it be a living, spiritual Fount,  
Flowing from heaven pure and clear;  
Eating its own flesh and blood,  
Whereby it is multiplied.

He who, by Divine Aid, has attained this Blessed Water, let him praise God; for he holds in his hands the key with which he can unlock the treasure houses containing gold, silver, precious stones, honour, power, and health. This Blessed Water is by philosophers called Pluto's Daughter, having power over all treasures. She is also called the white, pure, tender, undefiled Virgin Bega, without whom no bringing forth nor mingling can take place. Therefore have philosophers married this pure, tender



Virgin to Gabricus, that she might bear fruit; and Gabricus, having known her, died. Bega, by reason of her great love, swallowed and devoured her great love, swallowed and devoured him, as Aristotelese cleverly shews in Turba Philosophurum; and Bernhardus in his Practica says: “The fount is to the king as a mother, whom she bears within herself, and kills him. But the king rises again, and becomes so strong that no man can wound him”. Hence philosophers say: “Although the king is, before the world, more precious and worthy than Bega, yet alone can he bear no fruit”. This Virgin and Blessed Water have philosophers in their books called by a thousand names, as a Heaven, Celestial Water, Heavenly Rain, Heavenly or May Dew, Water of Paradise, Aqua Regia, Corrosive Aqua Fortis, a sharp vinegar and brandy, a Quintessence of Wine, a waxy green juice, a waxy Mercury, a water becoming green, and Green Lion, a Quicksilver, a Menstruum, a Blood and Mesntruum, urine and horse-urine, Milk, and Virgin’s Milk, white *Arsenic*, Silver, a moon and a humour of the moon, a woman and woman’s seed, a sulphureous, steamy water and smoke, a fiery burning spirit, a mortal penetrating poison, a basilisk which kills everything, an envenomed worm, a poisonous snake, a dragon, a poisonous serpent which devours its offspring, a strong fire, and a clear fire, a fire of horse dung and horse dung, a sharp salt and sal armoniac, a saltary and common salt, a sharp soap, lye, and viscous oil, an ostrich-stomach which devours and digests an eagle, a vulture and hermetic bird, a seal and vessel of Hermes, a smelting and calcining stove. Innumerable other names of beasts, birds, vegetables, waters, humours, of milk, of blood, and of men have been given to it. Philosophers have spoken of it in their books, moreover, in a figurative manner, that such a water should be made out of such things, and all the fools who have sought it in such things, have never found the desired water.

But, know this, my dearest son, that it is only made out of live Mercury, and from no other foreign thing in the world. The philosophers have given it these many names in order hat the unwise may never know it. And you, my son, will have concluded the first part of this treatise, when you understand and know, that without this fire all the toil of the whole world and of alchemy is mere loss, and all alchemical processes are a delusion, unprofitable and false. For the Great Rosary says: “The receipt consists of only one thing, and with this key all the books of the philosophers are particularly and universally closed, and surrounded and guarded as with a strong wall. He who has not yet acquired the key can never enter the fortified castle, or obtain anything profitable. For this water is the one only key for opening the metallic walls. Further, this water is the strong aquafortis which Isaac refers to in his fragmentary work, and wherewith he dissolved bodies and made them spiritual. Therefore, diligently note, all alchemical work without this is only lies and falsify, whether metallic, mineral, vegetable, or animal substances are used. It is dissolved, sublimated, distilled, calcinated, extracted, mixed, compounded, as one will. One may dissolve it in cellars, in the bath, in dung, in aquafortis, and in all manner of strong waters, in every possible way, as the alchemical processes direct. We may make oil, water, lime, powder, black, white, yellow, and red. We may burn it, we may melt it in any possible fashion, even as the alchemical receipts tell us, and call it the true means for making gold and silver, yet from beginning to end it is abomination and falsity. I myself, with my own hands (for once I disbelieved this), have experienced such loss and damage.

Therefore, my son, be fully warned against the sophistry of Alchemy and all sophisticating, deceitful people. Beware of them as you would beware of the devil who works mischief. Avoid them as an impure, pitiless, and consuming fire, even as a

deadly poison, for a man comes to destruction of both body and soul, honour, goods, through this sophistry and self-insinuating false Alchemy. It is worse than the devil himself, for it is possible to expend (the wealth of) a whole kingdom thereon; yet everything is destroyed, and no fundamental truth is found out. Accordingly, open your eyes. Recognize the only key; avoid falsity, for it is impossible in any other way to obtain anything true or profitable, save in that way which I have now shewn in this book.

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## A Short Admonition to the Reader

I do not personally know who the exceedingly propitious and beloved reader of the remarkable foregoing treatise may be, but I communicate what I have obtained to you, and would fain that the other portion of the small book were also forthcoming, and entirely printed. You will not, however, think that I withhold it from jealousy, as is the common case with others in their editions of such philosophical tracts. But because I have communicated to you the mercurial water and permanent water, wherein chiefly consists the key of this Art, and this has been done in a useful and faithful manner, I will give the further processes requisite in my other volume --- *Thesaurinella Aurea Olympica Tripartita*, which will come out next Easter, and will contain a collection of the writing of the Philosophers, printed for the first time, concerning the Blessed Stone of the Wise, so that you will have sufficient and useful instruction to your heart's desire, and will know how to thank me for it. When I get the other part I will not keep it from you. I have always wished and prayed to be the means of your instruction.

Farewell, with the love of God, which passes understanding!

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**Certain Verses of an unknown Writer,  
Concerning the Great Work of the Tincture.**

Wilt thou, by God's grace alone.  
Obtain the Stone of the Philosophers?  
If so, seek it no in vegetables or animals,  
In sulphur, quicksilver, and minerals;  
Vitriol, alum, and salt are of no value;  
Lea, tin, iron, and copper profit nothing;  
Silver and gold have no efficacy.  
Hyle or Chaos will accomplish it all.  
It is enclosed in our salt spring,  
In the tree of the Moon and of the Sun.  
I call it the Flower of Honey,  
The Flower known to the Wise.  
In fine, the Flower and Honey  
Are the Sulphur and Quicksilve of the Wise,  
Even water and earth,  
With the whitish seed of all metals.  
The water is volatile, the earth fixed;  
One can effect nothing without the other,  
Both are born of a root having a white exterior.  
It produces all the virtues of the metals,  
Yet it is not dug from the ore  
Either with pickaxes or other instruments.  
In the place and spot where our Matter is found  
No other metal whatever exists.  
It is produced, with its virtue and efficacy,  
In Hyle or Chaos alone.  
Homer knew it well, and called it Moly.  
This, in its proper condition,  
Has a root altogether black.  
The god Mercury offered it to Ulysees,  
Even unto Ulysses in his wanderings,  
As a precaution against the sorcery of Circe.  
The gods also have bestowed it upon man  
As a singularly great gift,  
Designed to assuage and comfort him.  
Hence springs pleasing nectar,  
The drink of the goddesses.  
It is also termed Chelidonia,  
As a singular gift of Heaven.  
Solar Root is another name.  
The root is known to the wise:  
It receives high honours in astronomy,  
Is metaphorically likened to the planets,  
Lead, tin, copper, and iron,  
Silver and gold, everything the wise have named.  
In the tongue of Chaldea it is also called Azoth;

In German it is a blessed spirit;  
In Latin, argent vive animate,  
That is to say, Mercury of the Philosophers.  
It is also named the herb Adrop,  
A well-known Chaldean word,  
Signifying in our speech Saturn.  
Astronomically speaking, I must say  
That Saturn rules the earth.  
Metaphorically is our matter compared,  
Being the Red Lead and Red Earth,  
With Fools despised and valueless.  
It is called the Red and Green Lion.  
It is well known as the Adamic Earth ---  
A skillful production of the Wise Creator,  
Which doth contain and unite in one mass  
The powers of all natures.  
From this mass and red earth,  
Almighty God creates Adam.  
He has highly honoured our first father,  
Who is also called Microcosmus.  
You are to recognize the Red Earth as Adam;  
We call it the First Matter.  
Later on, I will likewise disclose its preparation.  
With great courage kill the lion;  
But take its coagulated blood,  
The brilliancy of gold and its costliness,  
Separated from the center of putrefying earth;  
Dissolve it with the greatest diligence;  
Imitate the Creator of Nature so wise,  
Who will vouchsafe to enlighten our understanding,  
That we may separate the dry from the moist.  
Thus water is produced from earth,  
The volatile from the fixed,  
The animated spirit on the earth.  
Water and earth, two invisible elements,  
Have, by God's grace and care,  
Fire and air concealed within them.  
They are also purely impregnated  
With the fifth invisible nature.  
But, to proceed to the end of the work,  
Marry the woman with the man,  
Our Adam with clear Eve,  
Both being absolutely naked,  
For then Nature herself, being clean and pure,  
Rejoices with her own nature.

The animated spirit dissolves the body,  
The body coagulates the spirit.

This is the sole Mercury,  
Which is the Foundation of the Stone of the Wise.  
It becomes black, white, green, and red,  
Is itself Proteus, the God of the sea,  
Who, being caught, so wondrously  
Transforms himself into a thousand shapes;  
That is, it dissolves and coagulates itself,  
Sublimates and calcines,  
Mortifies and vivifies,  
Washes and incerates,  
Clarifies and fixes.  
In all these things  
Heaven and earth are concerned,  
And the Sun and the Moon  
Become dark and black as a raven:  
Heaven and earth are melted quite away:  
Truly, in the Hyle or Chaos  
There is a most wonderful strife  
Of the elements in all directions.  
Water covers all the earth,  
But, in order that the moist may become dry,  
Our strong giants maintain  
Incessant and unwearying contests  
With our wondrously small dwarf,  
Who, finally, by divine miracle,  
Conquers and overcomes  
And captures them all, both slays and binds.  
Out of the destroyed rubbish  
God creates a new Heaven and Earth.  
The New Jerusalem is built  
With transparent clear gold,  
Also with pure precious stone.  
Here is placed the famed Stone of the Wise,  
The Unique bird, the good Phoenix,  
Who by the glow of the fire  
Is slain and born again,  
And becomes a real Salamander,  
Who now lives in the fire.  
This is the filius solis, child of the sun,  
Who with his singular power  
Works miracles and great wonders,  
And can expel all sicknesses  
In human and metallic bodies,  
With glorified body, flesh and blood,  
He purifies all that is corporeal.  
The immortal Adam, highly endowed,  
Tinges common gold and silver,  
So that they thereby may become fruitful,  
To bear their blessed likeness on the Earth.

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## Enigmas Concerning the Tincture

### *Question the First.*

All things are compounded in triads;  
They also rejoice in thenuber four,  
Yet they resolve themselves into unity,  
For otherwise nothing could exist.  
It is indeed a subtle vapour,  
And proceeds from Divine favour.  
Tell me, then, what is this art?

### *First Answer.*

A point which suddenly goes in a circle,  
Wherein quadrant and triangle sand:  
If you obtain it, you have the secret,  
And escape poverty, want, and peril.

### *Question the Second.*

I am sprung from four.  
Your war harasses and slays me,  
Could I but end this war,  
Then my soul would never depart from me.  
Your war destroys the green grass.  
Alas for advice! What good does that?

### *Second Answer.*

If you desire to unite the evil four,  
That they may no depart from one another  
Under the test of fire, then make them fire.  
Thus you will possess a treasure richer far  
Than Charles of Ghent could count,  
Although he were a rich man.

### *Question the Third.*

At first, there were four,  
Yet now are there only three.  
Before, there were five,  
Yet release the fourth;  
Otherwise we cannot use them.  
Instruct me, what kind of being is this?

### *Third Answer.*

One and four compose five completely,  
But three and one make a bad four.  
If you wish to reduce the three to unity,  
And cannot, then make it nothing.

*Question the Fourth.*

Who is it, whose war is readily  
But with secrecy prepared?  
Yet there cannot be war without warriors:  
I need four of them for this strife.  
Instruct me, now, where are there such people?

*Fourth Answer.*

From the green meadows  
Come forth our giants;  
From the deep mines  
Proceed our dwarfs.  
Vesuvius and Etna furnish us  
With the children of the fire.  
The deep waters produce our nymphs;  
Our water is not disagreeable.  
Instruct us what is this?

*Final and Universal Rule.*

On the Mount of Venus, on the green heath,  
You will find your answer.  
Seven companions go in and out,  
Drinking with gusto a sour wine,  
Ogling also a beautiful woman,  
Whom they regard with looks of live.  
This love befools their bodies,  
So eagerly desire they the woman.  
These men will expound thy questions,  
And quickly answer the same.  
Now cease thy questions,  
For more I may no tell thee.

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## **A Short Admonition to the True-Hearted Reader and Son of the Doctrine.**

Well-beloved Friend, Brother, and Reader, since this book is coming to an end, I have obtained the following description of the potable gold from my dear and most trusted friend, John George Cressius, citizen of Heidelberg, and lover of chemistry. He wishes me to append to it the statement that it is the work of Theophrastus. I cannot say for certain that it belongs to our dear Teacher, since many processes and writing appear among the lovers of Alchemy bearing his names, but such as he would never have thought of writing in such a fashion. However this may be, may I prove not unpleasing to thee that I place after it a remarkable instructive tract of Dom. Jacob Montanus, Doctor at Konigsburg, Prussia. The treatise deals with the efficacious administration of the glorious antidote called potable gold, the highly desirable, universal medicine for all diseases. Take this Pandora for the present, and be welcome to it. As to what may be wanting in it, I will send thee it in our Olympic Golden treasure, to be printed at Frankfort, as also in our New Olympic Rosary, which, as an appendix to the Golden Fleece, is to appear a Basle, if God will, this Easter. If I find that this work which I dedicate to thee is acceptable, thou wilt see next Michaelmas, and the following Easter, four or five additional tracts, by ancient and modern writers, concerning the Philosopher's Stone, if it be God's will, if it please thyself, and the publisher sufficiently remunerates me. Vale.

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## Concerning the Potable Gold of Theophrastus Paracelsus

Take an old Hungarian wine which has not been drawn off, but still remains on its stand, and is already clear, the older the better, and extract its spirit. At first there goes up a little phlegm, and shews itself with streaks. When the rectified spirits ascend, no streaks are to be seen, and when these recommence, and the evaporation leaves off, distill the spirit again, and leave a little behind; this is now phlegm. Repeat the process ix or seven times, in each case leaving a little behind, until the spirits be quite separated from their phlegm.

### Test for the Spirits ~

Take a small and fine linen cloth, moisten it with any spirit, set fire to the cloth, and when it is completely consumed, the spirit of wine is rectified. Next, drop in a drop of olive oil, as the spirit falls from the stand to the bottom, and remains on the bottom, as fast as one stirs up; then you will have completely and rightly distilled the spirit of wine.

After this, take the extracted phlegm and distil it very slowly; at first a little spirit will evaporate; you may keep the same to drink; continue to distill the phlegm slowly, and there will remain at the bottom a beautiful white earth. Keep this, as also the phlegm; next, distill the remaining phlegm about tow measures; keep the phlegm, for it will serve you for the first phlegm. Afterwards, completely distill the matter; a black substance will remain at the bottom, smelling as offensively as pitch, while the black matter is still moist, In order to pour it out, pour it into a retort and distill it very slowly, when phlegm will at first arise; throw this away, and when the oil begins to dissipate, put it into another receptacle; distill the oil slowly, and carefully preserve it. After this, destroy the retort; take out the black matter; break it into pieces as large as beans; let a potter construct you a vessel shaped a Wallenburgian box, with a lid; put the black earth therein; elutriate the box well, and let it dry. Place it in a fire, at first gentle, afterwards strong, for his purpose covered with coals. Let it remain in this condition 12 hours; then let the fire cool so that the matter may become cold.

Afterwards, put it on again, and calcine it as at first. Then the matter will become beautifully white like paper; pound it small; pour upon it some of the phlegm which I gave instructions should be kept hot; let it stand 24 hours, when a salt will be extracted from the earth; pour it away from its dregs, and again pour another phlegm upon it; then let it stand 24 hours while more salt is being extracted. Repeat the process till the extraction ceases. Then throw away the remaining earth, which looks like sand. After this, extract the phlegm, and a beautiful white salt will remain. Repeat the process six or seven times, so that it retains the moisture; otherwise it will not receive the spirit of wine.

Now, pour upon the salt a little spirit of wine; shake it well; pour it into a phial in such a way that the spirit of wine may pass over it to the breadth of two or three little fingers. Then let it stand two months putrefying and the spirit of wine will acquire a beauteous red colour, and become even as an oil. After this, take as much gold from the goldbeater as you wish, put it in a phial, pour the spirit of life upon it, wherein its salt is dissolved; let it stand for about three months in a moderate heat, and the red

will turn into a beautiful yellow, and will extract the soul of the sun into itself. Pour this away. Distill it by means of the alembic, and the spirit of the sun will arise with the spirit of water, and will be potable medicine. Its salt will remain behind, which you may keep.

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## **On the Power, Operation, and Exceedingly Beneficial Use of the Glorious Antidote Termed Potable Gold.**

The worthies of antiquity, before as after Christ, have, with the greatest diligence, laboured in most searching enquiry and investigation into the nature of and concerning the property and potent efficacy which reside deeply hidden in gold, which also innumerable writings on the subject serve to demonstrate.

Now, it is not without reason that their zeal has caused them to labour and toil so wearily, because they have seen that the greatest constant of all God's earthly creations lies hidden in gold, which by no element can be destroyed or broken without extraordinary skill. All other creatures, as silver, precious stones, pearls, corals, spices, vegetables, and all kinds of herbs, howsoever named, although Divinely endowed every one with great power and virtue, cannot, notwithstanding, resist fire and the other elements, but yield and are destroyed.

In consequence, our ancient worthy men have made a commencement, and sought in many ways, and at great cost, wherewith, and by what means, the said noble creature of God might be compelled to yield its infinite power and virtue to succour human health, and become indisputable theirs. Many industrious investigators have diligently asked God for understanding, so as to arrive at the end they desire. Many, however, and the majority, have thought to force the sun by disgusting things, corrosive salt, urine, Mercury, and the like, but have accomplished nought, since, using, as aforesaid, noxious medicines, which cannot be employed without harm and damage.

Thus, these unskillful workers, ignorant of the nature and property of this gold, can accomplish nothing, either by fire or any other way, and in consequence imagine that it is impossible to force the gold without the corrosives, and to reduce it to a potable gold.

Yet is it manifest that God Almighty has created all creatures in the water and on earth solely for the use of man, and has appointed man as the ruler of them all. Hence it follows that there exists nothing so trifling and mean, but, applied externally or internally, it may be put to a medicinal use.

However, the noble metal and medicine is never, as many suppose, to be sought in acids; still less from other species of metals can it be extracted, even with the aid of fire, for it resists all this, but must be compelled by a special subtlety, and be changed from its first form and metallic nature. Afterwards its power and virtue are extracted by means of a pure, specially prepared spirit of wine, in the same way as noxious herbs, without the use of any corrosive whatever. The potable gold prepared with corrosives cannot be used without great harm and damage.

As to how, and in what manner, the sages thought that gold could be compelled to yield its power and virtue, a thing most people deem impossible, I ought to reveal to every considerate man, though, notwithstanding, little thanks will be gained, even when I have appealed to the uprightness of my life, and though the expenses I have incurred should be considered. I have no hesitation whatsoever to point it out, and

thereby openly dissipate all suspicion. Consequently, I have, as soon as possible, made a short relation concerning the preparation, whereby anyone may know for whom this, my already prepared Potable Gold, may be used, in that it is prepared without any corrosive matter, and can be used with no risk whatever as a universal medicine in all serious maladies.

Know, in the first place, that before the medicine can be properly used in long-standing sicknesses and weaknesses, it is necessary that the body be purified by proper medicines, as a learned and skillful physician directs. For with regard to sudden dangerous sickness, as apoplexy, epilepsy, cordialgia, syncope, tremor cordis, and the like, it is permissible to use the tincture at once; yet in the case of such severe dangerous illnesses, when the attack itself is allayed, it is well, before further employment of this tincture of gold, that the body be none the less previously purified.

In the next place, we must be careful concerning the amount of the dose, to avoid administering too much or too little; it is beneficial to give a full-grown adult guttae, or small drops. A person half-grown takes five or six; a child but one drop. The distilled water or wine that accompanies the dose must not exceed a single spoonful.

In the third place, in the case of chronic sicknesses, it should be daily, early in the morning and about five or six at night, after four or five hours fasting. When necessity requires, and the sickness has obtained a firm hold, it may be used thrice a day, that is to say, in the morning, between the two meals, two hours before dinner, and in the evening, two hours after supper. If the patient wishes to sleep, no further meal must be taken for two hours. This daily use must be kept up 8 or 14 days, according to the nature of the disease.

In the fourth place, it is necessary that potable gold be taken with things appropriate to it. We must regard the qualities, effects, and position of the same; for this reason, various accompaniments are suitable. It must be used to allay pain of a headache with water of betony. In case of giddiness, balm is necessary. Insomnia requires aqua vitae, betony, or marjoram water. Apoplexy requires water with extract of lavender; also place separately two or three drops at first on the tongue. The same quantity is used for paralysis. For a bad memory use a decoction of the roots of fennel and acorns.

Melancholy, sadness, and similar emotions of the mind, which are especially seated in the head, require betony and peony water, together with the potable gold, or liquor of oak mistletoe, but never anything hot, for this fills and oppresses the head. Should the malady arise from feverish blood, use water of common fumitory. Borage water dissipates and wards off all weakness and feebleness of the head, and preserves the constitution.

In epilepsy, or falling sickness, the potable gold must be used with peony water, or with a decoction of the root of peony, or with a decoction of the root of peony, collected while the moon wanes; in the case of an old or full-grown man, at the beginning of the paroxysm. The same is required when the paroxysm has ceased. A child of a year or 18 months, and of corresponding size, must be given one drop. A very young child must, at the commencement, middle and end of the attack, only have the point of its tongue smeared by means of a piece of wood dipped in olive oil.

Continue the application till the epilepsy ceases altogether. In cases of ophthalmia, or abscess in the eye, use fennel, swallow-wort, or xerophthalmia water. For catarrh and rheum add violet root water. For toothache drop a little into the tooth. For bleeding of the nose, scabious or plantain water must be used. For phthisis or constipation use honey water or milk. For ulcer of the lungs, take water wherein crabs have been caught, well corrected, for offensive breath, orthopnoea, and other cold and rheumy diseases, use water of Marrubius, hyssop, fennel, and the like. In cases of trembling or palpitating of the heart, use balm or borage water. With pains of the stomach use balm mint water, or a decoction of balm mint.

In fainting or heaviness place one or two drops on the tongue, with borage or sorrel water. For the iliac passion, or twisting of the guts, use plantain water. For the worm use a decoction of zedoary. In costiveness, pain or swelling of the liver, or dropsy, where external heat is the cause, use plantain or liverwort water. When the illness is occasioned by cold, use a decoction of spikenard and of cinnamon, for it removes the obstruction. In costiveness of the spleen use ash-tree water. In melancholy the potable gold must be administered with temperate, not with cold or hot, things, but with fumitory water, young hops, or nettle-moth water, or with liquor cornucervus, also with rose sugar, syrup of betony, after a slight purgation of the melancholy and morbid humour has been effected by the syrup of epithimum and cichorium, which humour produces the obstruction. Otherwise, the virtues of this potable gold would be extinguished and frustrated. This must also be understood of other medicinal extracts. For pain in the stones and the kidneys, use aquatic nut water, radish water, pimpernel water, or philanthropist's powder. In case of strangury or injury to the reins, employ fresh goat's milk. With rupture use a species of woundwort or common comfrey water. In obstruction or retention of the menstrual course, taking place not only in the matrix but in all other parts of the body whence the matrix receives its nourishment, the channels which convey nourishment are choked up. Since there is no nutriment in the uterus, there is also no menstrual excrement, and alarming symptoms supervene. The potable gold, however, is most excellent in removing this evil, wine mixed with herbs being employed for a week, twice or thrice daily, early in the morning, and at night, about four or five drops being used at a time. It is a marvelous secret in the case of any menstrual flow, ensuring proper regularity. Women take it, as Theophrastus and others witness, even when 50 or 60. Moreover, because the potable gold sets right the flow of the white and red, not restraining it like the ordinary astringents, but separating the bad from the good, it assists Nature to expel the bad, retaining what is good for the nourishment of the uterus; it is utilized in suffocation of the uterus, as the case requires, with wormwood water, orange peel water, endive, wormwood, salt, etc. The potable gold is also used with wormwood in cases of difficult birth. For sterility, water of Neptune or lavender is required. In cases of gout of the foot or the hand, burning water, or water of paralysis, or lavender water, is necessary.

When there is plague, it is good, if the malady and falling sickness permit, previously to administer a lenitive of cassia, manna, and the like, according as one ascertains from the symptoms what humour has infected the body and rules it, afterwards employing the potable gold with other purgatives. In cases of putrid fever, arising from humours, as takes place in a mild pestilence, antiseptics must be taken. When the putrefaction abounds in humours, then the appropriate lenitives must be used, but nothing acid. These humours must be dealt with in this manner since they would hinder the operation of potable gold. Various accidents originate them. We have here

given the best instruction how the poison may be warded off, either by perspiration or vomit. Therefore this potable gold is in this case used with lemon water, liquor of *Carduus Benedictus*, sandalwood, sag's head, syrup from the acidity of lemons, with water of citron, conserve of roses, of borage, water germander, in cases of heated paroxysms and with a warm condition of the body, etc. But if the heat were moderate, and the poison were situated in cold humour, it would be properly administered with theriacal water of pimpernel, vervain, angelica, and pomegranate. Moreover, pearls, corals, and salt of absinth may be added.

In the case of gangrene, fistula, itches, the potable gold with aqua pedis Columbini and sorrel water, externally and internally used, has healing efficacy. As for poison, it preserves those who are poisoned or been by a mad dog. It cures them with white tormentil or snake's root water.

The gold must be administered in the case of quatrains and other fevers with water of *Cypripedium*, theriacal water, water of *Carduus Benedictus*, or a sufficient decoction of the root of fennel, pimpernel, and salt of absinth. It is generally given at the commencement of the paroxysm, Perspiration must, if possible, follow.

In certain complaints of the belly we require water of the dodder of thyme, fumitory water, with liquor in water *Garyophyllorum Maris*, with a decoction of *Vincetoxicum* and of *Camaedius*, with a syrup of the acidity or the juice of lemons. Finally, it may be used against all maladies which are formally named by physicians. Yet we must be careful that, together with these sicknesses, we take into consideration the other indispositions or diseases which humours originate, as when, for instance, heat and cold are present, that we may know the opportunity for using a suitable preparation. Thus the potable gold is powerfully conducive to preservation and cure in the case of miners, assayers, alchemists, goldsmiths, cannon founders, mint-wardens, and all those who have been poisoned with poisonous smoke, and especially with mercury sublimate, crude and precipitate, or however it may be termed.

It is especially efficacious with those whose constitutions have been ruined by grease and fumes from the precipitate, and such matters. In this case the gold is accompanied with treacle water, scabious water, water of pimpernel, anthos with the sap of the holy wood, horn of sag, rhubarb, Muscat nuts, conserva anthos, syrup from the juice of lemons, bark of citron, of Mithridates, etc. We must also add, if necessary, the redness of pomegranate, and the pearl salt of absinth.

Finally, this potable gold destroys all superfluous moisture in the body; when rightly used, externally and internally, it expels all impurities, is an excellent purgative of every poison, purifies the blood, not by evacuation, but passing imperceptibly through all the limbs, renews them, retains that which is good, expelling the bad, being the true tincture of the wise, for consuming the remains of diseases, and increasing the natural heat of the body, surpassing herein all other medicaments. It is also efficaciously employed for fistulas, gangrenes, and all incurable ulcers, externally applied. This potable gold is also used with wine for leprosy. So much for the present concerning the right use of this glorious antidote. Should further information on this subject be desired, it can be obtained by consulting me at my house.

Jacob Montanus  
Doctor of Medicine at Konigsburg, in Prussia, in the year of our Lord, 1595.

*Finis.*



## **A Letter to the True Disciples of Hermes, wherein are Six Cardinal Keys of the Secret Philosophy**

Were I writing this letter to persuade of the truth of our Philosophy those, who unto themselves imagine it but a vain idea, & pure Paradox, then should I follow the example of the divers of the masters of this art; & I should attempt, basing myself upon the laws, & in the operations of nature, to convince such spirits of their error in demonstrating unto them the solidity of the principles of our science, & should touch but lightly upon such as concerns its practice: but in that my design be wholly other, & that I write but for yourselves, wise Disciples of Hermes, & true Children of the art, my sole aim is to serve you as guide upon this course so difficult to follow. Indeed our practice is a pathway in the sand, whereon must we take the Pole Stare for guide, rather than trust to the vestiges we find imprinted on it. The confusion of trails left on it by a near innumerable host, are so numerous, & one finds there such profusion of divers tracks, leading nearly all unto but some awesome desert, that it is well nigh impossible not to err from the veritable way, that alone those sages favoured by Heaven, have happily been able to extricate, & to recognise.

Such confusion brings to an abrupt halt the child of the art, one at the very start, another in midstream of the Philosophic course, & some few as they approach even to the ending of this arduous route, & descry the first glimmerings of the felicitous term of their enterprise; but perceive not, that the little road, left them for to travel, is the most laborious of all. They know not that those envious of their joy have hollowed ditches, & precipices in the midst of the path, & that unless it be they know the secret byways, whereby the wise sidestep such dangerous pitfalls, they shall miserably lose all advantage gained, at the instant itself, of imagining they had overthrown all obstacle.

I sincerely avow, that the practice of this our art is the thing most difficult in all the world, not as regards its operations, but with regard to the hardships there be, to learn it plainly from the works of the Philosophers: for if on the one hand it is with reason called, child's play; it requires upon the other in those who in it by their labour & study seek the truth, a knowledge most profound of the Principles, & operations of nature throughout the three realms; but the more especially in the realm of the minerals & of metals. 'Tis a grand point to discover the true material, which is the subject of our work; & one must needs to that end pierce the thousand dark veils, wherewith it is enwrapped; one needs must distinguish it by its own proper name, among a million extraordinary names, wherewith the Philosophers have diversely declared it; comprehend its properties in their entirety, & judge all degrees of perfection, art might bestow upon it; know the secret fire of the wise which is the one & sole agent efficient unto the opening, subliming, purifying, & disposing of the material to reduction into water; to which end must one penetrate also unto the divine source of the heavenly water, which operates such solution, animation, & purification of the stone; one must needs by means of a complete solution of the body, whence it springs, be able to convert our metallic water into an oil incombustible & to this end know how to effect the conversion of the elements, & separation, & reunion of the three principles; one must needs learn to make a white Mercury, & a Mercury that is citrine; one needs must know how is such a Mercury fixed, & nourished of its own blood, that it might convert into the fixed sulphur of the Philosopher, that one be not

in want of an explication more ample.

As there are in nature three realms, there are also in our art three medicines, which are three different workings in the practice, & which are nonetheless but three different degrees raising our elixir to its final perfection. These crucial operations constituting the three workings are by all Philosophers hid beneath the Key of secrecy, that the sacred mysteries of our divine Philosophy be not disclosed unto the profane; but to you, who are the children of science, & who are capable of understanding the language of the Sages, shall the locks be unloosed, & you shall have the Keys of the precious treasures of nature, & of art, if that you shall apply your mind entire & wholly to the comprehension of that which I wish for you here to set forth, in terms so easily intelligible, the which is of necessity, for the benefit of such as yourselves who are predestined, to knowledge of these sublime mysteries. I shall place within your hands six Keys with which to enter unto the sanctuary of Philosophy, open all its secret cabinets, & come to intelligence of verities most hidden.

### KEY THE FIRST

The first Key is that which lays open the dark prisons, wherein lies captive sulphur; 'tis that which knows how from the body to draw forth semen & which by conjunction of the male, with the female, spirit with body, sulphur with Mercury, forms the Philosophers' Stone. Hermes has made manifest the operation of this first Key in these words. *De cavernis metallorum occultus est, qui Lapis est venerabilis, colore splendidus, mens sublimis, & mare patens [1]*; this stone shines brilliant, contains within it a spirit of sublime origin, & is the Sea of the Wise, wherein they do seek their mysterious fish. The same Philosopher further & more particularly marks the birth of this admirable stone in the words: *Rex ab igne veniet, ac conjugio gaudabit, & occulta patebunt.*[2] A King he is & crowned in glory, taking birth within the fire, & who rejoices in union with the wife that to him is given, & it is this union that lays manifest what theretofore was hid.

Howsobeit, before that I pass on to other subjects, I have a counsel I would give you, the which shall be unto you of no little profit; & that is to point out that the operation of the three workings, having much that is analogous, & many relations the one to the other, the Philosophers wilfully speak concerning them in terms obscure, that those who have not the eyes of a lynx, shall be duped, & lose themselves in this labyrinth, whence it is right difficult to extricate oneself. Indeed as one imagines they are treating of one operation, they are often times speaking of another: take care then lest you be taken in: for it is true, that in each working the wise Artist must needs dissolve the body with the spirit, strike off the crow's head, whiten the black & redden the white; yet is it properly in the first operation, that the wise Artist shall strike off the head of the black dragon, & of the crow. It is thence that art, says Hermes, takes its beginning, *quod ex corvo nascitur, hujus artis est principium.*[3] Consider then that it is by separation of the fumes, black, foul, & malodorous of a black most swarthy, that our astral stone takes form, white, & splendidly radiant, the which in its veins contains the blood of the pelican; it is on this first purification of the stone, & at this lucent whiteness, that the initial Key of the first working comes to its close.

### KEY THE SECOND

The second Key dissolves the composite or stone, & initiates the separation of the Elements, in Philosophic manner; such separation of the Elements is achieved solely

in the raising of those parts that are subtle, & pure, above those that are crass & earthy. He who is competent to sublime the stone in manner Philosophic, justly merits the title Philosopher, for he knows the fire of the Wise, the which is the unique & sole instrument, capable of operating such sublimation. Never has Philosopher overtly revealed this secret fire, & puissant agent, which performs all the marvels of the art; he that understands not, nor has distinguished it in the characters wherewith I painted it forth in the discourse of Eudoxus & Pyrophilus, should halt here, & unto God make prayer that he illumine him: for knowledge of this great secret is rather a gift of the Heavens, than light acquired by force of reasoning; let him read nonetheless the writings of the Philosophers, meditate thereon, & most especially pray; for no difficulty is there, that shall not be illumined by work, meditation, & prayer. But that the stone be sublimed, the conversion of the Elements, & extraction of principles, shall prove impossible; & this conversion, which makes of the earth water, of water air, & of air fire, is the sole & one means whereby may be made, & prepared, our Mercury. Apply yourself therefore that you know this secret fire, the which does naturally dissolve the stone, & without violence, & resolves it into water in the great sea of the Wise, by distillation worked by the rays of the sun & the moon. Thus it is that the stone, which according to Hermes, is the vine of the Sages, becomes their wine, whence by the operations of art is produced their rectified *aqua vitæ*, & vinegar most sharp. This, the father of our Philosophy, cries out concerning this mystery. *Benedicta aquina forma, quæ Elementa dissolvit.*[4] But by this water most divine, the Elements of the stone can not be dissolved, & no perfect dissolution can there be, 'til completion of a proportionate digestion & putrefaction, whereon concludes the second Key to the first working.

### KEY THE THIRD

The third Key comprises in it longer suite of operations, than all the others together; right little have Philosophers spoken of it, for all that the perfection of our Mercury hangs thereon; the most reliable even, such as are Artephius, Trevisan, & Flamel, have passed over the preparations of our Mercury in silence, & there is hardly a one, who has not supposed, rather than teach, the longest, & most important operations of our practice. Wishing but to lend my hand upon this portion of the way, that you must take, & where for want of light, it is impossible to follow the veritable path, I shall be show myself less laconic than were the Philosophers, concerning this third Key, or shall at very least follow in order that which they have said upon the subject, so confusedly, that short of Heavenly inspiration, or the aid of a faithful friend, one shall, & this without doubt, remain lost in the Maze, powerless to find fortunate issue soever. I am certain, that you who are true children of science, shall derive great satisfaction, from the elucidation of these hidden mysteries, concerning the separation & purification of the principles of our Mercury, the which is effected by a perfect dissolution & glorification of the body from whence it springs, & by the intimate union of the soul with its body whereunto is the spirit the unique link, effecting such conjunction; this then is the intention, & essential gist of all the operations of this key, which finds its term in the generation of a new substance infinitely more noble, than the first.

When from the stone the wise Artist has made to spring forth the fountainhead of living waters, has expressed the resin of the vine of the Wise, & produced their wine, let him mark that within this homogenous substance, appearing in the form of water, are three & divers substances, & the three natural principles of all bodies, salt, &

sulphur, & Mercury, the which are the spirit, soul, & body; & albeit they seem pure & perfectly united, much is required still that they be more so; for when by distillation we draw off the water, the which is the soul & spirit, the body remains in the depths of the vessel, as a dead earth, black, & dregs, the which be it said, should not be held in despite; for in our subject, there is no thing which is not good. The Philosopher John Pontanus holds that the superfluities of the stone convert themselves into a veritable essence, that those who claim to separate whatsoever from our stone, understand nothing of Philosophy, & that all that is superfluous, refuse, dregs, & in fine the entire substance of the composite, perfects itself through the activity of our fire. This thesis opens up the eyes of those, who to effect an exact purification of the elements & principles, have convinced themselves they need take only of the subtle, & may discard the dense; but the children of science should not overlook that fire, & sulphur are hid within the earth's core, & that one must needs wash it carefully with its own spirit, for that the balm, the fixed salt, which is the blood of our stone, be thus extracted; herein then lies the essential mystery of this operation, the which shall be accomplished only should you observe an adequate digestion, & slow distillation. Follow therefore, O children of art, the precept given you by the candid Hermes, who in this place says, *oportet autem nos cum hac aquinâ animâ, ut formam sulphuream possideamus, aceto nostro eam miscere, cùm enim compositum solvitur, clavis est restaurationis.*[5] Knowing that none are more contrary than fire & water; let the wise Artist nonetheless bring peace between these enemies, who at heart love well each the other. Cosmopolitus has declared this mean in but a few words: *Purgatis ergo rebus, fac ut ignis & aqua amici fiant; quod in terrâ suâ, quæ cum iis ascenderit, facile facient.*[6] Be attentive therefore to this point, moisten often the earth with its own water, & you shall have, that which you seek. Need not the body then be dissolved in water, & the earth penetrated by its humidity, for that it be rendered disposed to generation? In the eyes of the Philosophers the spirit is Eve; the body Adam; let them be conjoined for the propagation of their species. Hermes says this same in other terms: *Aqua namque fortissima est natura, quæ transcendit, et fixam in corpore naturam excitat; hoc est lætificat.*[7] Indeed these two substances, which are of the same nature, but of two different sexes, embrace each the other with the selfsame love, & satisfaction as do man & woman, & together imperceptibly rise, leaving behind but few fæces in the base of the vessel; such that soul, spirit, & body, after careful purification, finally appear inseparably united in form nobler, & more perfect, than they had had theretofore, & as different from the original liquid form, as is the Alcohol of a wine perfectly refined, & purified of its salt, from the substance of that wine, whence it is taken; not only is this comparison most apt, but also it affords to the children of science a precise knowledge of the operations of this third Key. Our water is a living fountainhead, streaming from the stone, by a natural miracle of our Philosophy. *Omnium primò est aqua, quæ exit de hoc lapide.*[8] 'Twas Hermes declared this great truth. And recognised furthermore, that 'tis this water is basis of our art. The Philosophers give it divers names; calling it now wine, now *aqua vitæ*, & now again vinegar, or oil, according to its different degrees of preparation, or the divers effects, of which it is capable. Hosowever that may be, let me warn you that it is properly the vinegar of the wise, & that in the distillation of this divine liquor, occurs the same thing as with that of common vinegar; from this may you draw great instruction; the water & phlegm rise first; the oily substance, in which consists the efficacy of our water, last. And it this substance median between earth, & water, which in the generation of the Philosophic child, performs the function of the male; Hermes brings this to our attention right forcibly with the following words so clear;

*unguentum mediocre, quod est ignis, est medium inter fæcem, & aquam.*[9] Not contenting himself with showing these lights unto his disciples, he further explains to them in his emerald table, how they should in this operation proceed. *Seperabis terram ab igne; subtile ab spisso suavitur, magno cum ingenio.*[10] Mark that you smother not the fires of the earth in the waters of the flood. This separation, or rather extraction must needs be effected with great judgement.

You must thus needs to utterly dissolve the body, for that you might therefrom extract its humidity entire, the which contains this precious sulphur, this balm of nature, & marvellous unguent, without which hope not ever to find in the bottom of your flask that blackness so sought after by the Wise. Reduce the composite entire then unto water, & make of the volatile & the fixed perfect union; such is the precept of Senior, & it merits your attention. *Supremus fumus, says he, ad infimum reduci debet, & divina aqua Rex est de cælo descendens, Reductor animæ ad suum corpus est, quod demùm à morte vivificat.*[11] The balm of life is hid in these despicable fæces, & 'tis these you must lave with the heavenly waters, until that you have removed all blackness, & thence will your waters become animate of this fiery essence, which effects all marvels of our art. Better counsel thereunto, than that of great Trismegistus, can I not give. *Oportet ergo vos ab aqua fumum super-existentem, ab ubguento nigredinem, & à fæce mortem depellere;*[12] & more, the one means to success in this operation, is by that same Philosopher taught, who immediately thereupon adds; & *hoc dissolutione, quo peracto, maximam habemus Philosophiam, & omnium secretorum secretum.*[13]

But that you deceive not yourselves as regards this term *composite*; I shall affirm that the Philosophers have two species of composite. The first is that of nature; whereof I spoke in the first Key: for 'tis nature makes it in a fashion incomprehensible to the artist, who does but to it lend his hand, in the administration of things external, by which means does she bear forth, & produce that admirable composite. The second is the composite of the art; & 'tis the artist does effect the intimate union of the fixed unto the volatile perfectly conjoined, with all prudence he might have acquired from a profound Philosophy; the composite of art is not exactly alike in the second, & third workings, but 'tis nonetheless ever the artist makes it. Geber defines it a mixture of quicksilver & sulphur, that is of the volatile & the fixed, reacting the one upon the other, respectively volatalising, & fixing, the one the other till the state of perfect fixity be achieved. Consider the example of nature, & you shall see that the earth produces no fruit, but that it is penetrated by its humidity, & that the humidity continues sterile; but that it be held, & fixed by the dryness of the earth.

Be assured therefore, that there shall be no goodly success in this our art, but that in the first working, you do purge the serpent born of the alluvium of the earth, bleach these fæces feculent & swart, that therefrom you separate the white sulphur, the *sel armoniac* of the wise, which is their chaste Diana who in the basin shall lave herself. All this mystery is but of the extraction of the fixed salt from our composite in which consists the energy entire of our Mercury. The water, which rises by distillation, carries up with it a portion of this fiery salt; such that the affusion of the water upon the body several times over reiterated, impregnates, fertilises, & fecundates our Mercury, & renders it proper to fixation.; the which is the term of the second working: Finer exposition of which truth can I not find, but in these words of Hermes: *Cum viderem quod aqua sensim crassior, duriorque fieri inciperet, gaudebam; certo enim sciebam, ut invenirem quod quærebam.*[14]

Do you have but right mediocre knowledge of our art, what I have here said shall more than suffice, for that you understand that all operations of this Key, ending the

first working, are but to digest, distil, cohobate, dissolve, separate, & conjoin, & this with gentleness, & patience: in this manner shall you have not only a complete *extractio* of the juice of the vine of the wise; but you shall furthermore possess their veritable *aqua vitæ*; & I place you on guard that the more you shall rectify, & the more labour thereon, the more shall it acquire penetration & virtue; the Philosophers named it *aqua vitæ* in that it restores life to metals; but it is more properly called the great moon, by cause of her splendour, with the which does she shine; & they call it also the substance sulphuric, the balsam, gum, viscous humidity, & the vinegar most sharp of the Wise, etc.

Nor is it without reason that the Wise do give to this Mercurial liquor the name of pontic waters, & of vinegar most sharp; its exuberant ponticity being the veritable character of its virtue; and, as I have said, furthermore, that there occurs during its distillation, the same as occurs with vinegar, in that the phlegm & water rise the first, the sulphurous & salty parts rising last; separate the phlegm from the waters, unite the water & fire, the Mercury & sulphur, & you shall at last perceive the black most swart, blanch the crow, & redden the swan.

Since it is to you only that I speak; true Disciples of Hermes, I shall reveal to you a secret, that never you will find in its entirety in the books of the Philosophers. Some are content to say, that of their liquor are made two Mercuries, the one white, & the other red. Flamel more particularly says, that one is to utilise a citrine Mercury, in the imbibitions of the red; & warns the children of the art not to be mistaken upon this point; assuring also that he had been mistaken himself, were it not for the warning of Abraham the Jew. Other Philosophers teach, that the white Mercury is the bath of the moon, & the red the bath of the sun: but none sought clearly to set forth unto the children of science, by what path might these two Mercuries be obtained: if you have well understood me, already you are illumined upon this point. The lunar is the white Mercury, the vinegar most sharp the red; but to better determine these two Mercuries, feed them upon a flesh of their own species, the blood of the slaughtered innocents, which is to say, the spirits of the bodies, are the bath, wherein the sun & the moon shall bathe.

I have here set forth a great mystery if well you will reflect upon it: those Philosophers who of it do speak, pass lightly o'er this important point: the Cosmopolite spoke of it right spiritually by means of an ingenious allegory, declaring the purification & animation of Mercury: *Hoc fiet, he says, si seni nostro aurum et argentum deglutire dabis, ut ipse consumat illa, et tandem ille, etiam moriturus comburatur.*[15] He concludes & describes the magistracy entire in the words: *Cineres ejus spargantur in aquam, coquito eam donec satis est, & habes medicinam curandi lepram.*[16] Nor should you ignore the fact, that our ancient is our Mercury; that this name well suits him, in that he is the first matter of all metals; the same Author says, that he is their water, to which he gives the name of steel, & of lode-stone, & he adds thereto for greater confirmation of that which I have disclosed to you: *Si undicies coit aurum cum eo, emittit suum semen, & debilitatur ferè ad mortem usque; concipit chalybs, & generat filium patre clariorem.*[17] Whereon therefore a great mystery, have I disclosed to you without enigma; this is the secret of the Mercuries twain, the which contain the twin tinctures. Conserve them separately & confound not their species, for fear that they engender a monstrous progeny.

Not only is it that I dilate more intelligibly than any Philosopher before me has done, but also I lay bare all that is most essential in the practice of our art: if you meditate thereon, if you apply yourselves to understanding it well; but, most especially, if you labour on the lights that I have given you, I doubt not but that you shall find that

which you seek; & should you not come to such knowledge, by the way I have marked out unto you, certain am I that with great pains only shall you come at your goal, by simple reading of the Philosophers. Do not then despair; but seek out the source of the liquor of the wise, the which contains all that is necessary to the operation; it is hid beneath the stone; strike upon it with the rod of magic fire, & a clear fountain shall thence burst forth; do then as I have shown; prepare the bath of the King with the blood of the Innocents, & you shall have the animate Mercury of the wise, which loses never its virtues, if you but preserve it in a vessel well stopped. There is such sympathy, says Hermes, betwixt purified bodies, & spirits, that they quit each the other never, once that they be joined together; for that such union is like unto to that of the soul with the glorified body, concerning which faith tells us there shall be no further separation, nor death. *Quia spiritus, ablutis corporibus desiderant inesse, habitis autem ipsis, eos vivificant, & in iis habitant.*[18] By which you may see the merit of this precious liquor, unto which have the Philosophers given more than a thousand divers names, it is the *aqua vitae* of the wise, the water of Diana, the great moon, water of quick silver; it is our Mercury, our incombustible oil, which when cold like unto ice congeals, & in the heat, liquefies like unto butter; Hermes calls it the foliated earth, or earth of leaves; not without great reason; for if you observe it well, you shall see that it is leaved through & through; in a word 'tis the fountain most clear, whereof the Count of Treves makes mention; in fine it is the great Alkahest, which radically dissolves all metals; it is the true & permanent water, which having dissolved them, unites with them inseparably, augmenting both their weight & tincture. Hermes assures us our Mercurial water shall, once that it has been changed into earth, have acquired all virtue, wherewith Philosophers endow it.

#### KEY THE FOURTH

The fourth key of the art, is the entrance unto the second working; it is that which reduces our water unto earth; there is in this world but this one, unique water, which might by simple cooking be converted into earth; for the Mercury of the wise holds within its core its own proper sulphur, the which does coagulate it. The terrification of spirit is the sole operation of this working; cook therefore with patience; if you know well how to proceed, you shall not be long in awaiting the signs of this coagulation, & if they appear not in due time, then shall they not arise at all; for that is a sign indubitable that you have failed in some essential thing, in the first operation; for to corporify the spirit, which is our Mercury, it must needs be that you have well dissolved the body, wherein is enclosed the sulphur, which brings about coagulation of the Mercury. *Vis ejus integre est, si in terram conversa fuerit.*[19] Earth admirable in its fecundity; promised land of the wise, who knowing how to make fall thereon the heavenly dews, cause it to bring forth fruit of inestimable price. The Cosmopolite well expresses the benefits of this blessed earth. *Qui scit in aquam congelare calido, & spirtum cum eâ jungere, certè rem inveniet millesies pretiosiorum auro, & omni re.*[20] Nothing approaches the merit of this earth, & this spirit perfectly conjoined, in accord with the rules of our art; these are the true Mercury, & true sulphur of the Philosophers, the living male, & female who contain in them the seed, which alone may procreate a son more illustrious yet than his parents. Cultivate therefore & with care this precious earth; water it often of its own humidity, & dry it out as many times, & you shall increase no less its qualities, than its weight, & its fecundity.

#### KEY THE FIFTH

The fifth key of our work is the fermentation of the stone with the perfect body, to make thereof the medicine of the third order. Concerning the operation of the third working I shall say nothing in particular; but only, that the perfect body is a necessary leaven to our dough: that it is the spirit effects the union of the leaven with the dough, just as does water soak the flour & dissolve the yeast, in the creation of a fermented dough, appropriate to the making of bread. This comparison is right apt, & 'twas Hermes first made it. *Sicut enim pasta sine fermento fermentari non potest; sic cum corpus sublimaveris, mundaveris, & turpitudinem à fæce separaveris; cum conjungere volueris, pone in eis fermentum, & aquam terram confice, ut pasta fiat fermentum.*[21] Concerning fermentation, the Philosopher here reiterates the working in its totality, showing that just as the Mass of dough, becomes in its entirety leaven, by the action of the ferment, which to it is added; so too the sum of the Philosophic confection becomes by this operation a leaven proper to the fermentation of a new substance, & to the multiplication of it unto infinity.

If now you well observe how bread is made, you shall find the just proportions, which to observe, between the substances composing your Philosophic dough. Do not then bakers utilise greater quantity of flour, than of leaven, & more yet of water than of flour, & of leaven? The laws of nature are those to be followed in the practice of this our Magistracy. I have given you all necessary instruction upon the principal points; such that it would be superfluous to say more, particularly touching upon the final operations, concerning the which the Philosophers have shown themselves much less reserved, than as to the earlier, which are the fundamentals of their art.

## KEY THE SIXTH

The sixth key teaches of the multiplication of the stone, for the reiteration of the same operation, the which does consist but in opening & shutting; dissolving & coagulating; humectation & dessication; whereby are the virtues of the stone augmented unto infinity. Since it has not been my intention to describe the practice of the three medicines in their entirety, but to instruct you simply as to those operations which are most important, as regards the preparation of Mercury, o'er which the Philosophers pass generally in silence, to hide from the profane mysteries, which are but for the wise; I shall tarry no longer upon this point, & say naught further either concerning that which pertains to the projection of the medicine, in that the success you seek depends not on that; I have given extensive instruction only upon the third Key, for that it consists in a long series of operations, the which, albeit simple & natural, require nonetheless a great intelligence of natural law, & of the qualities of our materia, as also a perfect knowledge of chymistry, & of the divers degrees of heat, adapted to such operations.

I have led you by the direct path, & without detour; & if you have marked well the route I have traced to you, certain am I that you shall directly come to the goal, without erring. Know me right willing in my intention, that I have spared you a thousand labours, & as many pains, that I myself should have suffered on this arduous journey, were it not for like aid similar unto that I have given you also in this letter, stemming from a heart sincere, & a tender affection for all veritable children of science. I should be most grieved for you should you, like myself, & knowing already the true materia, pass fifteen years entire upon the work, study, & meditation, & come not to extract from the stone, its precious sap, the which it encloses in its breast, for cause that you know not the secret fire of the wise, which causes to stream forth from this plant to the sight both parched & arid, a water which wets not the hands, & which



by magical union with the dry waters of the ocean of the wise, resolves into a viscous water, a mercurial liquor, which is the principle & fundament, & key to our art: transform, separate, & purify the elements, as I have shown you, & you shall have the true Mercury of the Philosophers, the which shall furnish you the fixed sulphur, & medicine universal.

But I place you on guard, that albeit you have knowledge of this secret fire of the wise, yet have you not come entire to the end of the first course. I myself erred several years in the route yet to be traversed, to arrive at the mysterious fountain, wherein the King does bathe, rejuvenate himself, & resume a life new & exempt from all infirmity; you must needs know also to purify, heat, & animate that Royal bath: it was to lend aid in this secret path, I drew out what I had to say upon the third Key, wherein are all its operations to be deduced. Of my heart I hope, that the instructions I have given you, lead you direct to the goal. But bear in well mind O children of science, that knowledge of our Magistracy stems more from the inspiration of Heaven, than from illuminations one might garner of one's own accord. This truth is borne out by all Philosophers: wherefore is it not enough to labour; but pray assiduously; read veridical & authentic texts; & meditate day & night, upon the operations of nature, & upon what conceivably she might do, were she aided by the attentions of our art, & in this way shall you of a certainty succeed in your undertaking.

And this is all I have to say, in this my letter; I had no wish to hold forth at length, such as the subject might demand; nor have I spoken of aught but what is essential to our art; such that if you know our stone, which is the sole & unique material of our stone, & if you have the intelligence of our fire, which is at once both secret & natural, than do you hold the keys of the art, & you may calcinate our stone, not by a vulgar calcination, the which is achieved by the violence of the fire; but by the calcination Philosophic, the which is natural through & through.

Mark also this with the most illumined of the Philosophers, that there is this difference, between vulgar calcination, effected by the force of fire, & natural calcination; that the first destroys the body, & consumes the greater part of its radical humidity; but that the second not only conserves the humidity of the body, it calcinates; but also considerably augments it.

Experience will teach you in practice this great truth; for you shall find indeed, that this Philosophic calcination, which sublimes, & distils the stone as it calcinates, greatly augments its humidity: the reason for this is, that the fiery spirit of the natural fire incarnates in the substances which are to it analogous. Our stone is an astral fire, which harmonises with the natural fire, & which like unto a veritable salamander takes birth, nourishment, & growth from the fire Elementary, to which it is geometrically proportionate.

The Author's Name is in Latin in the following Anagram:

DIVES SICUT ARDENS S....

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## A Magnificent and Select Tract on Philosophical Water

**Most beloved son**, so that I might explain to you, and write as a memorial a concise understanding of the one, true philosopher's stone, and of how to proceed with its preparation, you must know that this stone is made of and born of two things, namely *ex corpore et spiritu*, of the male and female seeds, that is, of water of mercury and *corpore solis*. We can find enough proof of this in the many true writing of the philosophers, and so I will mention many of the writings they left behind. Then it will be seen how the purified *mercurius* is poured into and dissolved in a spiritual water. The philosophers call this the *prima materia* of metals. They also call it *lunae water*, *aqua vitae*, *Q. Essentia*, or a fiery and burning liquid liquor. The metals can be dissolved and freed from their hard, stiff bonds in this water, and so return to their first, their original nature, just as the water of mercury has done. This is why the philosophers wrote for us in their books the example of how frozen ice turns to water again when heated, for it was water before its coagulation too. They also say that whenever an object's origins or *principalis* might be, it can be returned to that original state in this way. It will become that which it was in the beginning. The philosophers also wrote on the following subject in their books; that the species of metal cannot be turned into gold or silver if they have not first been reduced and returned to their original material. Note carefully, my son, that this reincarnation of the metals is possible only if the *prima materia metallorum*, or water of mercury, is used. It is not possible, and never will be possible with any other substance in the world. For this water is closest to the nature of the metals, and so it can never be separated or parted from them when the two are mixed. The philosophers have also given us explanations of this water in the '*Turba*' and in other books in which they say the following: Nature enjoys its Nature, Nature contains Nature, improves Nature, reduces Nature, Nature is superior to Nature. This is how we can recognize this blessed water and its preparation: It is a heated, fiery, all-penetrating spiritus, the philosophical water and the hidden key to this art. For without it all alchemical works are useless and in vain. So, my son, you must understand and remember that the whole basis of the philosopher's stone is this: That we can bring about a rebirth of the perfect and whole *corpus solis*, through the *prima materia metallorum*, or water of mercury, so that it is reborn through the water and the spirit, just as Christ says: Unless a man has been reborn through the water and the spirit he can never see the Kingdom of God. And so it is with this art. I say to you, my son, unless the *corpus solis* is sown, it is useless and fruitless, just as Christ says. Unless the grain of wheat falls onto the earth and dies there and rots, then it will bear no fruit. In this way the *corpus solis* is reborn through the water and the spirit, and immediately a clearer, more astral, eternal and immortal body grows from it, which bears fruit and multiplies like the *vegetabilia*. On this subject the philosopher Rogerus Baco says: I assure you, thus will the *astrum*, give of itself to the body of gold which has been clarified in this way, so that it will never lose its riches and its strength until the day of the Last Judgment. For the body is perfect, purified of all other elements and it is beautiful. But unless it is reborn it will never become anything bigger, or clearer, or higher or better. Unless you know and recognize this rebirth from Nature and new birth of metals through the water and the spirit of the *prima materia*, it is futile to practice this art. For believe me, in all truth, without this all is false, a lie, and useless, and in vain. It is impossible for it to happen in any other way. Because of this the philosophers wrote wonderfully in their books and said that everything bears an image of itself and that man will reap what he sows, and nothing else. In the same way the philosopher Angelicus said: Sow gold and silver so that they can bear fruit by Nature's means. For this reason, my son, you must search in your work for a corpus other than gold, for all other corpora are stinking and incomplete. And so the philosophers have chosen gold above all other bodies as the most complete thing in the world, as the substance which lights up all other corpora and which pours life into them, while it has a

fixed nature, an unburnable nature and a constant root in the fire. Rogerius also says of the body of gold that its nobility and perfection can never be altered, and that gold is the culmination of all natural births, and that nothing in the world is more complete. The philosopher Isaacus Hollandus speaks of the same substance in this way: Our stone can be extracted from nothing other than a perfect corpore, yes, from the most complete one in the world. If it were not a perfect corpus, what sort of stone could we extract from it? The stone must have the power to give life to all dead corpora, to purify all that is impure, to make all that is hard and to make all that is hard soft, and it would be truly impossible to extract such a powerful stone from an incomplete and frail corpore, just as it is also impossible to extract a good and perfect thing from something imperfect and unclean. How many people deceive themselves that such an extraction is possible, but they are always mistaken, and in truth they are great fools. Therefore my son, take care that the red philosophical sulphur is in the gold, as Richardus proved and King Calid said. Our sulphur is no common sulphur, but is fixed from mercurial nature and does not flee the fire. All other philosophers also confirm that their red sulphur is gold.

But, my son, the philosophers also say in their books that common gold or silver is not their gold or silver. While their gold and silver is alive, common gold and silver are dead, and as such cannot perfect other, incomplete corpora, nor impart their completeness to them. If they had to give away some of their perfection they would remain incomplete themselves, for they would have no more perfection. Now my son, the words of the philosophers are true and founded on fact, for it is impossible for common gold and silver to make other, complete corpora perfect, unless, as I said before, the *corpus Solis* and *Lunae*, is reborn through the water and spirit of the prima material and an enlightened spiritual, clarified, eternal, fixed and subtle, all penetrating body grows from this which will purify other perfect corpora and multiply. Therefore the philosophers have said of this: Such works are performed on their stone so that the tincture in it can be improved. This is why it is necessary for this stone to be treated better and more subtly than common gold and silver. The philosopher Berhardus writes on this subject in his book. He says: We take this body just as Nature created it. But it is necessary to make to make it even more perfect using this art (which must still follow the rules of nature) so that it, in its great perfection and with its many rays, can make the imperfect corpora and complete in weight, colour, substance, yes even its mineral origins and *principiis*. And if it had remained in the sate in which Nature would normally have left it, if it had not been perfected or made superior, how would the period of ten and a half months served us then? Arnoldus speaks on this very subject in his Epistle: In our stone gold and silver are to be found more strongly, invisibly and more maturely in *potentia et virtute*, for if this were not so, neither gold nor silver in our stone are to be found in great strength and in their essence in their stone, but they are not as visible as common gold or silver. Euclides confirms this in his great '*Rosario*': Nothing can come from one perfect things, he says, for it is already perfect and complete, just as Nature created it. We find a similar example in bread: When yeast-risen bread can be made from it. So it is too with gold, which is brought by nature over a long period of time to a complete end. It is therefore impossible to perfect other corpora with bad gold, unless the perfect corpus solis is dissolved again, so that it returns to its original substance, and it is turned into a true ferment and tincture through our work and art. On this subject the philosophers say that one can never achieve a good result until the gold and silver are joined together in one corpus. Now, my son, do not read the words literally, but understand the lumen metaphoric, for the philosophers say in their books that Luna is made of cold and wet Nature, and they also give this same definition to *mercurio*. So, for *Lunam*, we read *mercurius*, or water of mercury, or *prima materia* which is the philosophers *luna* or *Lunae* water, as can be read in the wonderful and profound book '*Clangor Buccinae*'.

And so, my son, you have had a short lesson that this art is useless unless we bring the perfecta corpora

back to its original essence by the philosophical fire or by the water of mercury. This original essence is a sulphuric water and not *mercurius vivus* as the sophists believe. For the original *materia metallorum* is not *mercurius vivus*, but a sticky sulphuric steam and a viscous water in which the three *principia* Sal, Sulphur, and Mercurius are gathered. You must be able to recognize the true and blessed water of mercury or the heavenly supernatural fire in which the corpora are dissolved and melted. For this knowledge is the greatest secret of them all, and it is only found in the power of God, whom we must beg for the secret. Of this the philosopher Rogerius says: God the Almighty created man and set him above Nature and all the animals, although he is natural and nothing more than Nature, apart from the life which God breathed into him. And it is God who is and must be the judge of all the works and their nature. This godly spirit within man forms our feelings and thoughts, just as it does in its own head. The natural spirit found in the first beginnings of Nature many indications on which it could base and found these thoughts.

Through our work and through this spirit in us God-like Adam makes us ready for the destruction of the whole world. And from the lit, burning, fiery spirit of the breath of God, St Peter utters with quiet words that the elements will melt in the heat and the earth and all her works will burn in it, and a new world will be born, and it will be wonderful and precious and good, as is told in the *Apocalypsi*. And on this subject the philosopher concludes, saying, as we heard from St Peter, that a collapse of all the elements of the world shall occur in the heat of the fire. Take note that in this art too (which reflects nature) here too the fire must do this and perform these acts. Then, my son, turn your thoughts to the water which is burned, destroyed and melted with the *corpus solis*, which Rogerius confirms is a complete and created world. This too is no common fire, for common fire can neither burn nor destroy gold, but rather it is a supernatural, indestructible fire, the strongest of all fires, yes a hellish fire, the only one which has the power to burn gold, and to free it from its hard and stiff bonds. You must understand and know that this supernatural fire which has such power over gold and other metallic bodies, this fire alone is the spiritual, sulphuric, fiery water of mercury in which the *corpus solis* is melted and burned, and from this melted and destroyed substance a new world is created and born, a new world which is the heavenly Jerusalem, an eternal, purified, subtle, penetrating and fixed body which can penetrate all other corpora. That is why Rogerius says: It would be like a supernatural fire which will break, dissolve and mix together all the elementa in the world, and then the new work will be reborn from the broken, transitory work of the melted elements and will become an eternal work. Thus has the Holy Trinity also shown us a supernatural fire in the heavenly stone. My son, the philosophers have hidden this supernatural fire in their books and have called it in parabolic speeches by innumerable names. Some of their special names for it are *Balneum Mariae*, damp horse dung, menstruum, urine, milk, blood, *aquam vitae*, and such like. Bernhardus says of this fire: Make a vaporous and constant fire which is not too powerful, but subtle, airy, clear and contained, indestructible, all-penetrating and eternal. And he goes on to say more on the subject. In truth, I have told you all about the wisdom of the fire, for this vaporous fire can do everything. For this reason he also says that one must consider his words about the fire often and deeply. A wise man will soon deduce that he must not take these words to mean a common fire, but rather a supernatural fire. Maria Prophetessa also indicates that the element of water melts the corpora and turns them white. Raymundus Lullius writes on the subject of this fire (which he calls menstrum) and its preparation in his '*Testamento noviss. in codice, in Anima metallorum, Luce Mercuriorum*' and in '*Libro mercuriorum*' in the book '*De Secretis Naturae f. de Q. Essentia*' and in the '*Elucidario Testamenti*' ch. 4, he says that it is not human, but rather angelic to reveal this heavenly fire, and that to know this is to know the greatest secret of all. He also says, in figurative expressions, that this fire of the wise is composed of horse dung and live calcium, I will explain what is represented by the live calcium elsewhere. I have already explained what is meant by the horse dung, namely that the horse dung is the water *prima materia*, for that too is warm and damp, just like horse dung,

but it is no ordinary horse dung, as many ignorant people think. This is why the philosopher Alanus says: the philosophers have called the damp fire horse dung, in whose dampness the hidden warmth is contained, for it is a characteristic of the fire in a horse's stomach that it does not destroy the gold, but rather increases it for the sake of its dampness. Alchidonius says: Our medicine is to be hidden in the damp horse dung which is the fire of the wise. Alanus speaks in a similar way. Dear son, take great care with the decomposition or disintegration. The decomposition must occur in a gentle warmth, that is, in a damp horse dung. Similarly, Arnoldus de Villa Nova writes in the ninth chapter that the heat of horse dung should be in the fire. Alphidius too says: It must be cooked and buried in the heat of horse dung, Aristotle too: The earth or the corpus will gain no power unless it is sublimated in horse dung. For this reason Hermes says: cook and bake it in the warmth of a horse's stomach; and Morienus: if you do not find what you are looking for in the horse dung, then you can count your losses. Arnoldus agrees: You must search for no other fire than this, for this is the fire of the wise, the melting oven of the wise, their calcinating, sublimating, reverberating, dissolving, coagulating and figuring oven, for this water can dissolve and calcinate all metals and melts red and white with them. The '*Turba*' and '*Senior*' also speak of this: Our water is a fire and our water is stronger than all fires, for it makes a pure spirit from the *corpore* of gold which a natural fire cannot do, although natural fire also has something to do with it. For our fire enters into an earth or powder so that the gold burns more greatly than natural fire. Calid too says: In truth, it is a fire which burns and grinds all things.

But how this philosophical water or fire, which is *aqua mercurii*, is prepared has been hidden by the philosophers, as Raymundus Lullus writes mysteriously in his works. It is first necessary for the mercury to be purified of its outer dampness and earthliness, but this must not be done with harmful and destructive things which would destroy its noble, fruitful, green and fertile nature. Avicenna, Arnoldus, Geber, Raymundus in codicillo and other philosophers state that mercury is best purified through the sublimation of commonly prepared salt. The sublimate is dried and mixed with Sal Tartari, is ground per retortam, then cut up. This must be done several times. In this way the *mercurius* will be rid of its outer dampness and foecibus. This purgation, says Bernhardus at the end of his epistle, does not harm the *mercurius* because the hot water and the salt do not penetrate it. But you must understand my son, that while the *mercurius* is a uniform and inseparable substance and essence, we cannot completely purify its outer whiteness, for its earthy impurity lies hidden in its innermost depths and it cannot be separated from it by any method of sublimation, how ever many ignorant people have the audacity to suggest this. For this reason the following method must be used. The *mercurium vivum purgatum* must be freed from the bonds with which Nature ties it so securely to the earth. These bonds must be loosed and it must be returned to its very first essence, namely a sulphuric, spiritual water, without the addition of any foreign bodies in the world, as Rogerius Bacon testifies to under the title '*De Mercurio*', and as Raymundus also says in the '*Theorica*' of his testament: Unless it is putrified in this way and dissolved, the menstruum will not be worth a fig. But when the living mercury, purified of all foreign bodies, has been freed of its bonds, and returned to its original water, then we can purify it inwardly and separate the *spiritum* from the water and its earthliness by distillation. The philosophers have spoken in secret words about the separation, in a way that a hard-headed man would not easily understand. They have written of it mysteriously and in a figurative manner in their description of the distillation of wine that the spirit of wine is mixed with a great deal of water and worldly earthiness. But the dry *spiritum*, or spirit of wine, can be separated from all phlegmatic moisture and worldly earthliness by artificial distillation. In other words, the whole *spiritum* is separated from the water of the wine, and the water from the earth. And so the yeast, through whose calcinations its own white salt is extracted, remains. This is married again with the spiritum and distilled again several times until all the sal

nitri has then gone into the lid of the distilling vessel with the *spiritu*. In this way the power of the *spiritus* is greatly strengthened and heightened by the sal. Truly, the philosophers have given us a remarkable figurative description, which we should also follow in the description of the water of mercury.

For when the latter has been dissolved, we should do exactly as was done to the wine: By the sublimation of the water (or phlegma) from the *spiritu*, the *spiritum* is separated from the earth, the earth is rectified and married again to the *spiritu*, and they are distilled again and again until both substances are to be found in the lid of the distilling vessel. Of all the philosophers, none has written better and more clearly on this subject than Raymundus Lullius, in his '*Testamento Novissimo*' and also in his first testament '*In Libro Mercuriorum, libro Q. Essentia*' in which he explains clearly and at length that after the putrefaction, separation and distillation of the philosophical spirit of wine, the spiritual water is mixed and distilled again with its earth, and they are both put over the alembic together. He also explains that this philosophical wine or menstruum is heightened and strengthened with its own salt. And also you must also understand that this water, menstruum or philosophical spirit of wine dissolves its own corpus or living *mercurium* into the original essence or water, and is then multiplied ceaselessly through the putrefaction and the distillation. What is said of the extract of this water is confirmed by Arnoldus de Villa Nova when he says: It is a substance full of foul smelling vapours and which contains a gross moisture. From this substance the artist separates the philosophical moisture which is easy to work with and which is as clear as tears. The *Q. Essentia* lives in its metallic form in this substance. It causes no discomfort to the metals, and the tincture of the whole metal can be gathered in it. For it contains Nature's *Argenti Vivi*, and the nature of *sulphuris*. On the subject of the distillation of this menstruum or water '*Rosarius Philosophorum*' says that you should take great care that the dishes in which you wish to purify your spirit are made of glass, so that the spirit can find no place to escape through, for it often slips quickly through the holes in dishes. And once the red spirit has escaped all the artist's work is in vain. The red spirit is what the philosophers call blood and menstruum. So take care with your dishes and with any cracks in your dishes, so that you can catch the dry spirit with its blood in a receptacle, without letting its power escape. Store it carefully until you begin to work on it. But seeing the distillation is more important than reading about it, and none can become a Master without having first been a pupil. For this reason take great care over your work. Using a receptacle distill the element at first over a gentle fire, and when it has been distilled off, put it aside and replace it with another receptacle. Make sure all the cracks are tightly sealed so that the spirit cannot escape. Make the fire a little stronger. A dry yellow *spiritus* will rise into the lid of the distilling vessel. Keep the fire burning steadily for as long as the spirit is yellow. Then, when the alembic begins to turn red, make the fire a little stronger, and keep it at this temperature until the red spirit and the blood have been completely distilled off and are floating in the lid of the distilling vessel like clouds in the sky. As soon as the red spirit is distilled off, the lid will turn white. Stop as soon as this happens. You now have the two elements air and water in the receptacle, and you have separated the right matter.

As you will see, you now have the *primam materiam metallorum* in which corpora can be reduced. For all metals have their origin in water, and water is the root of all metals. That is why they are reduced to water, just as frozen ice becomes water again in the warmth, for it used to be water, before it was frozen. So do not be surprised, for all things on the earth are like this, they all have their origins in water. Oh there are so many of them! But you must not think about their origins. You must work on. This is the key to the whole work, the key which dissolves the corpora at the beginning, it is father and mother, it opens and locks them, and reduces them to that which they were in the beginning. It dissolves the corpora and coagulates with them, the spirit is led to the water, that is, the power of the spirit is seen there taking effect,

and this happens when the corpus is placed in the water. On this subject the philosopher says: There is something which everyone recognizes, and whoever does not recognize it will rarely, perhaps never find it. The wise man will keep it and the fool will throw it away, and the reduction comes easily to the man who knows it. But, my son, the greatest secret of all is how to free the stone or *mercurium vivum* from the natural bonds with which it is bound to the laws of Nature, that is, how to dissolve it and return it to its original water. For if this did not happen, all our work would be in vain, for we could not separate and extract the true spirit or liquid essence which dissolves all *corpora*. And all the philosophers have kept this dissolution secret, and God the Almighty in His Power has ordered them to do this, and they have cursed and damned the men who have revealed it. For this reason they have spoken only briefly and subtly of the return of this raw body to its original essence, so that it can remain hidden to the ignorant. But you, my son, must understand that this dissolving of the living *mercurii* to its original state is difficult without knowledge of certain methods, but no sophistic methods can be used, as are used by many coarse ignorant and unknowing fools, who change the *mercurium* into water using many marvelous arts and believe that it is the true water. They sublimate the *mercurium* by *corrosiva* with all sorts of salts and vitriols, whereby the sublimated *mercurius* draws the spirit of the salts into itself. Then they dissolve the sublimate in water in Balneo or in the cellar or in various other ways. Then they turn it into water using salmiac and herbs, salves or *aqua fort*, using peculiar apparatus and many sophistic rules, but all of this is mere fantasy, nonsense, useless and in vain. Some of them also think that they can separate certain things from the water of mercury and that it will become the true water which the philosophers desire. The reason for this is simply that they do not heed the words of the philosophers which say quite clearly that it should be mixed with no foreign object on earth. And Bernhardus says in his '*Epistle*': As soon as the *mercurius* has been dried out by the salts, alum and *aqua fort*, it will no longer dissolve. But take note, my dear son, of what I am about to tell you, and of how the philosophers have left an account for those who understand their books, namely, that this water cannot be prepared using strange methods in the world, but rather, it can only be prepared using natural means; together with Nature and from nature. These words are bright and clear to those who understand, so this time I will not explain it openly, but I will write it down in a special little tract, but as a memorial I will add here the following verses:

Take one that is fresh, pure, living, white and clear,  
Tie its hands and feet well  
With the strongest rope you can find  
So that it dries and is choked  
In the House of Putrefaction,  
As Nature has shown us.  
By this same harmonious Nature  
It will be dissolved and it will rise to the original essence.  
It is a living, spiritual spring  
Which flows clearly and brightly from Heaven.  
It eats its own flesh and blood  
In order to multiply.

Whoever succeeds, with God's help, in attaining this blessed water should thank God, for he has in his hands the key which will open the closed locks of all metal chests, and can take gold, silver, precious stones, honour, power and good health. This blessed water is called the daughter of Pluto by the philosophers, it has strength and power over all reassures. It is also called the white, pure, tender and unspoiled maid of Beja and without it no birth or blending can occur. For this reason the philosophers have married this

tender and pure maid to Gabrico, so that they bear fruit, and when she was joined with Gabricus, he died. Beja swallowed and consumed him in her great love, as Arisleus tells in his '*Practica*': The spring or Fontina is like a mother to the king, for she draws him to her and kills him. But through her the king is resurrected again and he joins himself fast to her, so that no man can harm him. This is why the philosopher says that Gabricus is more precious and worthy and dear to the world than Beja, but he can bear no fruit alone. The philosophers have called this maid and blessed water by many thousands of different names in their books. They call it heaven, a heavenly water, a heavenly rain, a heavenly thaw, a May thaw, water of Paradise, an aqua fortis and an *aquam Regis*, a corrosive aquafort, a sharp vinegar and liquor, also *Quintam essentiam vini*, a waxy green juice, waxy *mercurium*, green water and *Leonem viridis*, quicksilver, menstruum or blood. They also call it urine and horse piss, milk and virgin's milk, water of arsenic, silver, Luna or Lunae water, woman, a female seed, a sulphuric steam and smoke, a fiery, burning spirit, a deathly all-penetrating poison, a dragon, a scorpion which eats its young, a hellish fire of horse dung, a sharp salt, sal armoniacum, a common salt, a lye, a viscous oil, the stomach of an ostrich which eats and digests all things, an eagle, a vulture and hermetic bird, a vessel and *Sigillum Hermetis*, a melting and calcinating oven, and innumerable other names of animals, birds, plants, waters, juices, milks and blood, etc. They have used all these names and written of it figuratively in their books. They have suggested that such a water is made of these things, with the result that all ignorant people who have searched for it in these things, have not found the desired water. You must also know, my son, that it can be made only from *mercurio vivo* and from no other thing on earth, and the philosophers have given it so many names that ignorant people cannot recognize it. And with that, I end this little tract, written in order that you might understand and learn that without this fire, all work in the world is in vain, all chemical processes are a lie, useless and false. The great '*Rosarius*' says that there is no more than one recipe, and with this one lock all the books of the philosophers are locked, just as if they were surrounded by a strong wall, and unless you know of, or have the key in your hands, you will never open the lock, or achieve anything fruitful. For the only key to the metal walls and gardens is this water. And this water is the strong aquafort which Isaacus refers to in his own work. He dissolves the corpora with it and uses it to make it spiritual. So note carefully that without this water all is false, all is a lie, in metals and minerals as well as vegetalibus and animalibus. You can dissolve, sublimate, distill, calcinate, extract, mix and compose what you will, you can dissolve it in the cellar, in Balneo, in dung, in aqua fortis and in any amount of strong waters which the alchemical processes teach, or which you can think up yourself, you can make oil or water or chalk or powder black, white, yellow and red. You can burn it, pour it in any way and teach the alchemical recipes, you can claim that you can make gold and silver with them. But it is all false, a stinking lie from beginning to end (without the water). For I myself --- with my own hands, or I should never have believed it --- I myself have learned this through error and misfortune. Be warned, my son, protect yourself from such sophists in Alchemy and the bragging of all deceitful people, just as you would protect yourself from the tiresome devil and from a terrible, impure and burning fire or poison. For through the sophistry of such cunning and false alchemy a man can bring about the death of his body and soul, his honour and goodness. Such deceit is truly more evil than the devil himself, even if one were to turn a whole principality against such people, everything would still be destroyed and still the lasting truth would not be found. It is for this reason that you must open your eyes, know and recognize the only key, flee all falsehood, for it is impossible to achieve anything true and useful in any way, other than the way I have described in this little book.

*The End.*



# A Short Enquiry concerning the Hermetic Art

A Short enquiry concerning the Hermetick art... By a lover of Philalethes. London 1714.

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This Art, of bringing all Imperfect Metals to Perfection, hath been asserted for Truth, by Men of almost every Degree, in most Ages of the World; many of whose Books are extant.

They have declared, that they have made and possessed this great Treasure, which not only brings all Imperfect Metals to the Perfection of Sol and Luna (according to the Quality of the Medicine), but healeth all manner of Diseases in Human Bodies, even renewing Youth and prolonging Life.

Those Authors, from Age to Age, have justified one another's Testimony; alledging, as a farther Proof of the Art, that all that have understood it, have written most agreeingly of it, though contemporary, and unknown to one another in Person, or by Writing.

How far these Men's Writings have obtain'd, a very little Enquiry may serve; for most men look upon these (Alchymic) Books only as Cunningly devised Fables, and the Art itself as altogether impossible.

To which the (Alchymic) Authors answer, That it is not Lawful, nor Commendable to reprobate an Art, by Judges who are ignorant of its Laws as well as the Facts; and that the Ignorant Negative of such, is by no means sufficient to set aside the Affirmative Knowledge of so many Men of Unquestionable Credit, Piety, and Virtue, supported by Arguments and Circumstances of Uncontestible Force.

From which, together with the Excellency of the Things themselves (viz., Long Life and Riches, vide the 'Way to Bliss'), many have been induced to believe and seek after this Art.

Tis the Melancholy View that I have taken of these Men, that have occasioned the putting my own Thoughts into the Order you find them, hoping no Master will be offended, nor any Inquirer displeas'd.

When I compare, I say, the variety of these Men's Fortunes, Capacities and other Qualifications, with those the Philosophers have laid down for men like to succeed, it fills me with Pity, and makes me almost tremble to rehearse the words of Norton, viz.:-

"That of a Million hardly three,  
Were e'er ordain'd for Alchymy."

O sad Tidings to such Men! whose impair'd Healths, injured Fortunes and barren Practice, renders them more unfit every day than other, and instead of attaining that which should crown their Labours with success, are at length in danger of denying, if not cursing the Art itself.

I would pretty thoroughly enquire from whence this ill success, which attends the generality of Enquirers, proceeds, and accordingly shall mention a few chief

Impediments, in my Opinion.

First; But few of those that seek this Art, are qualified according to the Philosophers for attaining it; for they assert, That to find it requires the whole Man; as well as that, when found, it possesses him: Also that it is never found of any by Chance or by accidental Tryals, and casual Experiments; and that unless the Mind be kindled with a Beam of Divine Light, it will not be able to penetrate this most hidden Science.

These with many more Cautions, are plentifully set down in their Books, on purpose to inform and reform a great many Persons too rashly concern'd in these things; and yet how few take their Advice! undertaking this Study with much less than half the Man; constantly trying Experiments that have no Authority but their own idle Fancy; and consequently have Minds, in respect to this Science, as dark as Midnight.

Then add to these an almost Insuperable Difficulty, (hard enough to be overcome by those that can spare even the whole Man and are very cautious in their Practice, as having a pretty good Understanding of Natural Things in general, and of the Mineral Kingdom in particular) and that is the Subtilty of Stile so peculiar to Hermetick Philosophers.

Of this they often warn us, telling us also, that if it were not for this, they could not disclose, and at the same time hide their Secret. And though this be a Paradox, that at the same time they give light, they darken, yet they affirm it for Truth, with many other things hard enough to be understood; which yet must be understood before any one can profit by them, witness Geber, Sendivo, &c.

Also Norton has given a hint of this mysterious way of writing, and which indeed sufficiently shews that it will obscure, whether we can discern its Instruction or not, viz.:-

"If you consider how the Parts of Works  
Be out of Order set by the Old Clerks."

This breaking to pieces of the several Works, makes it almost impossible for a Tyro to make their Writings Tally; any one part not being rightly apply'd, the whole is incompleat.

Another tells us he has done this, by mixing Unusual Candor with Philosophical Subtilties, in such a manner as would render their Secret safe, tho' openly told; Nor is he wanting to admonish his Reader to be cautious in these things, viz.:-

"Yet beware,  
That thou mistake not; for I do aver,  
A mingled Doctrine these Lines do declare;  
For both ways in this Book of mine do claim a share:  
Learn to distinguish every Sentence well,  
And know to what Work it doth appertain.  
This is great Skill, which few, as I can tell,  
By all their Reading, yet could e'er attain;  
And yet of Theory, this is the main."

Wherefore 'tis obvious, there is no possibility of success, 'till it be learned to which Work their Sayings relate; which indeed is not easie, and is the top of Theory; nor can any speed upon any other, tho' never so finely spun, or fondly embraced.

And though Philosophers do sometimes affirm their Matters to be many, and their Works also; yet they very often, with equal Authority and Truth, assert the contrary;

Artephius saith:-

"Tho' we say in many places, take this, and take that; yet we mean, that it behoveth thee to take One Thing. For these things are so set down by the envious Philosophers to deceive the Unwary. Do'st thou, Fool, believe, that we do openly teach the Secret of Secrets? And do'st thou take our Words according to the literal Sound? Know assuredly, he that takes the Words of other Philosophers according to the ordinary Signification and Sound of them, he doth already wander in the midst of the Labyrinth, having lost Ariadne's Thread, and hath as good as appointed his money to Perdition."

By means of these seeming Contradictions, bolder steps have been taken by some of them in discovering this Art, than otherwise they would have done, and even some have dared to imitate, nay, so much as to repeat.

From hence I infer, That as much has been communicated to the World as can be expected, or that God will yet suffer to be discover'd by Writing. For this Art is declared, by those that have knowingly written of it, to be under his immediate Protection. Likewise that those that come to the Knowledge of it, shall admirably wonder at its Preservation; and that which will augment their wonder, will be, that so slender a Vail secures it; and which God makes a sufficient Guard against all the Attacks made by the unworthy. Vide Sendivo, etc.

Likewise, that as soon as any one discerns the Intention of the Philosophers, from the seeming Sense of the Letter, the dark Night of Ignorance will fly away, and a glorious Morning of Light and Knowledge will break forth: When Diana will unveil herself, Bathing in that most pleasant Fountain so much sought.

And that he will find himself in the High Road of Nature which is that Secret Way of Philosophers, viz., most easie, delightful and speedy; in which are no Storms, no Heterogeneities, nor any Fire, but the gentle one of Generation.

Norton asserts, That there are but few clerks that comprehend this Work, it being truly Philosophical. And he saith, That in this Work you must not begin with Quicksilver and Metals, as if in another Work you might; which other Work, he adds, if it be done in three Years, would be a blessed Chance, and which belongs to great Men; advising poor Men not to meddle with it, for that Errors in it may be committed above a Hundred ways; that it is a Work of Pain and Labour, as well as full of Perils.

That these things are so, we are sorrowfully confirmed, by a Modern Author, as is so well known by many. Intro-Apert.

Now as their Works differ, so their Waters or Mercuries differ also; for if you would calcine a perfect Metal, it must be done with Mercury; but if you would dissolve an imperfect Body (which is in the way to Perfection) it must be done with Mercurial Water, which is the Dew or Rain Water of Philosophers.

The perfect Body is calcin'd with a gross Humidity, and by a tedious Labour; but the imperfect Body is dissolved and purified in a much more subtile Mercury, by an easie Fire and little Toil.

And tho' this subtile Menstruum be the Mercury of the imperfect Body, yet it will (for a certain purpose) dissolve Sol, as warm water dissolves Ice, and will make its Body a mere Spirit.

This is the Fountain of Chymical or Hermetick Philosophy, concerning which it is said:-

" He that exactly knows the Magistry of this Water, no Words, or Secrets of

Philosophers, Sayings, Writings or Enigmas, will be concealed from him. And further, that it is stupendous in its Virtues, and the things out of which it is immediately drawn, are most secret above all others; also the means of extracting it most wonderful. In the Knowledge of which, all their Fires, Weights and Regimens lie hid."

The same Author affirms, that none can imagine its Splendour, except they see it, and then you will think you look upon a certain Celestial Body. Believe me, saith he, I have seen this Snowy Splendor.

Sendivo not only confirms the same in Words to this effect, viz., Believe me, for I beheld it, that that Water was as white as Snow, but adds, from whence it was drawn, viz., From the Beams of the Sun and Moon.

Nor is this said by him only, but by many more; I shall instance a few.

Artephius asserts, That 'tis drawn from the Beams of the Sun and Moon, yea, that this dissolving Water is the Soul of the Sun and Moon, their moist Fire, and the only Agent in the World for this Art.

The author of Arcanum Hermeticae, saith, "Let thy Mercury draw its Original from both these Lights."

Flamel, speaking of the Sun and Moon, saith, "They are of a Mercurial Source, and Sulphurous Original."

Another, viz., the Author of 'The Way to Bliss', saith: "That as the Sun is the Father of all things, and the Moon his Wife the Mother, (for he sends not down these begetting Beams immediately, but through the Belly of the Moon) and this double Spirit is carry'd in a Wind and Spirit into the Earth, to be made up and nourished."

Which double Spirit or Flame, Geber calls the immediate Matter of Metals.

You very well know, that Hermes himself, as well as most of his Followers, agree in these things; and 'tis our Business to observe wherein they do agree. Arnold says, "In our Imperfect Metal, there are the Sun, and Moon in Virtue and near Power." The Philosophical Work begins with this Heavenly Mercury, and an imperfect Body purified.

"There is a pure Matter" (saith another) "which is the Matter of Gold, containing in itself the Heat that giveth Increase." (Fire of Generation.) This is lock'd under thick Folds in common Gold; nor is it to be extracted, but by a strong and tedious Decoction, which is a Work liable to many Errors, and hath always occasioned those that wrought in it to complain of the length and trouble of it. But in the other Work, the Body is soon dissolved, by a sweet and kindly Bath, or moist Fire.

As the former Path requires much Pain and Patience to effect the Work, so this requires great Skill and Application to find it out, it being deeply concealed. The Masters of these Secrets do also affirm, that these Works (which are all one in the Beginning) may be conjoin'd, and made their grand Medicine. And I have been informed, that the way of making them one is but slenderly hid. For should they but change some Words (which they affect to use in order to conceal it) of one Syllable, and sometimes of two, for others of three, and sometimes of four or more, it would not be difficult for a Tyro, to conceive it. And the Reason given for this slender Covering is, that if any one should discern it and yet be ignorant of the means of both it would be of little avail; and that if he knew the means he could not long remain ignorant of the Practice. So that the Knowledge of the Means seems absolutely necessary in the first place.

These Norton calls his "Means Mineral," which, he saith, are no other than Magnetia and Litharge her Brother. And he asserts that to clarify them is the foulest Work of all.

And though he makes these means two, yet he tells you how they differ, viz., as a Mother from her Child, or as a Male from a Female: Which we see brings his to the general Doctrine of Philosophers, viz., Agent and Patient, which seems to be their one intention, whatever Skill they use to perplex their Sayings.

Litharge, he says, is a subtil Earth, brown, ruddy, and not bright.

"Old Fathers called it a thing of vile price,  
For it is nought Worth by way of Merchandise;  
No man that findeth it would bear it away,  
No more than they would an Ounce of clay."

He likewise saith, it is not to be sold in all Christian Ground, but thou must be fain to make it.

Magnetia is fair and bright, known by few, and is found in High Places as well as in Low and called by Plato, Titanos; these are the Materials to make Elixir; and addeth: -

"This Secret never was before this Day  
So truly shewed, take it for your Prey."

Now to apply these things to the Doctrine of Philosophers; Litharge must be their Brass or Philosophical Sol: Magnetia must be understood to be their Subtil Humidity or Philosophical Mercury; which is Living and not only so, but Inlivening; Clean and not only so, but cleansing; Volatile, and not only so, but Volatilizing, even the most fixed Body of Sol; and is the Radical Moisture of Metals.

How this is attained, is worthy our Inquiry, and whether they agree in the manner of preparing it, as well as from whence it is to be drawn, viz., From the Sun and Moon; for it seems it must have the Influences of both.

But to collect these Virtues requires a Mean, as Ripley hath it, speaking of the Green Lion,

"He is the mean, the Sun and Moon between, etc."

Also the Author of 'Hunting the Green Lion' saith,

"The Lion is the Priest, the Sun and Moon the Wed;  
Yet they were both born in the Priest's Bed."

By which Green Lion another saith, "All Philosophers understand Green Gold, multiplicable, spermatick, and not yet Perfected by Nature; Or Assa Foetida, because in the very first of this Operation or Distillation, a white Fume with a stinking smell exhales." It was by this strong scent that Flammel knew this Subject.

That this Agrees with the rest of the Philosophers, I need not enlarge to shew, it being well known to them who read their Books.

This Distillation, Hermes, as well as many others, declares must be made by a gentle Fire, by little and little, with great Discretion, lest the thick be mixed with the thin, the subtile with the gross, or the foul with that which is clean. Lully is very famous for his witty Description of this Operation, under the Figure of Distilling of Wine, which he sometimes also calls Juice of Lunaria, from which he extracts the Sweat with a gentle Fire, in the form of a white Water.

This is also called by other Names, as Adrop, Saturn, Brass, Leprous Gold, and

Imperfect Body; and which they all agree lies in great Obscurity, saturnine and foul, in the making of which there is a great Stink; that 'tis not fixed, a Medium between a Metal, and a Mineral partaking of the Nature of both, and very crude, containing an Argent vive, which is the Basis and Groundwork of their precious Medicine. And thus, saith the Philosopher, you will come to understand how Saturn contains the greatest Secret in this Art. This is "The Golden Branch, so much conceal'd, which all the Groves with Shadows overcast and gloomy Vallies hide, and which will follow none, but him that knows Dame Venus's Birds and him to whom of Doves a lucky Pair," etc. - Arcanum Hermeticae.

The Masters of this Science agree with one Voice in this, viz., That this Matter must be exactly purified, and dissolved into an Argent vive, of such Virtues as are nowhere else possible to be found.

This is performed by a wonderful Cohobation: the Number of which Cohobations are much varied: But in this they all agree, that there must be so many, till a total Dissolution and perfect Purity be known.

The time of doing this; some will have it, is hinted in Arcanum Hermeticae where 'tis said, "Cause the Dragon to Drink Three times the Magical Number Seven, until being drunk, he put off his hideous Garment."

Thus, I say, Three times Seven is Twenty-One, which some will interpret Days, and to which some other Philosophers seem to agree; but whether these are One and Twenty Days or Cohobations, he will rightly determine, who shall be blessed with the Knowledge of their "Light bringing Venus, and Horned Diana."- Arcanum Hermeticae.

Likewise the Philosophers agree in the Virtues of this Water, viz., that as it partakes of the Natures of both Sexes, so it acts the part of both, viz., Dissolving and Congealing. For they assert, That it will Congeal itself into a Lunar or a Solar Nature, (according to the design of the Workman) without any addition whatsoever.

There are also some Cautions given concerning Proportion in Compounding the Imperfect Body, as well as with relation to its Dissolution; for that in case of undue Weight or Measure, the Virtue will be much diminished, if not altogether spoiled. But if a due Proportion be observed, and a proper Fire given, the true Sign will follow. The true Union between the imperfect Leprous Body, and its Water, they have deeply conceal'd, as the Philosophers own, and Searchers find; because as they say, the rest is so easie in the Work of Generation, that 'tis hardly to be missed, by one that hath attained their wonderful Mercury, so united and purified.

Concerning which, they have declared, they have given such hints as are sufficient to an enlightened Mind; and that none shall ever dare to do it more openly, without a Curse from God.

But all have not done it with the same Candor nor by the same Similes and Enigmas; 'The New Light' under that of Chalibs; 'The Way to Bliss', by that of tile Witty Fire of Hermes, and so of the rest, Norton says:-

"Bacon did it darkly, in his Three Letters all  
But Raimond better in his Art general."

And since the Readers can expect no better Account from me, concerning the Means and Medium of this Wonderful Union, than the Philosophers have learnt in their Books, I must refer them for more ample Satisfaction and Information therein. For, as Norton saith:-

"Trust not therefore to Reading of one Book;  
But in many Authors' Works ye may look.  
Liber librum aperit, saith Arnold the great Clerk;  
Anaxagoras said the same for his Work,  
Who that slothful is in many Books to see,  
Such one in Practice, prompt shall never be."

The Reason he gives for thus Reading and Comparing many Books, is, that

"Every each of them taught but one point, or twain.  
Whereby his Fellows were made certain,  
How that he was to them a Brother,  
For every of them understood each other."

I have mentioned Norton the more, because it appears to me, that he and his Contemporary Ripley, have written very Learnedly of this Art, and wonderful Agreeingly, through both writ near the same time, and very probably one in England and the other abroad; and for ought I can meet with, were not known to one another at that time. Nor can one suppose that Norton had seen Ripley's 'Compound of Alchimy', since it was written but six years before his 'Ordinal'. Books of that kind especially, did not in those days come abroad quickly: Nor doth Norton, when he reckons up some that had written excellently of Proportion, take any notice of Ripley, who beyond all question hath in that excell'd.

This Harmony in Authors, that have written of the Art at the same time, and unknown one to another, a Modern Adept of the same Nation with the two before mentioned, has brought as a convincing Argument (among others) to prove its Being; and which, with me, has great Weight, and seems to serve his purpose.

This Author has profess'd to have outdone all that went before him, discovering such things, he says, as the World was barren enough before, yet his Disciples have much complain'd of their ill success; notwithstanding they have seemed to understand him more fully than the other Philosophers, insomuch that many have concluded his way of proceeding in this Art to be different from many of theirs. Nay, at length some have so ill rewarded his Candor, as to charge him with being ignorant of those things he so solemnly professeth to be true, and of which his Accusers are unworthy.

It seems he foresaw his Readers would thus misconstrue his Writings, and therefore he here and there scatters some necessary Cautions for those that would receive them.

"Nor let any expect," saith he, "Comfortable Doctrine in our Books, who know not the true Keys, by which our Matter is brought forth from Darkness into the Light. For verily tho' we write for the Inlightening a true Son of Art, yet also for the fatal Blinding of all such Owls and Bats, who cannot behold the Light of the Sun, nor can endure the Splendor of our Moon. To such we propound rare Tricks, suiting to their sordid Fancy: To the Covetous, an easie way without Expence: To the Hasty, Rash and Unstable, multiplicity of Distillations.

"In the World our Writings shall prove like a curious edged Knife; to some they shall carve out Dainties, to others they shall serve only to cut their Fingers. 'Tis the sign of an Owl, to be blinder, by how much the Sun shines brighter. - If thou wilt be heedless, thou may'st sooner stumble at our Books, than at any thou didst ever read in thy Life. Take this from one: that knows best the Sense of what he has written; where we speak most plainly, there be most circumspect, (for we do not go about to betray the Secrets

of Nature) especially in those places which seem to give Receipts so plain as you would desire, suspect either a Metaphor, or else be sure that something is suppressed which thou wilt hardly find (without Inspiration) of thyself; yet to a Son of Art, we have written that which never heretofore was by any reveal'd."

I might add many more Cautions of other Authors, as well as of this, concerning the Difficulties which attend the Reading of their Books; and had not mention'd what I have; but that it appear'd the more necessary to mention some of this Author's because almost every Body has taken up an Opinion, that he is more easily understood than the rest I but how profitably, themselves may judge.

We should not be just to ourselves, if we should be ignorant that when any of them have made a Discovery of this or the other Part of the Work, they have not Balanced it with such Obscurities which are not easily discerned; especially by the Unwary. And therefore if the Students in this Art, and particularly of this Author's Works, did believe the Philosophers had Cunning equal to their Skill and would but take the Advice given by them, they would not have room to Censure the Philosophers but themselves.

For what could anyone have said, more to have deter'd Inquirers from rash Conclusions, either in Theory or Practice, than this Author has done? viz., "Venture not," saith he, "to practice barely upon my Words: For know that what I have only hinted, is far more than what I have discover'd; and what I have declared to thy first Apprehension, most openly, hath yet its lurking Serpent under the green leaves; I mean some hidden thing, which thou oughtest to understand; which thou, being Cocksure at first Blush, wilt neglect."

The fond Notion which Men have entertained, of understanding this Author's Writing more perfectly or easier than the rest of the Masters is to me an Argument of his great skill in that peculiar way of Writing, which the hermetick Philosophers profess and value themselves upon, viz., to be able openly to show the Art to the Sons of it, and yet secure it from the unworthy.

That this is true, all their Writings shew; for some of them have learned the Art from Books as they own; which could not be, if it were not taught in them. These indeed are very few in comparison to those that Learn it not, though they read the same Books, but not the same things in them. As this Author hath again excellently described such men, viz., "Some I know will serve my Book, as they have served others; out of it they will read their own Phantastick Processes, which I never dreamt of, nor yet are they in Nature. Though we write in English, yet our Matter will be as hard as Greek to some, who will think they understand us well, when they misconstrue our Meaning most perversely. Nor is it imaginable, that they who are Fools in Nature, should be wise in our Books, which are Testimonies to Nature."

As this Author hath profess'd an extraordinary esteem for Ripley, and (in many things) has imitated his Candour, yet he has so manifestly compounded it with the Craft of Norton, that it is hard to distinguish them, and which well deserves the Cautions he hath given, and his Readers' Care therein.

He has in his Books led us some part of the way under such Philosophical Vails, as have been pretty easily seen through by most that read them with Application; who no sooner discover some of his Metaphors, but overcome with joy, and exalted with an Opinion of their own Abilities, presently cry out, we have found! we have found! And what have they found? Why their way into a Labyrinth.

For at the end of this short Walk, he hath set up one Metaphor, harder to be understood than all the rest, viz., The Doves of Diana. This stands at the Entrance into



a great Labyrinth, in which are abundance of Inquirers rambling at this day; many of them undiscerned by one another.

I have taken several Turns in it myself, wherein one shall meet with very few; for 'tis so large, and almost every one taking a different Path, that they seldom meet.

But finding it a very melancholy Place, I resolved to get out of it, and rather content myself to walk in the little Garden before the Entrance, wherein many things, tho' not all, were orderly to be seen. Choosing rather to stay there, and contemplate on the Metaphor set up, than venture again into the Wilderness; in which I heard the Noise and Voices of several strange and devouring Creatures, (some of which I had with difficulty escaped) every one, almost, having a differing Sound.

As this Author seems to have design'd a full stop at the Pillar he hath caused to be erected, and to prevent

Travellers running unawares into that dangerous and dark Wilderness, caused this Inscription to be put upon it, viz., "Learn what Diana's Doves are, which doth vanquish the Lion by asswaging him; I say, the green Lion, which is indeed the Babylonian Dragon, Killing all things with his poison. Then at length learn to know the Caducean Rod of Mercury, with which he works wonders;" etc. Therefore I will not step one Step farther without a Guide, for I dread going again into the Labyrinth. This guide must be a very wise Man, indued with singular Gifts; for he must not only tell me the Interpretation, but the Dream itself; and by this I may judge of his Ability. For, as Kelly saith, "Let no Man lead, unless he knows the Way."

Therefore let none mistake my Inquiring the Way, for a Teaching of it. If any do, and suffer by it, they must blame themselves, not me; for I am Inquiring, I say, not Teaching the Way. Masters cannot be deceived, but Searchers may.

We do not find this Enigma of Doves so frequently used as many others, and which also art very difficult to be understood. These figures, I conceive, spring from a Root of Knowledge and Learning, far above the Vulgar's Reach: For, is not this Art, saith one, Cabalistical, and full of Mysteries? So one of these Masters, well versed in Rabinical Learning, has told us what the name of a Dove doth signifie, as well as what it doth not, viz.:-

"The Name of a Dove is never apply'd to Metals themselves (which ought to be well observed by Inquirers, many having erred after this manner) but the ministering and preparing Natures. And that he that understands the Nature of the Burnt Offering (for Purification) will not take Turtles themselves, but two young Pigeons (which are the Off-spring) or Sons of the Dove."

And this Secret Pair he rather appropriates to Nogah (Venus) which is the Fifth amongst the Planets; so the Author of 'Arcanum Hermiticae' calls them the Birds of Venus. Tho' this Cabalist applies the name of Dove to Diana also.

In the 'History of Natural Things', saith he:-

"Luna is called the Medicine for the White; because she hath received a Whitening Splendor from the Sun, which, by a like shining, illustrates and converts into her own Nature all the Earth - that is the imperfect Metals: And that place of Isaiah xxx. 26, may be mystically understood of this, because the Work being finished, she hath got a Solar Splendor. But in that state, the place in Canticles vi., 9,25, belongs to her. But by the same Name the Matter of the Work is called; and so indeed, like to the Horned Moon, she is in the first State of Consistence; and like the full Moon in the last state of Fluidity and Purity."

In another Place he hath this Passage, speaking of two Birds, which place, I make no doubt, but the Author of Introit. Apert. had well considered, if not drawn his early Knowledge from, and of Argent vive, which he calls a Leopard, Water not wetting, and Jordan of the Wise Man, etc.

"And he shall have four Wings of a Bird upon his Back; the four Wings are of two Birds, which exasperate this Beast with their feathers, to the intent he may enter and fight the Lion and the Bear. And Power was given him over them, that he may overcome them, and extract their glutinous Blood. Of all these is made one Fourth Beast, which is frightful and terrible and very strong... Eating and breaking to pieces himself and others;...Treading the residue under his Feet."

This Guide I think may be depended upon, having given Demonstration of his Ability, by telling not only the Interpretation, but the Original figure itself.

More I have not met with in my Inquiry, therefore no more can be expected from me concerning this great Stumbling-block, at which so many fall into Error.

From these things 'tis very evident, to me, that this Art cannot be found by never so many casual Tryals, or Experiments, without a real Knowledge, as Sendivo has written, viz.: "Know for certain also, that this Art is not placed in Fortune, or casual Invention, but in real Science; and that there is but this one Matter in the World, by which, and of which, the Philosopher's Stone is made, viz., the Mercury of the Philosophers."

Out of what this is made, he teaches in his 'Treatise of Sulphur', as well as elsewhere. This is that Mercury, saith another, which the returning Sun diffuseth everywhere in the Month of March, or House of Aries; from whence also the Sulphur is to be sought. Which Sulphur, in this Work, saith Sendivo, is indeed instead of the Male; but the Mercury instead of the Female; of the Composition and Acting of these two, are generated the Mercuries of Philosophers. For as they have a double Sulphur, so they have a double Mercury, viz., For the White and for the Red: Which is but seldom, and then very cautiously hinted; and these Mercuries differ, both in Colour and Quality, as may be easily gathered from their Books, by careful Readers.

The Author of Intro. Apert. indeed hath taught, that there are two Mercuries to the White, used in two different Works; Asserting that the Acuation of the Mercury for Sol Vulgar, must differ from that of Philosophical Sol. And further, If (saith he) "you shall in your Decoction of Sol Vulgar, use the same Mercury which is used in our Sol (tho' both flow from the same Root in general) and apply that Regimen of Heat which the Wise Men in their Books have apply'd to our Stone, thou art without all doubt, in an Erroneous Way: And that is the great Labyrinth in which almost all young Practitioners are ensnared. For there is scarce one Philosopher, who in his Writings does not touch both ways."

In this, we may say of him, he hath not fallen short of any of them: For he has so interwoven one Work with another, one Regimen with another (by way of Balance, as I said before, for Discoveries) that little less than the Knowledge of all in Theory, will prevent our falling into constant Error, in some of these particulars; even after the Field in general is known: and which happened to himself as he confesses, and which I shall mention, as it falls in my Inquiry.

These (with many more) are the Difficulties which the Inquirers after this Art have to incounter with; and which, one would think, should rather deter, than encourage, many Men from pursuing it as they do: especially considering the adverse Fortune

that attends most Men, who prosecute this Study to their dying day; finishing their Lives in Ignorance and Despair. This Melancholy Prospect, I say, should leave such a deep Impression upon us, as to make us more cautiously meddle with this rare and difficult Philosophy; which without a Master or the special Favour of God, is never attain'd. As the Author of the 'New Light' informs us, viz., that unless God reveal it by a good Wit, or Friend, 'tis hardly known.

By the last most commonly, by the first most rarely. For as he adds, "Tho' Lully was a man of a subtile Wit, yet if he had not received the Art from Arnoldus, certainly he had been like those which find it with difficulty; and Amoldus also received it from a Friend: Every Art and Science is easie to a Master, but not to a Scholar."

Therefore this Art is easie to none, tho' of never so quick a Wit and Parts, but to those that know it only.

The Cabalist, I have before mentioned, hath lively prefigured, wise and good Men by Elisha; and the foolish Pretenders of this Art, by Gehazi, who was indeed Servant to Elisha; but to what purpose, the History of them, in the Second Book of Kings, sheweth.

Elisha an Example of Natural Wisdom, and a Despiser of Riches: He knew how to correct and make wholesome Poisonous Waters, and to multiply Treasure beyond the common Course of Nature: He could cure the worst Infirmities, nay, even raise the Dead: He knew how and when to blind and open the Eyes of Inquirers, also to punish Mockers, and even make Iron to swim; yea, his very Remains were efficacious after he was dead.

Gehazi labour'd in vain, and remain'd a Servant for ever; never qualified to be a Master, notwithstanding he had the Advantage of conversing with so great a one: He was Covetous, a Lyar and Deceiver; a Prattler, boasting of other Men's Deeds; Conceited and Hasty, thinking he sufficiently understood his Master, when he bids him take his Staff, and lay it upon the Dead Child, presently enterprising, though with an Heterogeneous Matter, and so able to effect nothing not discerning the Law of Nature; but Elisha apply'd a living Homogenous Agent, and then the Dead was raised. And instead of a double Portion of his Master's Knowledge (which Elisha desired and obtained by his Master Elijah) Gehazi got a Leprosie, as the Reward of his Doings. A great deal might be observed from this History of Elisha and Gehazi, who are Notable Examples of Wise and Good Men, and their Reverse, viz., Foolish and Profane; the last may talk, as Gehazi did, of procuring the supernatural Son of the Wise Man, but without being able to effect it; no more can his Successors, which are not a few even at this Day, who not only succeed him in Qualifications but Success. The Philosophers agree with one Voice, that one worthy of this Science must be strictly Virtuous, leading a holy Life, or God will not prosper him: He must have a competent Understanding, or he will not be able to conceive: He must be Diligent and Laborious, or he will not be able to work out what he conceives; and he must be private or he will not quietly enjoy that which he works out. To these must be added Patience and Leisure, together with a Competent Fortune; which is the more necessary in this Study, because it requires, as is already said the whole Man to find out the means, and then a careful Application is absolutely necessary to accomplish the Work.

The Philosophers, you very well know, take the liberty of seemingly contradicting themselves, and one another: Sometimes asserting the Work to be very easie; other times that 'tis very difficult or hard. One while, that 'tis short; then again that 'tis very tedious. Again, that 'tis done with little Expense, and an easie Labour; then complaining of the charge and Toil. Sometimes affirming their Matter to be but one

only thing, other times that 'tis compounded of several. One while the Work is to be done with a gentle Fire, another time that 'tis not perform'd without a strong. Then again, that 'tis equal, and of the same degree; and yet that 'tis daily increased. These are the Difficulties with many more that might be named which Inquirers lie under. And yet the Philosophers affirm, they all vanish when the Key of this Art is once attain'd, which is the Chalib's of Philosophers. No longer will a Tyro relish a false Writer, or be to seek to reconcile the true. For that as soon as the first Gate is opened, all the rest will fly open of themselves.

I fear many will be displeas'd and say, these difficulties are too well known to us already, we want rather to be told how we shall overcome 'em, than have them repeated to us. To these I answer, in the Philosopher's Words, Expound the Philosopher's Writings according to Nature and not to Fancy. Now they say, their stone is nothing else but Gold digested to the highest degree of purity and subtile Fixity. Many consent to this but will plead, that common Gold is not meant. In answer to which I shall add, let them read Sendivo on the Elements of Fire, The Way to Bliss, and others, and consider the Extensibility, Permanency and Purity of the Gold there spoken of. And also let them consider whether 'tis not such Gold they would produce by this Art, as is called common Gold. Then if it be common Gold you would produce, whether common Gold be not the Natural Body for such a Production; as common Man is of producing its own Kind; common Wheat, of Wheat; and so throughout whole Nature.

Common Wheat in a Barn, is as dead as common Gold in a chest; tho' both these have a Life, i.e., of Existence, and Power to increase their Kind; which Life must die, before the Power is brought to Action; and when this is done, they are properly called living Gold, and living Wheat, and not before.

Now, how comes Wheat to be so, we are pretty well appriz'd, viz., 'tis sown in its proper Vessel, the Earth; it is moistened with its proper Humidity and is digested by its proper Heat, and so it grows and increases.

And if we are to take Nature for our Example, Gold must be proceeded with after the same manner; tho' the Vessel, the Humidity and Heat differ, for a Metal and: for a Vegetable, yet both are liable to the Deficiencies and Excess of these things. For if Wheat hath not a Matrix duly qualified, or hath too much or too little Humidity, and so of Heat, it will succeed accordingly. And so must the other, if Nature be the same in the one as in the other, as no doubt she is; or to what purpose are we so often recommended to the Consideration of Nature. Sendivo bids us follow Nature; waving the many Subtilties of the Philosophers, written to amuse the Unskilful Inquirers. To conclude on this Head, if every Multiplication is from Seed; that the Perfection of every thing is its attaining a Seminal Virtue; and that nothing has this, which is imperfect of its Kind: Then it will follow, that if there be a Seminal Virtue in Metals, and that all of them are of the same Nature, the Seminal Virtue (that is the power of Multiplying) can be no where but in the most Perfect, which is Gold; vide 'Ars Metallica'.

As these things are consonant to Nature, Sound Reason and the Doctrine of Philosophers, even the most envious, I, for my part, shall make them my rule in my Inquiry: Others may do as they please,

And as the Author of the 'Way to Bliss' has not only told us (among many others) where the Seed of Gold lies, viz., in Gold; but how it lies, viz., This Seed of Gold is his whole Body loosened and softened in his own Water; there is all your stuff and Preparation. So he hath also, with the same Candor, shewed us the Water in which it dies, and with which 'tis raised. Where speaking of the Affinity that is known between

Gold and Quicksilver (in common Uses) which he calls the grand Mother of the Stone, and Spring of all her Goodness: Wherefore, says he, "When this fine and clean Body of Quicksilver is made, by Nature and Art, yet much finer and clearer, and again, as much more piercing and spiritual, and able to perform it; how much more readily will she run to her like, and devour it, the clean, fine and spiritual, that is the Quicksilvery part of the Metal. And if she do devour it, then it cannot be lost, but must needs go into a better Nature, even the Nature we desire."

This, he says, is done by the well-ordering the witty Fire of Hermes, "that here is all the Hardness, here all the World is blinded all the rest is easie. Search then this rare kind of Heat; for here is all the Cunning; this is the Key of all; this makes the Seeds and bringeth forth: Search wisely, and where it is, in the midst of Heaven and Earth for it is in the midst of both these places, and yet but one indeed; it is Earthy, yet Watery, Airy, and very Fiery, etc. He adds, Let the dew of this starry blood beat about the Womb, and your seed shall joy and prosper. Muse and conject well upon my Words, you that are fit and skilled in. Nature, for this is a very Natural Heat; and yet all the World is blinded. Nay indeed, if a Man would read little, and think much upon the ways of Nature, he might easilie hit this Art; and before that, never."

Thus the witty Author, according to the Custom of all Philosophers, brought as to a full stop, and left as to consider Nature, in order to remove the Remora that so often stops Inquirers in their career.

'Twas from the Excellency and Virtue of this Fire, no doubt, that the Cabalist I have before mentioned intituled his wonderful Book, 'Aesch Mezareph', or 'Purifying Fire'. This Fire has lain hid from many, a long time after they knew the Field in general, where the Seed was to be Sown. The fiery Furnace of Philosophers, says one of them, lay hid from me long; but after I Knew this, and how it was fitted to its proper Vessel, after a few days I beheld the admirable Brightness of our Water, which being seen, I could not but be amazed.

So Pontanus seems surprised at the wonderful Effects of this Fire, for want of the Knowledge of which he had erred so long and often; and tells us who inform'd him of it, viz., Artepheus, whose Book is extant, and read by most Inquirers, tho' not with the same success; some interpreting his Sayings one way, and some another; but few according to the true Sense and Meaning. Whence they have erred and will always err, unless they learn it better; the way to learn it, is but just told above, by the Author of 'The Way to Bliss', which agrees with the Way Pontanus prescribes, viz., They that should read Geber, and all other Philosophers, never so long, could not comprehend it, because that Fire is found by deep and profound Meditation only; and then it may be gather'd from Books, and not before.

We must not only have the Knowledge of this Fire; but, as we are often told, the true Measure of it to its Furnace; both which seem to be remote from the Eyes of the Vulgar: When this is known, the Difficulties that attend the Radical Dissolution of the close and fixed Body of Gold vanish. And before this can be done, this stout fixed Body must be Calcined, and reduced into as fine a Calx as possible, which is often hinted by Philosophers, but with a design to conceal it. Geber witnesses, that everything Calcined is of easier Solution, because the Parts of the Calcined Body, more subtilated by Fire, are more easily mixed with Water, and turned into Water. Without this previous Calcination, no Solution is found.

Therefore no wonder so many fail in their Attempts, to dissolve Gold in a Generative Way, by working on its Compact and Gross Body; For as the gross Bodies of Sol and Luna are not fit for Dissolution, but only their altered and unctuous Calxes; so Mercury, in its gross Body is not able to do this, but in its altered more subtile and

spiritual Nature; and drawn from its Vitriolick Caverns, acuated with its pure salt and piercing Sulphur, which then overcomes all things, even itself. For it not only dissolves Sol and Luna into its own Nature, but coagulates itself into theirs, true and fixed, by a proper Heat only.

Some may say, All these are so fully taught already, that a bare repeating of them is of no use.

That they are taught already, by the Masters of this Science themselves, is my warrant for repeating of 'em; and if you have already Learn'd these things, you have no Reason to be uneasie; if you have not, tis your advantage to be put in mind of them, even by an Inquirer.

Sad experience sheweth, that but very few of the past or present Searchers, learn those things which they often brag the Philosophers have taught: But at length to cover their own Ignorance, they fall into Arrogance, and blame the Philosophers for hiding of them; as is observed by (the never too much to be admired) Candid Ripley; who, in return, only modestly reproves them, Thus:-

"All Philosophers record and say the same;  
But simple Searchers putteth them in blame,  
Saying, they hide it; But they are Blameworthy,  
Who are no Clerks and meddle with Philosophy."

Here this good Man, in few words, justifies the true Philosophers, and lays the blame where it ought, viz. on the Unskilful Medlers with Philosophy.

What tho' he has conceal'd the Key of the Art under his green Lion, as others have done under the Doves, Chalibs, secret Fire, etc., some under one figure, some under another, which best answered their purpose, viz., Concealing the Art from the Unworthy. What they have done towards Discovering of it to the Deserving, merits the greatest Acknowledgements, not Censure from Inquirers to whom they declare they are not indebted.

Nor do I affirm, that all these different Terms are synonymous, that behoves the Inquirer to satisfy himself in, from their Writing, whether they are or can be deemed so.

I have ventur'd to call the Green Lion of Ripley the Key of the Work, because his Expositor has as good as called it so. "Learn then," says he, "to know this Green Lion, and its Preparation, which is all in all the Art; it's the only Knot; untye it, and you are as good as Master: For whatever then remains, is but to know the outward Regimen of the Fire, for to help on Nature's Internal Work."

And the same Author has expressly called the Chalibs so, viz., I will tell thee (if thou wilt conceive) it is called Chalibs, by the Author of the 'New Light'; and it is the true Principle of the Work, the true Key (as it may be handled) of unlocking the most hidden Secrets of Philosophers.

Again our Chalibs is the true Key of our work, without which the Fire of the Lamp could not be, by any Art, kindled. Which he further describes thus, viz., It is the Minera of Gold, a Spirit very pure, beyond others, etc.

Sendivogius calls this Matter, as well by the Name of Magnet, as Chalibs, viz., To speak more plainly, says he, 'tis our Magnet, which, in our foregoing Treatises, I called Chalibs, or Steel. The Air generates this Magnet, and the Magnet generates or makes out Air to appear and come forth: I have here intirely shewed thee the Truth. This Author has comprized in few Words what the Author of 'Intro. Apert.' has divided into Three Chapters, viz., Chalibs, Magnet, and Air; all which he has

Concentrated in a Fourth, viz., Chaos; The Earth, says he, is a heavy Body, the Matrix of Minerals, because it keeps them occultly in itself; altho' it brings to light Trees and animals. The Heaven is that wherein the great Lights, together with the Stars, are rowled about; and it sends down its Virtues through the Air into inferior things. When he has gone thus far, he, in Imitation of Sendivogius's Skill and Candor, adds, But in the Beginning, all being confounded together, made a Chaos. Behold ! I have faithfully opened to you the Truth; for our Chaos, etc. O the Harmony and Skill, as well as Candor of these two great Masters! Beg of God that he would make you Discerners and Partakers of these things. Nor let me forget most candid Ripley, who exactly corresponds with these, viz.:

"For as of one Mass was made all thing  
Right; so must in our Practice be.  
In Philosophers Books therefore, who lifts to see,  
Our Stone is called the less World One and Three:  
Magnesia also of Sulphur, and Mercury,  
Proportionate by Nature most perfectly."

Thus we see Ripley's One Mass, Philalethes's Chaos, and Sendivogius's Matter of the Antient Philosophers, are the same; containing Three, viz., Magnet, Chalibs, Air, or Magnesia, Sulphur and Mercury: which also are called by abundance of other Names in Philosophers' Books, e.g., Artephius speaking of the Compound, Magnesia, says, That 'tis compounded, like a Man of Body, Soul and Spirit; which he thus expounds, viz.,

"For the Body is the fixed Earth of the Sun, which is more than most fine, ponderously lifted up by the force of our Divine Water: The Soul is the Tincture of the Sun and Moon, proceeding from the Conjunction or Communication of these two: But the Spirit is the Mineral Virtue of the Two Bodies and the Water, which carries the Soul, etc. Again, the Spirit therefore pierceth, the Body fixeth, the Soul coupleth, coloureth and whiteneth. Of these three united together, is our Stone made; that is, of the Sun, and Moon, and Mercury. Flammel says he could easily give very clear Comparisons and Expositions of this Body, Soul and Spirit: But then he must of necessity speak things which God reserves to reveal unto them that fear and love him, and consequently ought not to be written";

yet he is not wanting to concur with Artephius, in calling them the Sun, Moon and Mercury, and agreeing exactly with him in his Exposition. It would be as it were endless, and indeed needless, to recite all the different Expressions used by Philosophers, who confirm and constantly maintain this Doctrine of Trinity in Unity, under various Modes of Speech, and hard-to-be-understood Similes. But to keep a little to that of the Green Lion, which is worth our Enquiry: Ripley speaking of its Blood, asserts this Secret to be hid by all Philosophers, viz.:

"The said Menstrual is (I say to thee in counsel)  
The Blood of our Green Lion, and not of Vitriol:  
Dame Venus can the Truth of this thee tell  
At the beginning, to Counsel if thou her call.  
This Secret is hid by Philosophers great and small.

Which blood drawn out of the Green Lion,  
For lack of Heat, had not perfect Digestion."

So the Author of 'Arcanum Hermeticae' saith, the most precious Substance is Venus, the Hermaphrodite of the Antients, glorious (or powerful) in both Sexes. The Author of 'Aesch Mezareph', speaking of Venus, under the Names Nogah and Hod, which is a necessary Instrument to promote the Metallick Splendor, says, It has more a part of a Male, than Female; and speaking of the Green Lion, he saith, Which, I pray thee, do not think is called so from any other Cause but its Colour: For unless thy Matter shall be green, not only in that immediate State before 'tis reduced into Water, but also after the Water of Gold is made of it. Why 'tis called a Lion, is hinted by another, viz., Having Power to overcome, and reduce Bodies to their first Matter, and to make fixed things volatile and spiritual; whence 'tis fitly called a Lion. Some are who derive the Name Green from the Rawness or Unripeness of the Subject, and not from the Colour, viz.:-

"Whose Colour doubtless is not so,  
And that your Wisdom do well know;  
But our Lion wanting Maturity,  
Is called Green, from Unripeness, trust me."  
- The Hunting of the Green Lion.

Another says:-

" For it is because of its transcendent Force  
It hath, and for the Rawness of its Source,  
Of which the liice is no where to be seen,  
That it of them is named their Lion green.  
Our subject is no ways malleable;  
It is metalline, and its Colour sable."  
- Sophic Feast.

These are some more of the seeming Contradictions, which Philosophers warn us not to be deceived with, but to learn to Reconcile. These Difficulties are to be overcome by Meditation only.

Now, let us try whether, or how far, 'tis possible to Reconcile these Contradictions concerning the Green Lion. The Cabalist (much admired by me) says, the Matter is actually green, both before 'tis dissolved and afterwards also: This doth not deny, but confirm, that 'tis Spoke of, and considered, in divers States; and then it may not be absurd to suppose, that it may be, and is, described by one in one state and degree of Perfection, and by others in another: By one in its Impurity; by another in its Passage from thence to its Purity (for Ripley says 'tis unclean); and by a third when 'tis Purified. For as Matters, when more or less pure or mature, are of a different Texture, so they also differ in Colour. And 'tis in this Sense, I make no doubt the Philosophers are to be understood not only with relation to this Subject, but 'Tis not therefore every Matter which is foul or, green (as vitriol is, which Ripley says, Fools take to be their Green Lion) that intitles it to this wonderful Name; no, but it must have all the other Virtues and Powers in it, that are assigned by Philosophers: Which thing lies very obscure, and seemingly base, but it is, in its Purity and exalted Virtue, their Subject of Wonders. To Produce which, this fond Minera, they tell us, must be dissolved and



exactly purified, in a pure Homogeneous Water, which is its own Blood, as White as Milk; which Name some have rather imposed. This Leprous Body, Sendivo and others have called Saturn, and Saturn's Child and what some have called flood and Milk, he calls Urine.

Thus the Masters of this Science take the liberty to express themselves by different Similes, in order to disguise their Secret, which a mental man will discover and improve by, as soon as he shall discern any one of their Intentions; the rest follow in course, tho' varied ever so many ways, as they themselves testify.

What some have called Blood, Wine, etc., the Author of the Learned 'Sophic Feast' calls fiery Water, etc., viz.:

"Their Lion green they suffer'd him to prey  
On Cadmus Sociates; and when the Fray  
Was over, they with Dian's charms him ty'd  
And made him under Waters to abide,  
And washed him clean; and after gave him Wings  
To fly, much like a Dragon, whose sharp springs  
Of fiery Water, the only way was found  
To cause Apollo his Harp-strings to sound.  
This is the true Nymph's Bath, which we did try,  
And proved to be the Wise Men's Mercury."

Here all Doubts and Difficulties end, when this is attain'd; so with it I shall finish this Inquiry: Having shewed my Fellow Inquirers, in what manner I have been enchain'd in it; concluding in the Words of the aforesaid Author, viz.:

"Happy are they, who shall not miss to find  
The new uprising Sun:  
More happy they, who, with renewed Mind,  
In God find Rest alone."

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**A SHORT TRACT,**  
**OR**  
**PHILOSOPHICAL SUMMARY**

by **NICHOLAS FLAMELL**

HE that would understand the whole subject of metals, and how they are transmuted one into another, ought first to find an answer to the question, from what substance they spring, and how they are formed in their ores. For this purpose he must observe the changes that are continually going forward in the mineral veins of the earth. Hence they may be made subject to transmutation outside of their ores if they are first made spiritual, so that they may be reduced to their sulphur and mercury, which is performed by Nature. Now all metals have been formed out of sulphur and quicksilver, which are the seeds of all metals, the one representing the male, and the other the female principle. These two varieties of seed are, of course, composed of elementary substances; the sulphur, or male seed, being nothing but fire and air (*i.e.*; *good* sulphur, resembling fire, free from the mutable properties of metals, and not that common sulphur which is not a metallic substance at all); while the quicksilver, or female seed, is nothing but earth and water. These two seeds were figuratively represented by the ancient Sages under the forms of two dragons, or serpents, one of which had wings, while the other had none. The wingless dragon is sulphur, because it never flies away from the fire. The winged serpent is quicksilver, which is borne away through the air (the female seed, which is composed of water and earth)—because in a certain degree it flies away or evaporates. Now, if these two seeds, separated one from another, are united spermatically by triumphant Nature, in the book of Mercury, the first mother of metals, the Sages call the substance that results, the flying dragon, because this dragon, being kindled with its fire, in its flight pours abroad into the air fire and a poisonous vapour. The same happens to mercury, which, if placed in a vessel over an ordinary fire, has its internal, hidden fire kindled; and then you may see how the outward vegetable fire kindles the inward natural fire of mercury. You will notice that it exhales into the air a certain poisonous fume or vapour, the stench of which is such as to prove that it is nothing but the head of the dragon which is leaving Babylon in great haste, even the philosophical Babylon which is encompassed by a double or treble vessel.

Other Sages have likened this Mercury to a flying Lion, because the Lion devours other animals, and refreshes and strengthens himself at will with the blood of all animals except those which have power to resist his rage—and because mercury, too, is known to deprive other metals of their specific form, and to absorb and incorporate them. Gold and silver, however, are strong enough to resist its violence; although it is well-known that mercury, when exposed to an exceptional degree of heat, devours and swallows even these two metals. Yet neither of them is changed into the nature of the mercury, howbeit, they are enclosed in its womb; for gold and silver are more permanent and more perfect than crude mercury, this being an imperfect metal, notwithstanding that there is in it the substance of perfection. Common gold, which is a perfect metal, and silver, and all the imperfect metals, are developed out of mercury. For this reason, the ancient Sages have called it the Mother of the Metals, and hence, being itself a metal, it must contain a two-fold metallic substance, namely, the inner substance of the Moon, and that of the Sun (which is unlike the other). Of these two substances mercury is formed, and they are cherished in its body in the form of

spiritual essences. Now, as soon as Nature has formed that mercury of these two spirits, she strives to transmute them into a perfect bodily form; and therefore, when those two spirits have grown up, and their two varieties of seed awake, they desire to assume their own proper bodies; and then the Mother, mercury, must die, and having died a natural death, can never be quickened any more into that which it was previously.

Vainglorious and arrogant Alchemists have obscurely hinted that perfect and imperfect bodies must be transmuted into fluid mercury, but this assertion is only a trap for the unwary. It is true that mercury consumes imperfect metals, like lead and tin, and thus increases in quantity; but, by doing so, it loses its perfection, and is no longer the mercury that it was before. If, indeed, it could be so mortified by a chemical process as to shut out all hope of its ever quickening itself again, it would be changed into something else, as happens with cinnabar, or in sublimate. But, when it is coagulated by a chemical process, whether by a swift or a slow method, its two bodies do not assume a permanent form. By the natural process this coagulation is indeed successfully carried out; and thus we never find a vein of lead, for instance, which does not contain a few permanent grains, at least, of gold and silver. The first coagulation of mercury is lead, which is most suitable for fixing it, and bringing it to perfection. For lead is never without some fixed grain of gold and silver, which are imparted to it by Nature for the purpose of multiplication and development, as I myself have experienced, and am able to testify. So long as it is in its mercury, and not separated from its mineral, it can continue to increase its substance from the substance of its mercury. But if this fixed grain is taken away, and severed from its mercury (or the mineral in which it is found), it can no longer gain in size. It is with this grain as with the green fruit that is formed on a tree when the blossom has been shed. If it is plucked off before it is ripe, it can come to nothing. If it is left on the tree, it is nourished and increased by the sap and the juice of the parent stem, and thus gradually attains to its proper size, and to maturity. But, until ripeness has been attained, the fruit continues to attract to itself the sap and juice of the tree, that is to say, so long as the connection with the parent tree is not severed.

Almost the same thing happens with gold. Such a grain attracts to itself the mercury of the lead, and incessantly "fixes" it into its own mercury, whereby it grows and gradually increases in size. The mercury of perfect or imperfect metals is the parent tree, and the grain (of gold) can be nourished with nothing but this mercury. But as soon as you sever the connection with the parent mercury, that growth of the grain must immediately come to an end; it is as though the unripe fruit had been plucked from the tree: you would vainly endeavour to restore the vital connexion. When you have once removed an unripe pear or apple from its native branch, it would be foolish indeed to join it to the tree once more, and expect it to ripen. Instead of growing, it will gradually shrivel up, and become smaller. The same thing may be observed in the case of the metals. For if any one were to take common metallic gold and silver, and tried to resolve those metals into mercury, he would be doing a very foolish thing. It is a result which cannot be brought about by any chemical process, however subtle and ingenious, just as fruit which has once been plucked in an unripe state can never again be vitally joined to the parent tree. It has, indeed, been well said by the Sages that if gold and silver be joined together through their proper mercury, they have power to render all other (imperfect) metals perfect. But these Sages did not speak of common gold and silver, which must always remain what they are, can never become anything else, and certainly cannot aid the development of other metals. It is fruit that has been plucked before the time, and therefore is dead and withered. No, the *living* fruit (the real living gold and silver) we must seek *on the tree*; for only there can it grow, and increase in size, according to the possibilities of its nature. This tree we must transplant, without gathering its fruit, into a better and richer soil, and to a sunnier spot. Then its fruit will receive more nourishment in a single day than it was wont to receive in a hundred years, while it was still in its former sterile soil.

I wish you to understand that Mercury, which is a most excellent tree, and contains silver and gold in an indissoluble form, must be taken and transplanted into a soil that is nearer to the Sun (*i.e.*, in this case, gold), where it may flourish exceedingly, and be abundantly watered. Where it was planted before, it was so shaken and weakened by the wind and the frost, that but little fruit could be expected from it. So there it remained a long time, and bore no fruit.

But in the garden of the Sages, the *Sun* sheds its genial influence both morning and evening, day and night, unceasingly. There our *tree* is watered with the rarest dew, and the fruit which hangs upon the trees swells and ripens and expands, from day to day. It never withers, but makes more progress in one year than it did in a thousand years in its former sterile situation. Or, to drop metaphor, let the mercury be taken, and warmed day and night in an alembic over a gentle fire. Yet it should not be a coal or a wood fire, but a clear and pellucid heat, like that of the *Sun* itself—a gentle and even warmth. Growing fruit must not be exposed to too much heat, or else it is withered, and shrivelled up, and is never brought to perfection. It must have a genial warmth, and be supported by a moderate moisture in the tree, if it is to flourish and expand. For heat and moisture are the food of all earthly things, both animal, vegetable, and mineral. Ordinary coal or wood fires are too violent for our purpose, and give no nourishment like the heat of the Sun which preserves all bodies through its natural influences. For this reason the Sages use none but this natural fire, not because it is made by the Sages, but because it is made by Nature—Nature, that creates all things, whether they be animal, vegetable, or mineral, and warms them, each at its own proper degree.

Therefore, I will not say that man by his art can make natural things; but I do say that human art can impart greater perfection to that which Nature makes. For this purpose the ancient Sages have had but one object in view, namely, to produce from the moon and the true mother mercury, the mercury of the philosophers, which in its operation is much more potent than natural mercury, and is useful for working upon simple, perfect, imperfect, cold, and warm metals. Now, the Philosophical Stone is good for perfect and imperfect metals, and soon restores and brings them to perfection without any diminution, addition, or real change of any kind. For, apart from perfecting them, it leaves them in the state in which they were before. I do not say that the Sages combine common gold, silver, and mercury for this purpose: this is the method only of ignorant charlatans, who thereby hope to prepare the mercury of the Sages; but they never succeed in producing this, the real first substance of the Stone. If they would obtain it they must go to the seventh mountain, where there is no plain, and from its height they must look down upon the sixth, which they will behold at a great distance. On the summit of that mountain they will find the glorious Regal Herb, which some Sages call a mineral, some a vegetable. The bones they must leave, and only extract its pure juice, which will enable them to do the better part of the work. This is the true and subtle mercury of the philosophers which you must take. Now, first it prepares the white tincture, and then the red. For the Sun and Moon are prepared by the same method, and yield the red and white tincture, respectively, and the preparation is so simple that it might be seen to by a woman while she works at her spindle—just as she might set a hen on some eggs, without washing them first, and without any other trouble but that of turning the eggs every day that the chickens may break the shells all the sooner. In like manner, you must not wash your mercury, but only put it with its like (which is fire) into ashes (corresponding to the straw), into one glass vessel (which is the nest), in a suitable alembic (which is the house). If you do this there will come out a chicken, that will deliver you with its blood from all diseases, and feed you with its flesh, and clothe you with its feathers, and shelter you from the cold. Therefore, I pray and beseech the Creator of all things to grant His grace to all faithful Alchemists, that they may find the chicken, which, through God's unspeakable goodness and mercy, has now been vouchsafed to me. I have written this tract for your sakes, to encourage

you, and point out to you the right way: I hope and trust that my words will enable you to understand more fully the works of other Sages. Farewell!

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**A SUBTLE ALLEGORY  
CONCERNING THE SECRETS OF ALCHEMY  
VERY USEFUL TO POSSESS AND PLEASANT TO READ**

**BY  
MICHAEL MAIER**

AFTER spending the best part of my life in the study of the liberal arts and sciences, and in the company of wise men and judicious scholars, I was compelled, as the result of my observation of mankind, to arrive at the melancholy conclusion that the hearts of most persons are set either on ambitious and vainglorious projects, on sensual pleasures, or on the accumulation of wealth by all and any means; and that few care either for God or for virtue. At first I did not quite know whether to become a disciple of the laughing or of the weeping philosopher, or whether to join in the exclamation of the wise Prince of Israel: "All things are vanity." But at length the Bible and experience taught me to take refuge in the study of the hidden secrets of Nature, whether pursued at home, by means of books, or abroad, in the Great Volume of the World. Now, the more I drank of the mighty fount of knowledge, the more painfully my thirst, like that of Tantalus, seemed to increase. I had heard that there was a bird called Phœnix, the only one of its kind in the whole world, whose feathers and flesh constitute the great and glorious medicine for all passion, pain, and sorrow; which also Helena, after her return from Troy, had presented in the form of a draught to Telemachus, who thereupon had forgotten all his sorrows and troubles. This bird I could not indeed hope to obtain entire; but I was seized with an irresistible longing to become possessed of at least one of its smallest feathers; and for this unspeakable privilege I was prepared to spend all my substance, to travel far and wide, and to endure every hardship. There was, of course, much to discourage me. Some people denied the very existence of this bird; others laughed at my faith in its wonder-working properties. I was thus brought for a time to regard all that Tacitus, Pliny, and all other writers have said as fabulous, and to doubt whether, after all, the different narcotics and opiates were not a better remedy for anger and sorrow than the supposed virtues of the Phœnix. Moreover, I had heard of the simple method of curing these mental ailments suggested by a certain wise man to Augustus, whom he bade run through the twenty-four letters before saying anything whenever he was angry; and this suggestion appeared to supersede all other remedies. I had also read the books of those moral philosophers who undertake to prescribe an effective remedy for every disease of the mind. But after giving all these boasted specifics a fair trial, I found, to my dismay, that they were of little practical use. In many cases, the causes of mental maladies appeared to be material, and to consist in an excess or defect of the bile, or of some other bodily substance; in all these cases a medical treatment seemed to be indicated; whence Galen, that prince among physicians, was led to believe that character depends on temperaments of the body. As a soldier may lose all his bravery and strength by being starved and confined in a close prison, so even a good person may yield to anger, simply through some vicious habit of body. This opinion is most reasonable in itself, and is borne out, amongst other things, by the testimony which is given by Arnold of Villanova, in that book of his where he sets forth the virtues of all medicines by means of tables of the four qualities: "The medicines that conduce to intellectual excellence are those which strengthen the digestion, and nourish the brain and the principal vitals, purging out all superfluities, purifying the blood, and preventing the ascent of vapours to the brain; hence you will find that many medical writers speak of their medicines as productive of a direct effect upon the mind, when it is only through the medium of the stomach, the brain, the blood, the liver, etc., that they tend to brighten the intellectual faculties, by improving the general health of the brain, and quickening all processes of the body, that you may say they are productive of joy, because they tend to strengthen the chief limbs, purify the

blood, and produce good animal spirits. Other medicines "lead to Paradise," as they dispose the heart to charity and to every good work. by their action upon the blood. Some medicinal herbs have the power of exciting love, by increasing and clarifying the blood, and thus quickening the sexual instinct; while others make men chaste and religious, by inducing poverty and frigidity of blood, and taking away the edge of all sensual appetite. In the same way, it is possible, by means of certain drugs, to make men stupid and insane, as men are rendered dull and stolid by drinking too much wine. You may also notice, sometimes, that after eating a certain kind of food, men become light-hearted, joyous, and inclined to dance and sing—though they are ordinarily staid and grave persons—while other kinds of food have a contrary effect upon them. Thus, a physician has power to make a miser liberal, a chaste person lascivious, a timid person bold, simply by changing the complexion of his vital juices. Such are the wonderful secrets of the medical Art, though, of course, they are hidden from the foolish and the ignorant. There are a great many infatuated persons who will not believe that medicine can do anything but cure a headache; but such people know little of the resources of this science. Hippocrates forbid the physicians whom he taught to reveal these secrets; and it was a wise prohibition." A little further on the same writer says: "What medicine can produce greater heat than anger? or chill the body more than fear? or invigorate the nerves more thoroughly than joy? or nourish and comfort more gently than hope? And what more certain cause of death is there than despair?" These are the words of the philosopher, and they shew that medicine may, through the body, cure the mind, and thus supply a remedy for anger as well as other mental disturbances. It is true that if there is a remedy for anger, it would, in the present state of the world, hardly be very highly esteemed. Still it would calm the passions of individuals, although other persons might not recognise its value. But that which men do not care to have just now, may one day be in great demand. Such is the vicissitude of all things human. Galen once said that the savages of England and Germany were as hostile to the science of Medicine as they were ignorant of it. But now the descendants of Galen's countrymen are sunk in barbarism, while the English and Germans are the most skilful physicians in the world. Thus it seems very likely that this Remedy may be one day in great request, especially when we consider its vast utility, and the innumerable evils which anger brings upon men.

What has been said about anger applies with equal force to grief; for while the symptoms of anger are more or less mental, those of grief produce a more perceptible and lasting effect on the body. This great Remedy for anger and grief, then, it would be most desirable to have, if we could only find the Phœnix which affords it, Where shall I look for it? Where shall I enquire after it? Whom shall I ask? I determined to go abroad, and to search for it till I should have found it. Fortune assists the brave: to the indolent and idle knowledge never comes. I would leave my native country—dearly as I love it, and sadly as I should miss my friends—and wander from land to land until I should be able to return with the eagerly coveted Medicine. All beginnings are difficult: he who has never been sad, cannot rejoice; he who has never erred, cannot be brought back to the right way; and as the Chemists say: "There is in Alchemy a certain noble body, which is moved from master to master, whose beginning is misery and sourness, whose end is sweetness and joy." So I expected to endure hardships, and go through bitter experiences, but I also expected them to be crowned with the delights of success. Of the existence of the Phœnix I had no doubt, or I could not have looked for it. It is enough for me to see the Sun and its rays, even though I cannot touch it; and perhaps it is as well for us that we cannot get so very close to the Sun. But as to this Medicine which I seek; how can I have a perfect knowledge of it before I see and touch it? How can I become a Master before I have been a scholar? The products of all countries are not the same; and perhaps I may learn in one part of the world what I cannot get to know in another. Moreover, I asked myself the question: Can a pilgrim's life hurt any one? Are we not all pilgrims here below to that land whither our Saviour Christ has gone before? And is not the example of peregrination set us by the swallow, the herald of spring; by the

crane, the stork, and other birds of passage? Does not the whole world lie open before man as the air is everywhere accessible to birds? Great Phoebus himself, the god of the Sun, journeys day by day over the wide expanse of the sky. The heart of man beats and pulsates in his bosom from the first to the last hour of his life; and being surrounded by all these models and examples, it is natural for man to lead the life of a pilgrim, particularly if that pilgrimage be directed towards a certain goal. The merchant travels over land and sea to buy the produce of distant climes; but a nobler merchandise by far are science and knowledge, which are the wares of the mind. He who stays at home will there bury his talents, and get to know little about the secrets of the universe. Moreover, it is both pleasant to travel and honourable to be always several hours' journey in advance of the Sun. That which is most spiritual is most swift in its movements, while the lifeless earth alone is immovable. The other three elements are in perpetual motion: the air sweeps over the earth in the shape of winds, hurricanes, and gales; fire devours everything before it as it rushes onward in the conflagration of a great city; water runs along in rivers and mighty streams, and hastes to reach the sea. Let us also look up and behold the heavens as they move in their glory. The stars, the sun, and the moon know the times and seasons of their rising and setting. A cannon ball, if projected from one of our most powerful guns, would be more than eight days in making the compass of the world (which is more than 25,000 miles); but the Sun, notwithstanding its vast size, accomplishes the same distance in 24 hours. It would make our thoughts reel if we strove to realise the velocity with which Saturn moves round the Sun, and with which the heavens revolve round their own axis. But greater still, and far more wonderful, is the speed of human thought, which, in a moment of time, travels from one end of the heavens to the other. We may believe that the angels, as spiritual beings, move with the quickness of that which is spiritual in man, viz., thought. God alone does not move; for He is everywhere. For all these reasons, I conceived that it would be both interesting, pleasant, honourable, and eminently profitable for me to follow the example of the whole world, and to undertake a pilgrimage for the purpose of discovering this wonderful bird Phoenix. I therefore braced myself for a long journey, determining to travel, first, through all the countries of Europe, then, if necessary, to America, thence to Asia, and at last to pass on to Africa. If, after carefully searching for the Phoenix in all these parts of the world, I did not succeed in finding it or hearing of it, I might reasonably give up all hopes of ever setting eyes thereon. The plan of my journey was determined by the relative quality of the elements which the different parts of the world represent, *i.e.*, Europe stands for earth, America for water, Asia for air, and Africa for fire; and earth cannot become air except through the medium of water; nor can water become fire except through the medium of air. I determined, then, to go first to Europe, which represents the grossest, and last to Africa, which represents the most subtle element. But my reasons will be set forth more clearly as I come to speak of the different parts of the world.

### **EUROPE: EARTH.**

I left my native town on the day of the vernal equinox, when the Moon and Sun were both in the sign of Aries, with the intention of first travelling through Europe, and to enquire everywhere after the Phoenix. I took Europe to represent the element Earth, because earth forms the foundation of all the other elements, and stands out above the water, so Europe is the mother of the whole world, and though smaller than other continents, is vastly superior to them through the courage, energy, and mental strength of its inhabitants. Some say that one handful of earth gives ten handfuls of water, a hundred handfuls of air, and a thousand handfuls of fire; and this is the relative importance of the different continents, if Europe answers to earth. Europe has produced the bravest warriors, and the most distinguished conquerors; and though she has subdued other continents, she has herself never been subjugated by them. Of the four great world empires, only one was founded by an Asiatic prince; the Macedonian, the Roman, and the Teutonic Empires, have



all had their centres in Europe. Alexander the Great and Julius Cæsar were among her sons. If we look at a map of Europe we may easily perceive that in shape this part of the world resembles a virgin; but her heart is that of a lion. For these reasons, I determined to travel first through this Virgin Lion, because it clearly corresponds to the fundamental element: earth.

Europe is a Virgin because of her beauty and spotless purity; a Lion because she has conquered others, but has never herself been conquered. Among the heavenly bodies the Sun answers to Europe, and among the metals, gold. For though she produces little gold, and the sun shines upon her with less fierceness than on Africa, yet she is worthy of being compared to the Sun and gold because of the excellence of her people, though a few years ago even some real lions were born in Germany, yet we call her a Lioness only on account of her stoutness of heart. Europe is the Mother of the World, and Germany is her heart.

Nor is Europe without her marvels. In Pannonia, it is reported, men live in compact stone houses under water. The hot springs of Carlsbad, it is said, are hardened into stones. On the coasts of Prussia, a transparent and pellucid stone (amber), formed out of subterraneous vegetable juices, is cast ashore in large quantities. I do not mention the coral of the Sicilian sea, which, originally a plant, hardens outside water into a white or red tree of stone; or the sealed earth of Germany and Silesia. . . . Europe, then, is the *Lion Earth*. This expression is for those who hear not with their ears only, but also with their brains; it is earth which resists the fire, like gold, and is not resolved into air. Like the boundary pillar of the gods of old, it "yields to none." Hence Europe (the gold of the universe) seemed the very place in which I should be most likely to hear of the Phœnix and its Medicine. But most of those whom I met laughed at my quest, and said that, like Narcissus, I had fallen in love with the shadow of my own mind, the echo of my vain and ambitious thoughts, which had no substantial existence apart from my own folly. "The words of the Alchemists," said they, "are like clouds: they may mean and represent anything, according to the fancy of him who hears them. And even if there were such a medicine, human life is too brief for the search; all that makes life worth living will have to be neglected and thrust aside while you are engaged in hunting after it. If we can pick up a knowledge of this secret casually, and whilst devoting ourselves to other pursuits, well; but if not, we can very ill spare the time for a closer search." These objections (at least the latter half of them) I met as follows: "The quest of this Medicine demands the whole powers of a man's body and mind. He who engages in it only casually, cannot hope to penetrate even the outward rind of knowledge. The object of our search is a profound secret, and a man who is not prepared to give himself wholly to this enquiry had much better abstain from it altogether. I readily acknowledge that the powers of my mind are not such as to justify me in anticipating success. But the spirit within me impels me to undertake this search; and I am confident that God will at the last reward my patience, and my humble waiting upon Him. As every King loves his Queen, as every bridegroom is devoted to his bride, so I regard this science as more beautiful and lovely than anything else in the world besides. Now, beautiful things are hard to win, and hard toil is the way to all that is great and glorious." This was the gist of my answer. Now I had already travelled through a great part of Europe, when it occurred to me that Italy and Spain are constantly mentioned by the Ancients as the great seats of secret knowledge, and I therefore directed my steps thitherward. In Spain I heard that some Arabs (Geber, Avicenna, and others) had lived there a long time ago, and these had possessed the wonderful Medicine; I was also told a great deal about Hercules and his achievement in securing the golden apples of the Hesperides, and also the golden cup, wherein he received the medicine for anger and sorrow. Now all prudent men have decided that it contained a small portion of the feathers of the Phœnix. I saw that Geryon with the three bodies was the theme of the philosopher's writings, that Hercules was a laborious artist, seeker of the Medicine. But nobody was able to give me any definite information. I did not, however, wish to leave Europe without visiting the Canary Islands, which are seven in number and are named:

Lancerotta, Bonaventura, Great Canaria, Teneriffe, Gomera, Ferro, and Palma. Three of them, Lancerotta, Gomera, and Ferro, are governed each by its own King. Ferro is naturally destitute of good drinking water, but the inhabitants get a supply of it out of certain broad-leaved trees, which distil sweet water in such quantities as to suffice for the whole island. Strangers and pirates who land in the island, being ignorant of this fact, are prevented by want of water from staying in Ferro very long. Now, it happened about this time that the King of Gomera had died without leaving a male heir, and his subjects refused to acknowledge the authority of his beautiful daughter Blanche, unless she accepted the hand of some royal wooer, because they said that it was unworthy of men to be ruled by a woman, and calculated to injure the manliness of the national character—as was shewn by the experience of those peoples over whom women have borne sway for any length of time. For there women had assumed the place of men, while men were degraded to the position of women; and, as a consequence, there followed the wildest excesses of profligacy and lewdness. So the royal maiden was prevailed upon to think of bestowing her hand in marriage. Now, there was in the island a royal youth, named Brumazar (with beautiful dark locks and a splendid golden robe), who was passionately enamoured of the royal maiden Blanche, and was loved by her in return. He wooed and won her, and the wedding was celebrated on condition that she should bring to him as her dower a diamond of great value and magnitude, while he should present to her a splendid ruby of incalculable worth (*i.e.*, worth a million ducats); he, as her King and Lord, should protect her from all dangers and from the robbers with whom that country swarms, while she, on the other hand, promised humbly to obey him without either subterfuge or tergiversation. After these preliminaries, they were linked together in close and indissoluble marriage, in which they lived long and happily; and it was predicted that a son should be born to them, who would be a mighty conqueror, and would carry his victorious arms as far as the Pillars of Dionysus in India. . . . So you see that I was unable to get any information whatsoever about the Phoenix in the course of my wanderings through Europe; I therefore determined to set sail for America, in the hope that I might be more fortunate among the savages of that Continent. For I remembered the words of the poet:—

"Accident is a mighty helper; let your hook always be baited; in the least likely river you may catch your fish."

### **AMERICA: WATER.**

In these days, when commerce has opened up, as it were, a highroad across the seas to America (or India in the West), there is no very great difficulty in reaching that continent; but far different were the circumstances under which it was first discovered. After leaving the "Islands of the Blessed," I became a passenger on board of a ship which had an eagle for its figurehead; and, after weathering many severe gales and hurricanes, we at length landed in Brazil, a great province of America, entirely covered with forests. The surface of the country is only dotted here and there with the homestead of a settler; there are few towns, and the inhabitants are sunk in ignorance, and unskilled in the arts of civilisation. How, then, could I hope to hear anything about the Phoenix among people who could hardly read or write? Yet there are in this country many rare and beautiful birds which are not found elsewhere, though, of course, the Phoenix, being a miraculous bird, must not be sought among common fowls. The trees of the land are of a rich colour and sweet fragrance; and one day when I was enjoying the wild beauty of the forest, and listening to the natural music of the birds, I happened to find an apple of unusual and exquisite beauty, which on a closer view exhibited the following inscription:—

"Within is that which, if you deliver it to its grandmother, there will thence arise a son who may cling to his mother in loving embrace. From this union will arise in a short time a noble tree which will render to the husbandman a golden harvest."

After much thinking, it occurred to me that the seed which was in the fruit must be placed in the earth (its grandmother, since the parent tree was its mother). So I took it as a gift of God, sowed the seed, and when there had sprung up a little tree, I grafted it into the parent tree (first having sawn off that tree close to the ground) and when the two had grown together, they became a much more glorious tree than either of them had been before; and the fruit was that of the scion which had been inserted into the parent tree. . . . It is said that before the Spaniards reached Brazil, there were no horses in that country, so that the natives regarded a horse soldier as a monster half man and half beast; but when both horses and asses had been introduced by the strangers, it was thought most desirable to obtain also some mules which are the common offspring of these two animals. Now, there was a certain chief who possessed a large number both of asses and horses, and he took particular interest in this matter. He knew very well how to breed horses from horses, and asses from asses, but he was not acquainted with the proper method of breeding mules from both; while he was aware that all experiments which are made in the dark, *i.e.*, without the light of previous experience, are both dangerous and uncertain. The consequence was that all his efforts to produce a mule out of a stallion and a she ass were doomed to failure, no doubt because their seeds were not mixed in the right proportion. At last a Sage who was passing that way, and whose insight into the secret working of Nature was infinitely keener and more complete than that of those ignorant people, gave our chief the following advice:

"If you would obtain a mule resembling the paternal ass in length of ear and slowness of gait, you should feed each of the parents with just as large a quantity of food as their nature requires. Would you know what this proportion is? Give to the male twice as much as to the female, then a mare will conceive a mule from an ass."

This advice was taken by the chief, and, after several failures, his perseverance was crowned with complete success. Nor does it appear contrary to Nature's general plan that two different parents should produce offspring which differs from them both. Look at the leopard, which is said to be the offspring of the pard and the lioness; in the same way the wolf and bitch beget the lynx; a scion inserted into a good tree produces fruit different from those of the parent stock; new varieties of flowers are obtained by a judicious mingling of the pollen; and the red powder called "our Tincture," being mixed with quicksilver over the fire, produces gold which is utterly unlike either the one or the other. Now, these Americans are able to perform a most singular experiment with metals, and particularly with gold. They have a kind of water in which gold becomes soft like wax, and capable of being moulded with the hand into any shape they please. This water is not a corrosive, since it does not burn the fingers of those who take up the gold. But we need not doubt that it is some chemical discovery, and that it is obtained by a distilling process . . . . As I could gain no further information in America, I began to think of taking the first opportunity of crossing to Asia: I took with me a very heavy and valuable piece of a certain kind of wood, the most precious I saw here in Brazil, and which is remarkable for its brilliant ebony colour, for this black colour seems proper to America by reason of the blackish poplars and the soil dyed with various hues. The colour of this wood seems to arise from the heat of the sun, and the wonderful peculiarity of the American soil, of which

Monandez, that learned physician of Seville, writes as follows: "The variety of colour exhibited by the soil of Peru is most remarkable. If you look at it from a distance, it has the appearance of a patchwork quilt spread out to air in the sun: one part of it is green, another blue, others again are yellow, white, black, and red. Now all these are different kinds of mineral earth: the black earth, if mixed with water or wine, makes an excellent ink; the red soil is said to be the ore of quicksilver, and the Indians paint themselves with it."— Well, I took my wood, went aboard a ship, with a white unicorn for its figure head, and setting sail for Asia, soon arrived in the Persian Gulf.

### **ASIA: AIR.**

Asia is the third continent of the world, the continent which answers to the element of Air, and its climate is more temperate than that of the other continents, as it is equally remote from the intense cold of Europe, and the intense heat of Africa. Being both warm and moist, it most admirably corresponds to the element of air; its heat is almost everywhere tempered by the vapours which ascend from the sea. Moist, warm air has fire for its father, and water for its mother, and retains the most active qualities of both its parents. Thus air is a mediator between the two hostile elements, and in its own composition reconciles their strife. In the same way Asia binds Europe (earth) and Africa (fire) together, the grossest and the most subtle of the elements; but without Asia (air) there would be no union between them. By means of air, fire clings gladly to earth, and fosters it; but without air, the fire soon goes out. It is the prerogative and distinctive mark of Asia to be the centre of the world, and to bring forth such fruits as require a warm, soft air, as, for instance, dates, balsam, spices of all kinds, and gold itself. Asia is the cradle of our race, the seat of the first Monarchy, the birthplace of our Redeemer. From the Persian gulf I travelled straight through the continent, till I reached those parts of Asia Minor where Jason is said to have obtained the golden fleece. So, being greatly interested in these old world occurrences, I walked out one day to a place said to be the field of Mars, and the site of the Palace of Aëtes, the descendant of the Sun; there I met an old man of venerable aspect and authoritative port, who saluted me graciously, and to whom, after returning his salutation, I addressed the following words: "Master, if I am not troubling you too much, kindly enlighten my ignorance, as I can doubt neither your ability nor your willingness to help a stranger." He having signified his willingness to do for me all that lay in his power, I asked him whether those things which were related in history and poetry concerning Jason and his golden fleece, were real facts or mere poetical fictions. He smiled, and made the following reply to my question: "I myself am Jason, and better able than any one else to give you information concerning those things which have happened to myself. You need not be afraid, for during my lifetime I was no man's enemy, but succoured all, like a good physician; and now that I no longer belong to this world, I am still as kindly disposed towards my mortal brethren. On this spot stood the royal seat of my father-in-law, Aëtes, whose father was the Sun—not, indeed, that heavenly luminary (which would be incredible), but one likest to him in name, and face, and dignity. The golden fleece of the ram, which Mercury had transmuted, and which Aëtes had hung in the grove of Mars, I obtained in the following manner: Medea was my chief adviser, and she enabled me by her wise counsel to contend successfully against the fierce and venomous monsters. The watchful Dragon I stupefied with a narcotic, which I cast into his maw; and while he was in that helpless state, I hastened to extract his teeth. These had to be buried in earth first prepared and ploughed up by means of bulls vomiting fire, which fire was extinguished by water poured into their mouths. Then Medea gave me the images of the Sun and Moon, without which, she said, nothing could be done." I asked where I should find all these things. His answer was that he obtained them Medea, but he could not tell me where she was to be found. "When she left me in her madness," he said, "she was wedded to old Aegæus, to whom she bore Medus; Medus afterwards went to Asia, and

became the founder of the Median race." I wished to ask Jason many more questions, but he excused himself from answering them, and vanished before my eyes. Then I saw that he had been speaking of the Medicine of which I was in search, which also he had shadowed out under the figure of the golden fleece. For the crest of the Phoenix and its feathers are described by the learned as exhibiting a golden splendour. I did not indeed meet with many learned men in Asia; but I was well satisfied to have explored that blessed "aerial earth," especially as Syria and the Holy Land (with their rivers of Adonis and Jordan, in which the leper Naaman was cleansed) form part of it. In Syria, it is related that Adonis was killed by a boar, hounded on by Mars, and that from his wounds there flowed forth that balm by means of which human bodies are preserved from decomposition. On this continent stood the Holy of Holies, into which our Most High Priest entered when He had made atonement for the sins of the whole race on the Cross of Calvary; to Him, let us now utter forth the most ardent desires of our hearts in the following prayer:

O great and merciful Saviour of the world, Jesus Christ, who being God from all eternity, next madest man in time, in order that, as our Mediator, Thou mightest unite God and man, by satisfying the eternal and infinite power of God which human sin had provoked to wrath, that is to say, Thyself, the Father, and the Holy Spirit. For this purpose Thou wast born into this world and didst go about doing good among men, and didst sanctify this earth by Thy miracles, Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension. To Thee I pray from the very bottom of my heart that as Thou hast given this Medicine for the use of men by ordinary means, and meanwhile hast Thyself cured incurable diseases by Thy Divine power, Who art the Great Physician: so Thou wouldst bestow the gift of this most precious Medicine upon me, the very humblest of thy servants, who for the sake of this most blessed knowledge have taken upon myself so weary a pilgrimage, and so many toils and hardships, as Thou well knowest—in order that I may use it to the glory of Thy Name, and for the relief of my suffering brethren. Thou who art a searcher of hearts, knowest that I despise all worldly pomp, and desire to consecrate my life to Thee, if Thou wilt but work in me both the will and the power of performance: Grant to me the power of exercising boundless charity, of relieving all sufferings, both bodily and mental: Bless me with the gracious gift of Thy Medicine, which comes next in value after the peace of mind and eternal happiness which Thou hast gained for us, in order that its virtue may be effectual in the cure of human sorrow, disease, and pain; to the everlasting praise of the everblessed Trinity, world without end, Amen.

When I had poured forth this prayer to the Giver of all good things, I remembered that besides the land which once flowed with milk and honey, but now, under Turkish rule, has become utterly barren and sterile, there was also in Asia, Paradise, which was created for man while he was still perfect. Knowing that this blessed garden was situated near Babylon, I journeyed to the spot, but found nothing except a confluence of certain rivers. Thence I travelled to the maritime parts of India, and found a city, called Ormuz, of which there ran a proverb, that if the world was a ring, Ormuz would be its gem. In this city there was a great concourse of eager visitors from the whole neighbourhood; and when I asked one of them whither he was hastening, he said: "To the terrestrial paradise." "What," said I, "was I unable to find the ancient garden of Eden, and do these people speak of a new Paradise!" But the man left me standing there, and pursued his journey as fast as he could. While I was considering whether I should follow him, it occurred to me that I should do well to adopt the plan of Columbus, the discoverer of America. So I went to the different gates of the city, and determined to leave it by that one where the sweetest and most fragrant odours were borne towards me on the air. This I did, and I soon found myself on a road where the air was such as might well come from an earthly Paradise, yet was frequented by very few travellers. Ormuz being situated on an island, we soon had to cross a sea, where I saw men fishing up pearls of the purest whiteness. Having obtained some of these for love and money, I had no doubt that I had come into possession of one of

the most important substances of the Medicine, for the whiteness of these pearls was such as to defy exaggeration. After pursuing my journey on the mainland, along a very narrow by-path, for some time, I reached a point where two roads met, and there was a statue of Mercury, of which the body was silver while the head was overlaid with gold. The right hand of this statue pointed towards the Earthly Paradise; and when I had followed for some time the road which it indicated, I came to a very broad and deep river, which it was impossible to cross without a boat, though far and wide there was no boat to be seen; but the beauty of the other shore convinced me that it must be the Earthly Paradise. The trees which grew there were covered with golden, orange, citron-coloured, purple, and intensely red flowers. There were evergreen laurels, junipers, box-trees, and great store of blossoms of all colours and of the sweetest fragrance: sunflowers, amaranths, lilies, roses, hyacinths, &c. The ear was charmed with the songs and cries of nightingales, cuckoos, parrots, larks, thrushes, and hundreds of other known and unknown birds; nor was there wanting the sweet music of instruments and sweet-toned organs; the taste was gratified, as it seemed, with all manner of delicious fruits, and the fragrance which streamed out on the breeze was such as charmed while it rendered insensible the olfactory nerves of all the people who lived round about, just as the noise of the Nile cataracts becomes inaudible to those who are used to it. But what did the sight of all these glories profit me, who, for want of one little boat, was unable to get at them? So I turned away, with the firm resolution of coming back, as soon as I could do so with a better chance of success; in the meantime, I should be most likely to find the Phoenix that I was in search of, if I crossed over to Africa without further delay. So I directed my course towards the Red Sea, and there landed in Africa.

### **AFRICA: FIRE.**

When I reached Africa, more than a year had elapsed from my first setting out; the Sun had once more entered the sign of the Lion, the Moon was at her height in the house of Cancer. All these were circumstances which inspired me with hope. The intense heat of the African climate renders the whole continent torrid, sterile, and dry. It has few rivers, but many wild beasts, which meet together at the riverside, and bring forth among themselves many new and strange shapes, for which Africa is so well known. Satyrs, cynocephali, and semi-human beings are said to live there. There are the Mountains of the Moon, and Atlas that bears up the heavens on its shoulders: all these abound in minerals and in serpents. There also is collected the blood of the Dragon which the Dragon has sucked from the Elephant; but when the Elephant falls dead, the Dragon is crushed, and the blood which it has drunk is pressed out of it. Again, in the neighbourhood of the Red Sea, an animal named *Ortush* has been observed, the colour of whose head is red, with gold lines up to the neck, while its eyes are deep black and its feet white, to wit, the fore feet, but the hind feet are black, the face up to the eyes white—a description which tallies exactly with that which Avicenna gives of our Medicine. . . . Now I heard that not far from the Red Sea there lived a prophetess, named the Erythræan Sibyl, in a rocky cave; and I thought well first of all to enquire of her concerning this Phoenix. It is she that prophesied and predicted the coming of the Son of God in the flesh This assertion has indeed been questioned by many writers, but it is borne out by Eusebius, the great historian of the Early Church, and by Cicero, the great orator, who, as is well known, translated this prophecy into the Latin tongue. Abundant evidence to the same effect may also be collected from the works of Virgil, the prince of Roman poets. The passage of Cicero which is referred to by Eusebius, will be found in the second book of his treatise, *De Divinatione* (On Divination). . . . When I came to her, I found her sitting in her cave, which was beautifully overgrown with the spreading boughs of a green tree, and covered with green sod. I saluted her with the lowliest and most deferential humility. At first she seemed somewhat startled at my sudden appearance, and hastily retreated to the interior of the cave. But she was soon won over by my earnest

entreaties, and prevailed upon to shew herself at the entrance of her habitation. "Who art thou, stranger?" she enquired, "and what wouldest thou of me? Dost thou not know that a man may not approach a virgin that dwells in solitude?" "It is not forward boldness that has brought me hither," I replied; "but I have come after mature deliberation, because I feel that it is you, and you alone, that can resolve certain doubts which lie heavy on my mind. If you will shew me this great kindness, I, on my part, promise to do you suit and service, and to fulfil all your commands, as far as lies in my power." When she heard these words, her countenance cleared, and she asked me in a more kindly tone what my business was. "I cannot," she continued, "deny anything to men like you who are anxious to learn." "There are two things," I returned, "concerning which I would crave plain and straightforward instruction from you. namely, whether there was and is in these countries of Arabia and Egypt a wonderful bird named Phœnix; whether its flesh and feathers are really an effectual medicine for anger and grief; and, if so, where the bird is to be found?" "The object of your search," she rejoined, "is a great and glorious one; doubt is the first stage of knowledge, and you have also come to the right place and the right person. For the country in which you now find yourself is Araby the Blest, and nowhere else has the Phœnix ever been found; moreover, I am the only person who could possibly give you any definite information about it. I will teach you, and this land will exhibit to you, the glad sight of which I speak. Therefore, listen to my words Araby the Blest and Egypt have from of old rejoiced in the sole possession of the Phœnix, whose neck is of a golden hue, while the rest of its body is purple, and its head is crowned with a beautiful crest. It is sacred to the Sun, lives 660 years, and when the last hour of its life approaches, it builds a nest of cassia and frankincense, fills it with fragrant spices, kindles it by flapping its wings towards the Sun, and is burnt to ashes with it. From these ashes there is generated a worm, and out of the worm a young bird which takes the nest, with the remains of its parent, and carries it to Heliopolis (or Thebes), the sacred city of the Sun, in Egypt. Now, this whole tale which you find in the books of the Ancients is addressed to the mind rather than to the ear; it is a mystical narrative, and like the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians, should be mystically (not historically understood. An ancient Egyptian writer tells us that the Phœnix rejoices in the Sun, and that this predilection is its chief reason for coming to Egypt. He also relates that his Countrymen were in the habit of embalming the Phœnix if it died before its time. If you therefore regard this tale as an allegory, you will not be far wrong; and you know that the flesh and feathers of this bird were of old used in Heliopolis as a remedy for anger and grief." When I heard her say this, I was full of joy, and asked her whether she could tell me how to become possessed of this Blessed Bird and Medicine. She promised not to forsake me, and to do all in her power to help me out of my difficulty. "Nevertheless," she continued, "the most important part of the enterprise must be performed by the toil of your own hands. I cannot describe to you in exact and unmistakable terms the place where the Phœnix lives, yet I will endeavour to make it as plain to you as I may. Egypt, you know, owes all her fertility to the Nile, whose sources are unknown and undiscoverable; but the mouths by which it is discharged into the sea, are sufficiently patent to all. The fourth Son of the Nile is Mercury, and to him his father has given authority to shew you this bird, and its Medicine. This Mercury you may expect to find somewhere near the seven mouths of the Nile; for he has no fixed habitation, but is to be found now in one of these mouths, and now in another." I thanked the Virgin Prophetess most cordially for her gracious information, and at once set my face towards the mouths of the Nile, which are seven:—the Canopic, the Bolbitic, the Sebennitic, the Pelusian, the Tenitic, the Phœnetic, and the Mendesic. The way to the Canopic mouth led me through an ancient Christian burial ground, where a most miraculous occurrence is witnessed every year on a certain day in May. From dawn to noon on that day the dead bodies gradually rise from their graves until they are completely visible to the passers by; and from noon to sunset they gradually sink back again into their tombs. If this be true, as eye-witnesses testify, it is a most certain proof of the resurrection of the human body, and exhibits a close analogy to the resuscitation of the dead Phœnix. . . .

When I reached the island of Canopus, I enquired where Mercury was to be found. But the people were

only hopelessly puzzled by my questions. Some said that, according to Hermes, Egypt exhibits an image of the heavens, and the seven mouths of the Nile (of which the Canopic is the most considerable) correspond to the seven planets; the Canopic mouth they called the habitation of Saturn, the grandfather of Mercury; Mercury was to be found domiciled in some other mouth of the river. At the Bolbitic mouth none of those persons of whom I enquired knew anything about Mercury. Near the third or Sebennitic mouth stood the city of Sebennis, of which the inhabitants were so savage and cruel towards strangers, and so utterly destitute of all the arts and graces of civilisation, that I could not conceive of Mercury, the god of culture and science, living in their midst. Moreover, a certain peasant whom I asked whether Mercury's house was there, told me that he had a house in the town but that he never lived there. So I at once went on to the fourth or Pelusian mouth of the Nile. The famous city of Pelusium is said to have been founded by Peleus, the father of Achilles. It separates Asia and Arabia from Egypt, and was at one time a most wealthy town. When I heard of its greatness in commerce and industry, and of the large quantities of Arabian gold which are imported in this city, one of the wealthiest marts of Egypt, I felt assured that I should find the dwelling of Mercury here; but I was told by the inhabitants that he did not come there very often, though he was received as a most welcome guest whenever he did visit it. This answer filled me with dismay, which was in proportion to the hopes which I had conceived, but I determined not to abandon my search till I should have visited the three remaining mouths of the river.

At the Tenitic mouth of the Nile, I learned quite as much as I had learned everywhere else, namely—nothing. When the people who lived there told me that Mercury never came to them at all, I began to bewail my hapless fate, and the many fruitless journeys I had undertaken; and I now saw that perhaps it would have been wiser to have begun at the other end. There, however, I was; only two mouths of the river were left; and in one of these Mercury would be found, if indeed the Prophetess had spoken true. At the Phœnetic mouth another disappointment awaited me. Mercury had once lived there, but had long since migrated somewhere else. At the seventh, or Mendesian mouth, nothing whatever was known about him.

It may easily be imagined that, after this long series of disappointments, I began to suspect the Sibyl very strongly of having sent me on a fool's errand; for I had now visited every one of the mouths of the Nile, and yet had not found even a trace of Mercury in any of them. Or if the words of the prophetess had been true, it seemed as if the various people of whom I had enquired must have deceived me with false information. But after more mature consideration of the answers which had been returned to my questions in the different places, I arrived at the conclusion that I had merely misapprehended their meaning. So I retraced my steps, and at length succeeded in finding Mercury in one of the mouths, where the people had at first appeared to know nothing about him. He sheaved me at great length, where I must look for the Phoenix and where I could obtain possession of it. When I reached the place to which he directed me, I found that the Phoenix had temporarily deserted it, having chanced to be chosen umpire between the owl and other birds which pursue it, of which battle we have treated otherwise. It was expected back in a few weeks; but, as I could not afford to wait so long just then, I thought I might be content with the information I had gained, and determined to consummate my search at some future time. So, having returned to my native land, I composed the following epigrams in honour of the Sibyl, Mercury, the Phoenix, and the Medicine.

## EPIGRAM

*In Honour of the Erythræan Sibyl, named Herophyle.*



"I thank thee, great prophetess, whose inspiration is not of the fiend, but of the Spirit of God, that thou didst direct me on my way to the Son of Nilus, who should shew unto me the bird Phœnix. Full of sacred knowledge, thou didst utter forth thy oracles when thou didst sing of God who should come in the fashion of a man. Thou dost love Him who, bearing the sentences of highest justice, will be the omnipotent judge of the whole world, though thou wert called a Gentile Maiden, and though men said that thou couldst know nothing of Him. The cave near the Red Sea cannot hold thy greatness, when Christ shall claim thee for His own in Heaven."

## EPIGRAM

*Dedicated to Mercury of the Sages.*

"The Latins call thee Mercury, the Messenger of the Gods; among the Greeks thy name is that of great Hermes. Thou art called Tenthius on the soil of Egypt; thy father is Nilus, who enriches that soil, and has bequeathed unto thee untold wealth. Thou hast duly conveyed to the peoples of Egypt the laws which Vulcan, being in the secret with thee, has given. All nations of the world behold thee with delight, yet thou desirest to be known to very few. Of how many secrets of Nature have the keys been entrusted to thy keeping! Thy face is red, thy neck is yellow, thy bosom is whiter than purest snow. Thy feet are shod with black sandals, a wand with a double snake in no wise hurts thy hand. This is thine apparel whereby thou art known to all, O Hermes! Thy complexion is fittingly of four hues. Thou didst shew to me the glorious bird Phœnix by the mouth of an interpreter, and I thank thee for thy love with all my heart; though the words be light, they are weighty with gratitude."

## AN EPIGRAM

*In Praise of the Phœnix.*

"O Marvel of the World, prodigy without a blot, unique Phœnix who givest thyself to the great Sages! Thy feathers are red, and golden the hues of thy neck; thy nest is built of cassia and Sabœan frankincense. When thy life is drawing to a close, thou knowest the secret way of Nature by which thou art restored to a new existence. Hence thou gladly placest thyself on the altar of Thebes, in order that Vulcan may give thee a new body. The golden glory of thy feathers is called the Medicine of health, and the cure of human woe. Thou has power to cast out disease and to make the old young again. Thee. Blessed Bird, I would rather have than all the wealth of the world, and the knowledge of thee was a delight which I sought for many years. Thou art hidden in the retreat of thine own nest, and if Pliny writes that he saw thee in Rome, he does greatly err. Thou art safe in thy home, unless some foolish boy disturb thee: if thou dost give thy feathers to anyone, I pray thee let him be a Sage."

*On the Hermetic Medicine of the Phœnix.*

"If all the mountains were of silver and gold, what would they profit a man who lives in constant fear of death? Hence there cannot be in the whole world anything better than our Medicine, which has power to heal all the diseases of the flesh. Wealth, and riches, and gold, all yield the prize to this glorious possession: and whoever does not think so, is not a man, but a beast."

*"If anyone will not acknowledge the force of reason, he must needs have recourse to authority."*

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# **A Tract Of Great Price**

**Concerning The Philosophical Stone.**

**Published By A German Sage In The Year 1423,**

**Under The Following Title:**

**The True Teaching Of Philosophy**

**Concerning The Generation Of Metals**

**And Their True Origin.**

## **Chapter I**

All temporal things derive their origin, their existence, and their essence from the earth, according to the succession of time. Their specific properties are determined by the outward and inward influences of the stars and planets, (such as the Sun, the Moon, Etc.) and of the four qualities of the elements. From these combined circumstances arise the peculiar forms, and proper substances, of all growing, fixed, and generating things, according to the natural order appointed by the Most High at the beginning of the world. The metals, then, derive their origin from the earth, and are specifically compounded of the four qualities, or the properties of the four elements, their peculiar metallic character is stamped upon them by the influences of the stars and planets. So we are informed by Aristotle in the fourth book of his Meteor., where he says that quicksilver is the common substance of all metals. The first thing in Nature, as we said before, is the substance which represents a particular conglomeration of the four elements which the Sages call Mercury or quicksilver. But this quicksilver is as yet imperfect, on account of its gross and earthy sulphureous nature, which renders it too easily combustible, and on account of its superfluous watery elements, which have all been collected together out of the four elements by the action of the heavenly planets. This substance is composed of a hot sulphureous earth, and a watery essence, in such a way that the sages have called it imperfect sulphur.

Now, since Nature is always striving to attain perfection and to reach the goal set before her by the Creator of all things, she is continually at work upon the qualities of the four elements of each substance; and so stirs up and rouses the inward action of the elements by the accidental heat of the Sun, and by natural warmth that there arises a kind of vapour or steam in the veins of the earth. This vapour cannot make its way out, but is closed in; in penetrating through fat, earthy, oily, and impure sulphureous substances it attracts to itself more or less of these foreign and external impurities. This is the reason that there are seen in it so great a variety of colours before it attains to purity and its own proper colour.

Those mineral and metallic substances which contain the largest proportion of efficacious sulphureous and mercurial vapour are the best; and each quality of the four elements has its own peculiar operation and transmuting influence in such a conglomeration of various substances -- their action being roused by the sulphur of the earth and the outward heat of the Sun. Through these agencies the Matter is often dissolved and coagulated, till that which is pure, or impure, is borne upward; and this is the work not of a few years, but of a great length of time. Nature has to purge away the peculiar characteristics of all other metals before she can make gold; as you may see by the fact that different kinds of metal are found in the same metallic vein. This fact may be explained in the following manner. When the sulphureous and mercurial vapours ascend they are mixed, and united by coction, with the aforesaid substance. If those sulphureous vapours are earthy thick, and impure, and the heat of the Sun, or their own natural heat, have too sudden and violent

an effect, the substance hardens, with all its sulphureous impurities before it can be purged of its grossness, and it becomes more like metallic sulphur. If the quicksilver is hardened, the whole mass takes the form of some metal, according to the influence of the particular planet with which it is penetrated. For Nature first combines the four elements into some substance or body, which then receives its specific properties through the influence of some planet. Such is the origin of copper, tin, lead, iron, and quicksilver. But it is not essential that I should here describe at length the specific composition and distinctive properties of each of the imperfect metals; they are all mingled in various proportions of impure sulphur and inefficacious quicksilver. Nature, as I said, is ceaselessly at work upon these imperfect metals purging and separating the pure quicksilver from the impure, and the pure sulphur from the impure, until all their grossness is removed and they become what God designed that they should be, viz., gold. But if these vapours float upward in their original pure condition, with their inward pure and subtle earth, without becoming mixed with gross, earthy, and sulphureous alloy, and if they succeed in breaking forth into the open air before they become hardened into a sulphureous mass, they remain quicksilver and are not changed into any metal.

If, however, this pure quicksilver floats upward in a pure mineral earth, without any gross alloy, it is hardened into the pure and white sulphur of Nature by being subjected to a very moderate degree of gentle heat, and at length assumes the specific form of silver. Like all the other metals it may still be developed into gold if it remain under the influence of its natural heat. But if the same pure, unalloyed quicksilver be subjected to a higher degree of natural heat, it is transmuted into the *purered* sulphur of Nature and becomes gold without first passing through the stage of silver. In this form it remains, because gold is the highest possible stage of metallic development.

Quicksilver is the mother of all metals, on account of its coldness and moistness; and if it be once purified and cleansed of all foreign matter it cannot be mixed any more with grossness of any kind neither can it be changed back into an imperfect metal. For Nature does not undo her work, and that which has once become perfectly pure can never become impure again. Sulphur on the other hand is the father of all metals, on account of its heat and dryness. In the following chapter we shall refer to this difference, and speak more in detail about quicksilver.

## Chapter II

There is, then, in *all* metals true mercury and good sulphur in the imperfect as well as in the perfect metals. But in the imperfect metals it is defiled with impure matter and stands in need of maturing. Hence you see that all metals may be changed into gold and silver, if the golden and silver properties that are in them be freed from all alloy and reduced by gentle heat to the form of silver or gold. Those metals, indeed, which have been torn up by the roots, that is to say, that have been dug up from their own proper soil in the veins of the earth, can no longer proceed in that course of development which they pursued in their native abode; yet, as much as in them lies, they strive to be perfected. Now the Spirit of Truth, who imparts all true knowledge, has taught the Sages a Medicine or Form, by which all the impurities of the imperfect metals may be removed, and the perfect nature, or true mercury, which is in them, transmuted into gold and silver.

## Chapter III

But we must now proceed to say a few words about the method of preparing this Medicine, by which the imperfection is removed from imperfect metals through the mediation of perfect mercury, and the mode of gold and silver is developed in them.

I find that the writings of the Sages are all about gold, silver and quicksilver, which it is said must be reduced to the form which they wore before they became metals; that is to say, the form which they wore perhaps some thousands of years ago. But the operation of Nature is progressive, not retrogressive. Hence it is a great mistake to suppose that the work of Nature can be reversed by dissolution in aqua fortis or by the amalgamation of gold or silver and quicksilver. For if the metal be plunged in a solvent, if water be distilled from it, or if quicksilver be sublimed from it, it still remains the same metal that it was before. The specific properties of a metal cannot be destroyed so as to obtain the first substance. Yet Aristotle says that metals cannot be changed unless they are reduced to their original substance.

#### Chapter IV

What we have said in the last chapter shows that Alchemical Art cannot be concerned with the subjecting of gold, silver or quicksilver to chemical processes. Nevertheless, that which you read in the books of the Sages is most true and we shall see in the following pages in what sense it is to be understood, that our Art is in gold, silver and quicksilver. But it is clear that our art can make no use of quicksilver such as may be obtained from the metals by means of any kind of artificial process, such as dissolution in aqua fortis, or amalgamation or any other method of chemical purification.

If then, this is not the right substance or original mercury, it is clear that it is not to be found in the metals. For even if you melt two, three, or four metals together, yet not one of them can give the others any aid towards attaining perfection, seeing that itself stands in need of external aid. And even though you mix some imperfect metal with gold, the gold will not give up its own perfection for the purpose of succouring the other for it has nothing to spare which it might impart to the imperfect metal. And even if the imperfect metal could assume the virtue and efficacy of the gold, it could only do so at the expense of the gold itself. In vain, then, shall we seek in metals the Medicine which has power to liberate the perfect mercury contained in imperfect metals.

#### Chapter V

Again, we read in the books of the Sages that quicksilver and mercury are the original substance of all metals. These words are true in a certain sense. But by many beginners they are supposed to mean ordinary quicksilver. Such an interpretation, however, makes nonsense of the dictum of the Sages. For ordinary quicksilver is an imperfect metal and itself derived from the original substance of all metals. The Sages, indeed, say little about the *origin* of their mercury but that is exactly because they use the name of mercury or sulphur, for the first substance of their perfect metals. If common mercury were not a metal, there would be no metal corresponding to the celestial influence of the planet Mercury as gold and silver receive their specific properties from the influence of the Sun and Moon. Now, as it is one of the metals the other metals cannot be derived from it, much less can their properties be derived from it or from themselves, although the real perfect mercury is quite as abundant in mercury as in any other metal. Nor can common sulphur be the first substance of the metals, for no metal contains so much impurity as common sulphur; and if it be mixed with any metal, that metal becomes even more impure than it was before, and is even partially, or wholly, corroded.

#### Chapter VI

Again, the Sages affirm that quicksilver, or mercury, is the spirit of the specific nature of metals, collected out of the four elements by the influence of the Planets, and the operation of Nature in the earth -- and that from it is developed either gold, silver, or some other of seven metals, according to the peculiar effects of the predominant planetary influence.

Hence ignorant alchemists have supposed that all this is true of the common quicksilver, because it amalgamates with all metals, and is soft and volatile. But why should its volatile properties prove it to be no metal? According to this definition, we might deny the metallic character of tin, lead, and other metals, because they do not remain fixed in a fierce fire -- though one can stand a greater degree of heat than another. If, again, any substance is to be called the first substance of metals because of the facility with which it amalgamates with them, copper would have a better claim to be so regarded, since it enters into a closer union with gold and silver than mercury, and shares both their fusible and malleable nature. But that is no final union, for it admits of separation; and quicksilver may, with the greatest ease, be separated from the metals with which it has amalgamated. A true union of metals can only take place in the original substance which is common to all. We do find amalgams of three or even more metals; but then this union was consummated in the first substance, which is *one*, and the whole amalgam would have been developed into gold, if its natural growth had not been retarded by gross, sulphureous, arsenical, and earthy impurity, which is found among metals when purified. The metals which we dig up out of the earth are, as it were, torn up by the roots, and, their growth having come to a standstill, they can undergo no further development into gold, but must always retain their present form, unless something is done for them by our Art. Hence we must begin at the point where Nature had to leave off: we must purge away all impurity, and the sulphureous alloy, as Nature herself would have done if her operation had not been accidentally or violently, disturbed. She would have matured the original substance, and brought it to perfection by gentle heat, and, in a longer or shorter period of time, she would have transmuted it into gold. In this work Nature is ceaselessly occupied while the metals are still in the earth; but she takes away from them nothing save their superfluous water and the impurity which prevents them from attaining to the nature of gold, as we briefly showed in the second chapter.

## Chapter VII

It is clear, then, that the final union of metals, or their perfection, cannot be attained by the mingling of any specific metals; that the metallic substance becomes useless for our purpose, as soon as it assumes a specific form; but that, at the same time, all metals have a common origin, or Matter, which is one thing, flowing out by the operation of nature, who ever desires the most perfect form which her own essence and her condition will admit. And this is the form of gold, highest and best of all that belong to the metallic mode. If, then the purest form of this substance which it is possible for Art to prepare with the help of Nature, be added to the imperfect metals then it overcomes what is impure in these, for it is not the impure, but the pure matter which is like unto it. But you must not suppose that this power belongs to common gold; common gold has its own specific form, which it is unable to impart to other metals. The power of gold is sufficient only for preserving its own excellence; but our prepared substance is much better and more honourable than gold, and has power to do that which gold cannot do, viz, to change the common matter of all metals into gold.

## Chapter VIII

From what I have hitherto said, one ignorant of alchemy might suppose that the teaching of the Sages is

altogether false and untrustworthy. Therefore I must now proceed to tell you how it may truly be affirmed that our Art is concerned with quicksilver silver, and gold, or with quicksilver and sulphur, and in what sense mercury is the spirit of the metals. I will first speak about quicksilver, and at once premise that this word is not here taken to mean that common quicksilver which is one of the metals, but the first substance of all the metals, and itself no specific metal at all. For a metal must have derived its distinctive properties through planetary influences; nor can any one metal be the first substance of all metals. This quicksilver is neither too hot, nor too cold, nor too moist, nor too dry; but it is a well-tempered mingling of all four. When perfectly matured quicksilver is subjected to external heat, operating thereon, it is not burned but escapes in a volatile essence. Hence it may well be called by the philosophers a spirit, or a swift, and winged, and indestructible soul.

So long as it is palpable and visible it is also called body; when subjected to external cold it is congealed into a fixed body, and then these three, body, soul, and spirit, are one thing, and contain the properties of all the four elements. That outward part which is moist and cold is called *water*, or quicksilver on account of its inward heat it is called air; if without it appear hot and dry it is fire, or sulphur; and on account of its internal coldness it is also styled *earth*. In this way quicksilver and sulphur are the original substance of all metals; but, of course, I do not mean that the substance is prepared by mixing common sulphur and quicksilver. The sulphur and quicksilver of the Sages are one and the same thing, which is first of the nature of quicksilver, or moist and watery and is then by constant coction transmuted into the nature of sulphur, which may Most justly be described as dry and igneous.

## Chapter IX

But I wish to confine my discourse to the quicksilver and sulphur of the philosophers, from which all metals derive their origin; and it is according to the Sages a heavy earthy water mixed with very subtle white earth, and subjected to natural coction until the moist and the dry elements have become united and coagulated into one body -- through the perfect mutual adjustment of all the elementary properties, and by the accidental operation of cold. This is the substance which is used for the purposes of our Art, after it has been perfected and purified by gentle coction, and freed from its earthy and sulphureous grossness, and the combustible wateriness of the quicksilver. It is then one clear, pure and indestructible substance, proceeding from a duplex substance, exhibiting in their greatest purity and efficacy the united properties of quicksilver and of sulphur. In art the operation is similar to Nature. Hence the Sages have justly affirmed that our Art is concerned with quicksilver, gold, and silver. For in its first stage the substance resembles quicksilver which is sublimed by gentle natural heat, and purified in the veins of the rocks in the form of a pure vapour, as we explained above. To it we know add silver and gold, and that for the following reason, because we cannot find anywhere else in any one thing the metallic power needed for rousing the sulphur of the quicksilver, and coagulating it, except in gold and silver For the Sage cannot prepare our quicksilver unless it be first removed from the earth, and separated from the potency of its natural surroundings; and all these natural influences can be artificially supplied only by the addition of gold and silver. Our Art then has to find a substitute for those natural forces in the precious metals. By them alone it is able to fix the volatile properties of our quicksilver, for in them alone do use find the powers and influences which are indispensable to our chemical process. You should also bear in mind that the silver should be applied to our quicksilver before the gold, because the quicksilver is volatile, and cannot with safety be subjected all at once to great heat. Silver has the power of stirring up the inherent sulphur of the quicksilver, whereby it is coagulated into the form of the Remedy for transmuting metals into silver, and this coagulation is brought about by the gentle heat of the silver. Gold requires a much higher degree of heat and if gold were added to the quicksilver before the silver, the greater degree of heat would at once change the quicksilver into a red

sulphur, which, however, would be of no use for the purpose of making gold, because it would have lost its essential moisture; and our Art requires that the quicksilver should be first coagulated by means of silver into white sulphur, before the greater degree of heat is applied which, through gold changes it into red sulphur. There must be whiteness before there is redness. Redness before Whiteness spoils our whole substance.

## Chapter X

The quicksilver of the Sages has no power to transmute imperfect metals, until it has absorbed the essential qualities of gold and silver; for in itself it is no metal at all, and if it is to impart the spirit, the colour, and the hardness of gold and silver, it must first receive them itself. It is with the first substance of metals as it is with water. If saffron is dissolved in water, the water is coloured with it, and if mixed with other water, imparts to that water, too, the colour of saffron. Unless the first substance, or quicksilver, is tinged with silver and gold, and coagulated by their efficacy, it cannot impart any colour, or coagulate the 'water or) first substance which is latent in the imperfect metals. For it is essentially a spirit. and volatile. and if it be added to imperfect metals, it cannot act upon their water, or undeveloped first-substance, because that is partly fixed by their coagulated sulphur. But if the first-substance has been fixed by means of gold and silver it has become a fixed and indestructible water: and, if added to imperfect metals. takes up into its own nature their first substance, or water, and mingles with it. By this means all that is combustible and impure in them is driven off by the fire. And herein is the saying true which was uttered by the Sage Haly: The spirit (i.e. quicksilver is not coagulated, unless the body 'i.e., gold and silver' be first dissolved." For then gold and silver become spiritual. flowing, capable of being assimilated by the common substance of all metals, and of imparting to it their own metallic strength and potency. And even though this new substance be fusible in the fire, yet, when it cools again, it still remains what it was, nor is it ever again converted into a permanent spiritual substance. It is the quicksilver, then that constitutes the chief strength and efficacy of our Art; and he that has no quicksilver is without the very seed of gold and silver from which they grow in the earth.

## Epilogue

We have sufficiently explained that quicksilver is the first substance of the metals, without which no metal can become perfect, either in Nature or in our Art. But we do not yet know where to look for it, and where to find it. This is the great secret of the Sages, which they are always so careful to veil under dark words that scarcely one in many thousands is thought worthy to find the philosophical Mercury. Many things have been written about it; but I will quote the words of *one* philosopher which I consider as the most helpful: In the beginning, he says, God created the earth plain, simple, rich and very fertile, without stones, sand, rocks, hills, or valleys, it is the influences of the planets which have now covered it with stones, rocks, and mountains, and filled it with rare things of various colours, i.e., the ores of the seven metals, and by these means the earth has entirely lost its original form, and that through the following causes:

First, the earth which was created rich, great, deep, wide and broad, was, through the daily operation of the Sun's rays penetrated to her very centre with a fervent, bubbling, vaporous heat. For the earth in herself is cold and saturated with the moisture of water At length the vapours which were formed in this way in the heart of the earth became so strong and powerful as to seek to force a way out into the open air, and thus, instead of effecting their object, threw up hills and hillocks or, as It were, bubbles on the face of the earth. And since in those places where mountains were formed the heat of the Sun must have been most powerful,



and the earthy moisture rich and most plentiful, it is there that we find the most precious metals. Where the earth remained plain, this steam did not succeed in raising up mountains; it escaped, and the earth, being deprived of its moisture, was hardened into rocks. Where the earth was poor, soft, and thin, it is now covered with sand and little stones, because it never had much moisture, and, having been deprived of the little it possessed, has now become sandy and dry, and incapable of retaining moisture. No earth was changed into rocks that was not rich, viscous, and well saturated with moisture. For when the heat of the Sun has sucked up its moisture, the richness of the earth still makes it cohere, although now it has become hard and dry; and earth that is not yet perfectly hard is even at the present time undergoing a change into hard stones, through the diligent working of Nature. But the steam and the vapours that do not succeed in escaping, remain enclosed in the mountains, and are day by day subjected to the maturing and transmuting influences of the Sun and the planets. Now, if this vaporous moisture become mixed with a pure, subtle, and earthy substance, it is the quicksilver of the Sages; if it be reduced to a fiery and earthy hardness, it becomes the sulphur of the Sages. This enquiry opens up the way of finding our quicksilver, or first substance of the metals, but though it be found in great quantities in all mines, it is known only to very few. It is not silver, or gold, or common quicksilver, or any metal, or sulphur. The Sage says: It is a vaporous substance out of four elements, watery and pure, and though it is found with all metals, it is not matured in those which are imperfect. Hence it must be sought in the ore, in which we find gold and silver." And when again he says, "If this quicksilver be hardened, it is the sulphur of the Sages." he means that this can only be done by means of gold and silver, which it takes into itself, and by which it is sublimed and coagulated through its own natural gentle coction, under the influence of the Sun's heat, and in its own proper ore.

O heavenly Father, shew this quicksilver to all whom Thou biddest walk in Thy paths!

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# A VERY BRIEF TRACT CONCERNING THE PHILOSOPHICAL STONE

WRITTEN BY AN UNKNOWN GERMAN SAGE,  
ABOUT 200 YEARS AGO, AND CALLED THE BOOK OF ALZE,  
BUT NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME

## THE BOOK OF ALZE

DO not, gentle Reader, find fault with me for speaking first about the Moon, then about the Sun, and the other planets, and only in the third place about our most excellent Medicine, ALZE. In this case that which is last is better and more honourable than that which is first. The substance must first become white, and then red; it cannot become red unless it have first become white. Hence Simon the Sage says: "Know that unless you first make the Stone white, you cannot make it red." For by the red are the rest of the planets united, and the Medicine appears unawares unless this order is observed in the matter of the white and red. So is the Moon first taken and makes, with the white, Elixir, that is, the white of the Moon to the white of Mercury out of bodies comes to the red. Whence our Sages say that the red is hidden in the white, which they do not dare to extract, until the whole substance has become red. When the substance has been subjected to the influence of the Moon, it may then, in the second place, be brought under the influence of the Sun, which will bring the Medicine to perfection without any aid from the other planets. By which you may understand why the Medicine comes last, even as from the Father proceeds the Son, and the Holy Spirit from both of these. He that hath ears to hear let him hear, and comprehend the brief statement of our Art, which is given in "The Crowd": "Know that the true Tincture can be prepared only out of our ore." Concerning this ore I therefore propose to give you the only explanation that is required, and I shall be careful to supplement and confirm my own opinion by quotations from other Sages. I shall speak not only about our ore, but also about our union or conjunction of water and mercury. For Eximenus says: "Nothing profitable can arise out of the elements without conjunction and gentle coction." Our ore Lucas calls the white ore, and it goes by many other names on account of the many colours which it exhibits in the various stages of the chemical process. But though the jealousy of the Sages has described it under various names, it is, and remains only one substance. Pythagoras says: "Many names are given to it; nevertheless, it is nothing else but the one and true Matter, and this is by reason of the development of its nature. The envious have described it by the names of all bodies, as, for instance, a coin, lead, copper, etc., according to the variety of its colours." So Lucas tells us that we have no need of many things, but only of one thing. Diamedes and Basan say: "Do not add to it any foreign substance; for the common substance of metals is one thing, and more excellent than all other things." Hence our whole Art is concerned with water, and a twin substance that ameliorates the water. Synon tells us that sulphur and our ore are derived from one thing, and changed into four. Lucas says: "The white ore is subjected to coction till it generates itself. Thus it becomes united in all its four elements, and receives a living soul. It is never more than one thing, but as a man consists of body, soul, and spirit, and yet is no more than one person, so our substance consists of body, soul, and spirit. The ore receives its strength, spirit, and growth from the water." The Sages say: "If the ore be often deadened in its coction, it becomes all the more excellent, and if the body have a soul after the manner of man." The body does not penetrate the soul, but the soul penetrates the body, because it is volatile. The soul, which is hidden in the four parts of the body, is called sulphur. These bodies are male and female, and by their mutual operation our substance becomes water. Aristeus says: "Observe the indestructible water which issues from it." Take the humidity which it gives off. Hence other Sages say: "Take water with its

twin substances, and let it be dried up by means of the vapour which is like it, and coagulated in its own water." That water is also called poison; it is the principle of life, because it is a soul, and extracted from many things. All bodies that this Tincture enters are quickened; all bodies from which it is extracted are destroyed. Its potency is spiritual blood, which, if well mixed with bodies, transmutes them into spirits, and combines with them into one substance. The body attracts the spirit, and the spirit tinges the body with a spiritual substance like blood. For the Sages say that whatever has a spirit has blood. If the venom penetrate the body, it imparts to it an indestructible colour, and then the soul cannot be separated from the body any more. If in flying it faces round and meets its pursuer, then is the flight at an end. The two belong together, and Nature always tends to assimilate kindred substances. The final colour is indestructible, because the soul pervades every part of the body, and is inseparably bound up with it. Though the water is naturally cold, yet we must beware of too fierce a degree of heat; for if the moisture of the substance be dried up, our work must come to nought.

That which is called the spirit, is the active, or male principle, and can only be obtained by the dissolution of the body. Accordingly, we must understand this of the humidity which results, namely, that which is produced, as long as two spouses are conjoined after a lawful manner, even unto the white. Would you know when the body has been rendered liquid by coction? Hear what Bonellus answers: "When you see a black substance floating in the water, you may know that the body has been dissolved."

These two, body and spirit, have a third thing which represents their common substance, and is, in its turn, called their body. It is also called a round cloud, death, blackness, darkness, shadow, ashy lead, or a metallic and subtle ore; or it is described, after that which is obtained from it, as gold that was hidden in the body of Magnesia. Hence it is said: "Extract the shadow thereof from the splendour." This also is the substance of which so many have spoken. Three things constitute the true ore, viz., body, soul, and spirit. Hence it is compared to an egg, because in an egg, too, the chicken is developed out of three things. Thus also Alchemy is produced out of the above-mentioned three things, as many philosophers do testify in "The Crowd." The male principle, or the water, is also called the "nature"; for water is a natural agent which dissolves the elements of bodies, and then again unites them. Concerning this water, it is said by Ficinus, that its nature has the wonderful power of transmuting the body into spirit. Where it is found alone it overcomes all other things, and is an excellent, harsh, and bitter acid, which transmutes gold into pure spirit. Without this acid we cannot attain either the red, or the black, or the white. When it is combined with bodies, then the body changes into spirit, by a heavenly fire, and immutable, indestructible tincture. Know also that the union must be brought about by a gentle fire, since the elements cannot stand a fierce fire, until the union has taken place. When the gentle heat is applied, the elements devour and consume each other, and yet again, on the other hand, comfort and strengthen each other, and teach each other to stand the test of fire. Hence the Sages say: "Invert the elements, and you will find what you seek." To invert the elements is to make that which is moist, dry, and that which is volatile, fixed. The husband also enforces conjunction that he may reproduce his own likeness. Many strive to accomplish this separation and conjunction; but few succeed in bringing about an union which can stand the test of fire. The composition which is prepared out of our precious substance is not even in the slightest degree diminished in volume by fire. Rather, it is nourished by fire, as a mother nourishes her child. These are the only things that have the power of making red and white, both inwardly and outwardly. Remember that at first they can only bear a gentle fire. When you see that a whiteness begins to appear it must be your next care to extract it from the black substance; then you should develop the redness which is hidden in it. But the latter object you must attain, not by extraction, but by gentle coction. Do not marvel that the Sages describe our ore under many names, and as consisting of body, soul, and spirit. They are also referred to as brothers, or as husband and wife. But

Geber says that sometimes the whole substance is only called body, or spirit; and unless there be a dissolution into water, our work cannot be brought to a successful issue. Of course, we do not mean the water of the clouds, as the foolish say, but a permanent water, which, however, cannot be permanent without its body. Thus Hermogenes says that we are to take the hidden spirit, and not to despise it, because it shares its great power with its brother. For only the union of the two can give us the right Tincture. The water is also called a most sharp acid, with which the body must be washed; this is what Socrates calls "woman's work, and child's play." The secret of our Art is the union of man and woman: the husband receives the tinging spirit from his wife. The union of husband and wife coagulates the female principle; and if the whole be transmuted into red, we have the treasure of the world, of which Synon says: "If the water be changed into the body, the body is changed, first into earth, then into dust and ashes, and you have what you want."

Then the work is over, and the Stone contains within itself the Tincture in the body of Magnesia. Therefore, the Sages say, in conclusion: "My son, extract from the splendour its shadow." Accordingly, we need exertion, and exercise is beneficial to us, seeing that milk is for infants, but that strong men require stronger food. So also is it in this operation of the Stone.

Now, it is laid down by Geber that our Art must do more for the substance than Nature has done for it; otherwise we should never obtain the Medicine which has the power of correcting and perfecting the essences of the seven planets, or metals. For this purpose the Art of Alchemy has been delivered to us by the Sages; but the beginner must be on his guard against being misled by their manner of speaking, and the multiplicity of names which they give to our substance, which has been suggested to them by its great variety of (successive) colouring, and by the fact that it is composed of the four elements. The Stone must be saturated with its water, that it may imbibe it all, and then subjected to the action of fire, until it turns to a kind of dust, like burnt blood, and becomes indestructible by fire. This Stone is sought by Kings, but is found only by those to whom it is given of God. It is publicly sold for money. But if men knew its precious nature, they would cease to think lightly of it. God, however, has hidden it from the world, and he who would accomplish our work should first lay the right foundation, or his building must come to nought. Let me tell you, then, that our Stone requires a gentle fire; and if, after not many days, it die, and lie in the tomb, yet God restores to it its spirit, and removes its disease and its impurity. When it is burnt to ashes, it must be well sprinkled and saturated with its blood, until it becomes like burnt blood. Hermes remarks that both substances rejoice in being united to each other. To the spiritual substance God gives that which Nature could not give it. For Nature has nothing so precious as the true Tincture; and if with its bodies it become liquid, it produces a marvellous effect. For the Tincture changes everything it is mixed with into its own nature, and makes it white both within and without. By one operation and way, by one substance, and by one mixing, the whole work is accomplished, while its purity is also one, and it is perfected in two stages, each consisting of a dissolution and a coction, with the repetition of these.

It must be your first object to elicit the whiteness of the substance by means of gentle and continued coction or heat. I know that the Sages describe this simple process under a great number of misleading names. But this puzzling variety of nomenclature is only intended to veil the fact that nothing is required but simple coction. This process of coction, however, you must patiently keep up, and that with the Divine permission, until the King is crowned, and you receive your great reward. If you ask whether the substance of our Stone be dear, I tell you that the poor possess it as well as the rich.

Many have been reduced to beggary because they foolishly despised that which is highly esteemed by the

Sages. If kings and princes knew it, none of us would ever be able to obtain it. Only one vessel is required for the whole process, which should be of stone, and should be capable of resisting fire.

A pound of the body of our ore should be taken, and rendered as pure, refined, and highly rectified, like the virtue of heaven, as the philosophers have it. Then the vessel should be placed in a reverberatory alembic. This should be set over a gentle fire, the vessel being kept tightly closed, in order that it may be able to retain its companion, and permit the same to enkindle the whiteness thereof, as Lucas says. The vessel containing the ore must be placed over the fire, since there can be no perfection without heat and intermixture of elements, seeing that it is produced from blood. When the male and the female principle have been together for a space of forty nights, there is an emission of moist warm seed; and to the same God has liberally given much blood to heat it. This seed develops into an embryo which is supported with a little milk over a moderate fire, and grows stronger day by day. Its growth must be aided by warmth; but the heat of the fire should be temperate, like that of the Sun. This may be effected by placing our vessel over an empty vessel, and that again upon some glowing coals. The process of coction should be continued until the alembic is well dried and the substance begins to assume a liquid aspect; for water alone is sufficient for the coagulation and fixing of the whole, as we are told by Democritus. This water is described under various names, such as sulphur, quicksilver, spirit, and also vapour, for it can scarcely retain its companion. There are in our Art only two substances, and if I speak of two, then I think of four, all which things require one thing, by which Nature, conquering all Nature, is extracted. For Nature, on account of its nature, rejoices in itself, Nature conquers nature, and in itself contains nature. At the same time one is not opposed to the other, but one comprehends the other, whereby it excels the other, and the philosophers call this water the purifying water.

This dissolution first imparts a black appearance to the body. The substance should then turn white, and finally red. The blackness exhibits an intermediate stage between fixedness and volatility. So long as there is blackness, the female principle prevails, till the substance enters into the white stage. This whiteness is called the first power of our Stone, and the water is referred to as that most excellent acid. You must be very careful not to destroy the potency of this water. Avicenna says that natural heat operating in humid bodies, first causes blackness; then removes the blackness; and finally causes whiteness, as may be seen in calx. Hence our substance must become first black, and then white, and be reduced to a kind of powder. Then the soul must be restored to the powder by a powerful fire; and both [be] subjected to coction until they become first black, then white, afterwards red, and finally good venom, the whole being accomplished by the separation of waters. And now, the waters being divided, cook the matter and the vapour till coagulation takes place, and there is made a white stone. Then are the waters divided. Another mortification, or exsiccation, follows, and is called clouds, or smoke. The smoke well coagulated with its feces becomes quick white; roast then the white ore that it may bring forth itself. When the blackness vanishes, the spirit is restored; for the spirit does not die, but rather quickens body and soul. The more perfectly our ore is purged, and subjected to coction, the better it becomes, till it is at length condensed into a Stone. But it must be dissolved again, and subjected to a powerful fire, until it looks like burnt blood. If this Stone be added to any substance, it tinges it into gold. The Sages speak of it as a kind of root. Take, they say, the whole virtue of the Tincture, and concentrate it in the Root. If a body which has no earthy elements receive this Tincture, it receives more benefit than less excellent bodies. The Stone overcomes everything to which it is applied, and tinges foreign bodies with its own colour. The dry fire tinges bodies, the air strengthens them, the white water washes away their blackness, and their earth receives the Tincture. Concerning the coction needed for the development of our substance, the Sages have expressed themselves in a great variety of ways. Observe Hermes, who says that it must be repeated again and again, until the red

colour at length is obtained. Herein is the stability of the whole work. Afterwards it assumes many, many colours, not including the red, which appears at the end. For the white must precede it. Set to work by the regimen of fire, and triturate. The above mentioned water volatilizes all bodies; even such as are gross it penetrates until it has assimilated them to its own nature. Know that unless you operate upon bodies until they are destroyed and their soul is extracted, with such you will never tinge any body, for nothing tinges which has not first itself been tinged. If the body be made fluid and burnt, then it bends itself towards its begetter, becoming a subtle Magnesia, and it turns towards the earth, which makes it spiritual and vivifies it. Before the final whiteness of the first stage is attained, the substance turns first of a black, then of an orange, and then of a reddish colour (which, however, is quite different from the final redness of the last stage). These colours, however, need not trouble you, since they are evanescent and merely transitional.

From what I have said you may gather that our substance is found in the gold which is hidden in Magnesia, and that it is *one* thing composed of sulphur from sulphur and mercury from mercury. And as the substance of our Stone is one, so is the method of its preparation. Therefore, do not listen to those ignorant and fraudulent alchemists who speak of many different kinds of sublimation and distillation. Turn a deaf ear to those who say that the substance of our Stone is the powder of the Basilisk. As to the (length of) time required for the preparation, you must begin it in the winter, which is moist, and extract the moisture until the spring, when all things become green, and when our substance, too, should exhibit a variety of colours. In the summer the substance should be reduced to powder by means of a powerful fire. The autumn, the season of ripeness, should witness its maturity, or final redness. About the motions of the stars or planets you need not trouble yourself. Our substance is a body containing the spirit which makes glass malleable, and turns crystals into carbuncles. One drop of our Elixir, as large as a drop of rain, will suffice to tinge and transmute a body a thousand times as large as itself

This most noble Remedy was appointed, like all other things, for the use of man, because he is the most glorious of God's creatures, and the lord of the whole earth. It was given to him for the purpose of preserving his youth, expelling disease, preventing suffering, and providing him with all he requires. Our Elixir is better than all the medicinal preparations of Hippocrates, Avicenna, and others. From it may be prepared a potable antidote which has power to cure leprosy. As fire purges and refines metals, so this Remedy restores to the human body its natural heat, expels from it all health-destroying matter, and fortifies it against every conceivable form of disease. Its virtue is infinitely greater than that of the potable gold dust, which is taken as a preventative among the Gentiles.

Great and wonderful is the potency of the gold that slumbers in Magnesia, both for the purifying of the human system, and for the transmuting of metals. What more shall I say? All the things that I have here faithfully described I have seen with my own eyes, and performed with my own hands.

When I was preparing the substance, after discovering the true method, I was so seriously interfered with by the persons with whom I lived that I was almost on the point of giving up the whole thing in despair. At length I communicated my discovery to a friend, who faithfully executed my instructions, and brought the work to a successful issue. For which Blessed Gift may God be praised, world without end. Amen.

**Altar of the Theraphic Brotherhood**  
**Fraternitatis Crucis Roseae**  
**Dedicated to the Assertion of the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross**

To the Reader,

Whoever has doubts about the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross, let him read this and having read the poem, he will be certain.

ANNO CHRISTI 1617

Written by a Brother of this Fraternity first in Latin, then translated into German and printed by I.S.N.P. & Poet Laureate

Printed at Neuenstadt by Johan Knuber 1618.

To the very Noble, Powerful and Honourable Balthasar von Schkoelen, Senior Master of the Horse of the Elector Prince of Saxony.

To the Honourable, Worshipful and Wise Ambrosius Becker, County Justice and Worshipful Mayor of Schkeunitz.

To the Honourable, Respected and Art loving Michael Stemplin, a Noble Erudite and noted Spagyric Expert.

To my high protectors and Young Lords, my Brother-in-law, and my trusty friends respectively, Luck, Blessing and Success.

Noble and powerful young Lord, kind and beloved Brother-in-law, well known and trusty friend, to you I send greetings first and my service, after that I dedicate and write these presents, which from outward appearance looks a short, little work, yet according to its secret meaning and hidden contents it is a very weighty and far looking work, and of the goodness and truth of my heart.

I trust they will receive and recognise it with a thankful mind and heart, read it with full attention, that they will think further over these matters, and wait with patience until something plainer, rounder, opener and more recognisable—as shall happen shortly, but then in Secret and in confidence—occurs.

Recommending myself to them jointly or severally as theirs for any service

Datum the 16th September Anno 1616.

at your service

Noble, Honourable, Powerful

also Honourable, Worshipful and Wise

Gentlemen.

I.S. N.P.P.C.

**ALTAR OF THE THERAPHIC TIE**

**F. X. R.**

**Fratris Christiani Rosencreutz**

People live in doubt every where  
If the highly honoured Fraternity  
of the Rosy Cross exist in truth  
which men declare to be so virtuous  
And the Fama is made ridiculous  
here and there as if it were a fairy tale.

The Fama I say declares one condition to the whole world.  
But whosoever likes to doubt matters clear as the Sun  
Is starblind at Midday  
No oculist can help him.

Note this, attentive and pious reader,  
What I tell you in one word  
I am a branch selected  
from the Highborn fraternity  
I tell you without guile  
In Germany our order exists in truth  
Right in the heart of the German Lands.  
And note it well, well known in foreign parts.

And although there are but few of us  
Until now, yet in these days  
And quite lately with pleasure  
The order has been extended  
By ten persons well known for their  
Understanding, honour, Art and virtue.

The Order has also at this present time  
Been newly and well reconstrued  
With many bye laws and statutes  
Which give it order, measure and object.

Could you see these, by your oath  
You would confess without hesitation  
That all and everything has been carefully  
Put into new form.

There are many who without pause or rest  
Endeavour and tireless try to come to our order,  
but by the nature of the thing,  
one does not easily reach one's heart's desires.

But many in their own mind  
cheat their own selves miserably.  
For our custom is of this kind



that we elect those who are known  
to us for a long time before,  
And who are proved full many a year  
who are their own masters and free  
Of body not bound to anyone.

Many strict conditions are to be found  
Which bind the Fratres of our Order  
Which are to be kept without exception  
Throughout your whole life.  
As a fellow a true friend,  
(Such are a thin crop in these days),  
may possibly be taken on  
So soon as he shows within him  
that he is worthy of such friendship,  
And is free from guile and tricks.

Listen, I will at this time  
Make round and clear yet another thing.  
A castle it is, a Castle fine  
Wherein the fraternal crown  
great in honour, rich in wonders  
has its lodging wonderfully.  
Which our father did erect  
And entrust to our fraternity  
and left it to them, as is known,  
Sancti Spiriti it has been called.  
But the length of time through many year  
Have however altered this name.  
In our documents, however, it remains  
The same as can be read therein.

In this cloister we live, I tell thee  
Dressed all alike,  
Yet are we not bound down  
to the yoke of the Pope of Rome  
As in former times we were  
Enveloped with that ill treatment.

Together with our well cared for acres  
We are surrounded by a green forest,  
A noble river quite clean  
Runs gently through our domain.  
Not far from us there exists  
A fine and farefamed City,  
Where we procure what we require

At any time that we desire.

In this place we live, believe me,  
in the enjoyment of freedom.  
The neighbours generally, round about  
Don't know who ever we can be,  
Many poor people daily and for ever  
Knock at our door desiring relief  
which we then send amply relieved away again.  
Whoever is troubled with disease  
and those whom evil fevers plague,  
All seek their refuge with us  
Those are helped quickly and at once

Wherefore the whole neighbourhood  
Is affected with loving kindness to us  
Loves and honours us, wishes us all good things  
And if a service can be rendered us  
it is done with joyous heart and willingly.

What more then can we now desire  
There is no man who intends or dares  
to hurt us in our bodies or goods;  
What more should we therefore desire  
That we would like better.

I nearly had told the place  
Where our order is concealed,  
But to tell that name now  
I have serious objections to.

In order that we have knowledge  
And news of all things in the order  
So that everything shall be free  
And unconcealed from any of us,  
We travel through all lands  
Unknown, now here, now there.

This is now my third voyage  
Which I have completed with zeal,  
Therefore have I rested a day finally in Hagenau.  
Because the rain without ceasing  
Has delayed me and the weather is wet  
Which has prevented me as aforesaid  
So that I could not get away.

Scarcely shall I complete within the space of a year  
my voyage which is prescribed to me,  
And how many countries and people do remain  
Which I have to visit yet  
In a little time and without vexation.

In the meantime it is not forgotten  
And is often done by me  
That I salute the order secretly  
By means of letters  
And communicate to them truthfully  
Many secret things frequently  
What I discover on my travels,  
That they know very soon.

And although we travel out and home  
Through foreign lands generally  
There is no host ever lived on earth  
Who received vexation and trouble  
One single time through us.  
We treat them well  
Pay for meat and meal and lodgings  
and what in such a case is fair and customary,  
Give them addition rich gifts;  
Wherefore as good friends  
We never are a burden to anybody.

The elder brethren of this order  
Have come to this agreement  
That the younger brethren henceforward  
Shall allow themselves to be used for this purpose  
But that their knapsacks are filled  
With rich and ample provender,  
Until they have in proper manner  
Deserved for troubles suffered and true diligence  
Their rest in the future.  
And have deservedly earned  
That for the rest of their lives  
They may live in peace without troubles.

We are anxiously desirous  
To study much more  
And daily to know much more  
Is our desire, wish and object  
If we find anything that is good anywhere  
Then we do it from that time

Note it, and make note of it.

Therefore nothing can happen  
In Germany at any time  
But we see it at once with our eyes.  
If any new books come out  
The Bookguide brings it to us at once,  
who is properly met for reward appointed to this office  
We treat honourably  
Manyfold Arts diligently  
With science, knowledge, art and handycraft  
We spend the rest of our time.

So that we may never be idle  
And stand in anybody's light  
We exercise ourselves at all times  
In the foreign languages of many lands.  
In Polish, Welsh, Spanish  
We all know how to talk  
In Italian and free Gallic  
And also in others whatsoever they may be (we can converse)  
There is no language throughout all lands  
Unknown to our Order.

Nature is assiduously examined  
Experience is highly valued  
What anyone in the fraternity  
Has newly, through his brain power,  
Discovered and studied  
He submits quickly to the Fratres  
Who examine these matters at once  
And amply weigh and value them.

We have in these times many things  
Which were invented by the Ancients  
Which we admit and experiment with  
And readily allow them to pass  
Which if rightly looked at  
Are hardly to be comprehended by human mind.  
At times also the inclination takes hold of me,  
When I can hardly help being idle,  
Idleness being a bad councillor  
So that I write Poetry,  
And in this enjoyment kill my time.,

Amongst us we maintain certainly

The due regulations without murmuring  
Our spirits inward and outwardly learn  
In peace and flame of love,  
One mind, one soul, one sense, one heart,  
One will, one opinion, one pain  
Are dwelling in us,  
Unity is our delight and most beautiful ornament.

Nobody knows anything but that forthwith  
The others know equally well  
Just as nobody owns anything particularly himself  
It is one heart, one sense, one council.

Our worthy overseer  
Then calls us together  
At certain hours and orders freely  
One after the other regularly  
To refer in *Mediem* (to practically try)  
What he has learnt in studying.  
As soon as that happens  
We do not all omit  
To consider the matter  
Now to argue *pro et contra*  
And what then is found correct  
Is entered at once into the Protocol (*Minute Book*)  
What is found false, as false is rejected.

Thus do we always proceed  
There everybody begins to tell  
What he in all his days  
Has heard, read, meditated  
All is truly referred.  
Then for love of our posterity  
All this is immediately also  
Entered with care into a Book.

What then pleases the Order  
The president (*praesul*) when it suits  
Knows how to use place, measure and time  
And sets a task now one or another  
That he do something and experiment (*laborier*)  
According as his known information (according to his ability)  
And qualification for the art  
Whom the Brethren altogether  
Counsel in many ways  
By (word of) mouth, with (helping) hand and good counsel

With assistance, science, and actual help (physical assistance)  
A library there stands  
With many thousand beautiful books.

No single trouble sorrowfull  
Is to be thought of in this world  
Which in the least could  
Trouble us anymore, nothing can be found  
That we should go short of here on earth  
God has given us plentifully  
With abundance what we lack  
No shortcomings are to be felt.  
On little do we live  
Well satisfied with some thing.  
Our bodies we cure  
According to nature properly.  
Therefore our health is good indeed  
And we live many a long year,  
Which creeps softly along like a tender rivulet  
Runs equally away on its course.

If it is required and necessity demands  
That we require money or goods  
For honours sake or necessity requires  
Then it is splendidly everywhere  
No dearth of Riches is here  
Of Power, pomp or reasonable adornment  
God give that every fellow  
Who hankers after temporary riches  
Knew thus to arrange matters  
in this world without guile or trick  
to do likewise when much honour  
would ensue to the fear of God  
And vice and shame would not  
be so plentiful in our fatherland.

God be praised,  
innocently we have to be blamed by evil tongues about many things  
by false hearts who charge us  
With things which never came into our minds.

What we began for the sake of the truth,  
That is explained in evil  
Therefore what we are charged with in evil  
We do not repay in evil  
But suffer patiently

In our heart and peacefully

He who accuses us of magic lately and without fear,  
and quite openly incriminated us  
and branded us with disgrace,  
That very pious man  
Does not himself know with whom he has to do.  
Truly he is in error absolutely  
And knows nothing at all about us.

But this I don't at all deny  
But grant it readily with all my heart  
That we naturally in many things  
Bring many a miracle into effect  
About which many an ignorant man  
May easily give many a thought  
As in chemistry many indeed proceed  
Without measure or object  
No day ever elapses  
Which does not see something in his fire (in his crucible)  
If he thinks that all this is done  
And not without the Devil's help,  
O God he is deceived  
And is in eternal error.  
For it is our care always that we together in common  
promulgate the honour of God  
Throughout the world in every place  
Serve God purely with hand and mouth  
Out of pureness of soul from the bottom of our hearts  
Full of the fear of God is our life  
Whom we to honour it is our duty  
To our neighbour our services are  
Openly ready now and evermore  
What more do you want dear Christian (brother)

Know that our College is an academy  
full of learning of God's word,  
what more do you want  
The time will yet arrive  
That it shall be hidden from no one  
In all this world what the power of God  
Has conceived by means of an order  
Amongst all people in every land.

The value of our order is recognised  
Be it about high and weighty matters

Which will call many to wonder greatly  
Whereof the stiffnecked world  
Shall be horror struck—as often declared,  
Out of our work it can be seen  
What benefit we have intended.

We are not lazy bellies  
Who are only trained to eat and drink  
We are no useless world plague  
Who lay themselves out for idleness  
But all our leisure is full of labour here and there  
Which labour serves to benefit  
The common weal for all his good  
And serves to your praise  
Lord Jesus Christ my saviour.

True it is and I cannot deny  
That many a false book is in print  
As if our society had published the same  
Which never came from us  
Nor would we dare to issue it.

A pious honest good man  
Can soon distinguish about these  
Who rightly considers our Reputation (Famam)  
And carefully bears in mind its sense

To say nothing about many an impudent clown  
Calls himself our Brother  
Whereas the unfortunate fool  
Widely differs from our Society

Such a deceiver a short while ago  
Has been found out at Nuremberg  
Who, amongst the common people  
Disseminated very many lies  
Until by reason of the truth  
he was in a very few hours convicted  
That he was a scoundrel and annant thief  
Who did nothing but brought misery on land and people  
Therefore on the gallows as he deserved  
His body became the food for the rooks.

In Augsburg also in the same way  
A landlouper was found out in flagrenti delictu  
And his back well paid for this



And the broom on his back he carried  
Out of the town as a reward  
And both his ears were cut off the head  
Of the wicked clown as a reward.

It serves them right all these fellows  
Who want to brag about the joint of meat  
Who have not tasted the Broth  
Such pay is proper for such tricks.

Here it is well also to bear in mind,  
Unfairly we are often thought of,  
That we do not make ourselves known  
And call ourselves after our first father,  
But his name clearly do not discover publicly,  
Indeed those altogether do us an injustice in this case  
Who say freely and without concealment  
That our name be only a dream.

You godless bumblebees do not err  
Your hive troubles us little  
Leave our Beehive undisturbed  
If you cannot please yourselves otherwise  
For your iniquity will be brought to light  
By us in a very short time

Therefore do not lightly believe  
What lyingly is painted to you  
Without you like to be made a fool of  
And deceived by false appearances  
And tell me this without wicked guile  
That in our days the world throughout  
Is dressed in the feathers of Lady Fraud  
Deceit, falsehood and wicked tricks reign now  
and every instant we find many Landswindlers.

Everybody pretends to know about us  
And lies and swindles without measure or number  
And all is ever invention alone

People hunt us very assiduously  
And many a question arises about it.  
The Jesuitical wicked crowd  
Invent many a hundred secret things  
That they may soon and above all  
Require to know of a surety

Where we might dwell  
Day and night they enquire about us.

In order to avoid their jaws  
And look well after our affairs  
And that our order does not become the prey  
Of these unmannerly wolves  
We have always to be careful  
And not make ourselves too public.

O holy and powerful God  
Save us from this wicked lot  
Cast down their godless impudence  
Keep our order in your protection  
If so be that you are pleased at this time with all our works,  
Turn away, turn away all our enemies  
Who have become wickedly wrath  
That they in no wise on us may  
Satisfy their great hatred

Protect the pious, Lord Jesus Christ  
Who art the refuge of us all  
For it is our wish all together  
To be known publicly  
To the world and the globe of the earth  
As God the best of witnesses knows

Oh that this in a short while may happen,  
How great would be our delight  
But if without end or finish  
Yet many obstacles be found  
We think the best counsel to be  
To keep as we are for a little while longer  
But in such a way that meanwhile  
We certainly make many more friends

Therefore we appeal to many a learned man in our writings  
With letters and by our own hands  
Although our names are not known,  
That is known to many a philosopher  
Many a chemist, many a Doctor  
Many a Reverend, many a worthy man  
Knows the sound of our trumpet.

Were I to let you know all  
And mention their names

O Eternal God, what a book  
would this indeed become  
Go now and doubt more  
Whether in untruth and dishonour  
Our free Brotherhood  
Really be in the nature of things

You must not make silly remarks  
The work itself will convince you  
What this noble brotherhood has  
Of might, of vitality, of power

But - where have I finally got to?  
I have almost gone too far  
Therefore that I do not not go beyond  
My object or say too much  
Or more than is permitted to me  
I will finish for this time  
And lay away my pen

Go be with you, and fare thee well

And now I beg kind permission  
What I have communicated to you this time  
If you do that and we get knowledge of you  
You will soon receive more.

*B.M.I. of the Fratres R.C. the least  
He wrote this during his third journey at Hagenau  
in which place he lay several days quietly, stopped by the rain.  
Done the 22 September Anno 1616.*

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# An Anonymous Treatise Concerning the Philosopher's Stone

Therefore, my son, be fully warned against the sophistry of Alchemy and all sophisticating, deceitful people. Beware of them as you would beware of the devil who works mischief. Avoid them as an impure, pitiless, and consuming fire, even as a deadly poison, for a man comes to destruction of both body and soul, honour, goods, through this sophistry and self-insinuating false Alchemy. It is worse than the devil himself, for it is possible to expend (the wealth of) a whole kingdom thereon; yet everything is destroyed, and no fundamental truth is found out. Accordingly, open your eyes. Recognize the only key; avoid falsity, for it is impossible in any other way to obtain anything true or profitable, save in that way which I have now shewn in this book.

My noble and dear Son, in order that I may communicate to you, in the briefest manner, my knowledge of the right, true, philosophical Stone, now know and understand that this Stone is composed of two things, Body and Spirit, to wit, male and female seed, that is, Mercurial Water and Corpus Sols, as may be read in all philosophical works.

And it is the general opinion that Mercury --- free from foreign admixture --- should first be dissolved in a spiritual water, called by philosophers primary matter of metals, Liquor Lunae, Aqua Vitae, Quintessence, with which water, or primary matter, the metals are delivered and freed from their rigid, frozen bonds, and are dissolved into their primary nature, like mercurial water itself. Hence philosophers, in their books, have illustrated their meaning by saying that ice dissolves into water by means of heat, because it was water before its coagulation. For everything is reducible to its primary condition. Therefore, also, philosophers have written that the species or forms of metals cannot be changed into gold and silver before being first reduced to their primary matter.

With respect to this regeneration of metals, observe well, my son, that the same can take place by means of the primary matter of metals --- i.e., mercurial water alone, and through nothing else in the world. For this water has the greatest affinity to metallic nature, so that --- after equal mixture --- it can never be separated from the same.

Therefore have philosophers, in the *Turba* and other books, indicated this water, saying: Nature rejoices in Nature, Nature preserves, improves, unites with, reduces, and exalts Nature. Hence it is necessary to know how to prepare the Blessed Water, which water is a fiery penetrating spirit, a philosophical water, and the hidden key to this Art. For, verily, without this water all Alchemy is vain. Therefore, my son, remember that the whole Fundament of the Philosopher's Stone consists in bringing to a new birth the primary matter of metals --- i.e., Mercurial Water, the perfect Corpus Solis --- that it be born again by water and of the spirit, just as Christ says: "Except a man be born again by water and the Spirit, he cannot see the Kingdom of God". So also here in this art, I tell thee, my son: except Corpus Solis be sowed, all else is vain, and there will be no fruit. Even as Christ says: "except the Seed fall into the earth and die, it shall bear no fruit". When, now, Corpus Solis has been born again through water and the Spirit, it grows up a purified, astral, everlasting, immortal body, bringing much fruit and multiplying after the manner of vegetables.

Concerning this Roger Bacon says: I declare unto you that if the Astrum (Star) turn its inclination to, and impress it on, this clarified gold body, I can nevermore lose its virtue and power. For the body is perfect,

composed of, and agreeable to, all the elements. Therefore, my son, let him not attempt this Art who knows not of this new birth in nature, and this bringing forth of metals through the water and spirit of primary matter. For, believe me, all else is useless, vain, and deceiving. Hence philosophers have written that: “Everything brings forth its like; and what a man sows that shall he reap”.

Therefore says the Philosopher Richard, the Englishman: Sow gold and silver, that they, by means of Nature, may bring forth fruit.

Hence, my son, for thy work seek no other body but gold, as others are all imperfect. For gold is the most perfect of bodies, enlightening and vivifying all others, stable in fire, possessing a fixed, incombustible root; and, as Bacon testifies, one can alter nothing in the nobility and perfection of gold, it being free from all natural ferment, and no substance in the world is more perfect. Therefore, says Isaac the Philosopher: “The Stone can only be extracted from a perfect body, the most perfect in the world. For, were this body not perfect, how should we extract therefrom a Stone having power to give life to all mortal, to purify all corrupt, to soften all harden, and harden all soft bodies? Verily, it were impossible to extract to excellent a Stone from an imperfect body! Although many attempt it, yet they are fools”. Therefore, my son, understand that the red, philosophical, Sulphur is a gold, as Richard testifies, and King Calid also states: “Our Sulphur is no common Sulphur, but is of Mercurial nature, stable, fleeing no water”. Other Philosophers also bear witness that their Red Sulphur is gold.

Now, my son, the Sages say in their books that common gold and silver are not their gold or silver, since theirs are living, while the common are dead, and therefore incapable of imparting to others the perfection they themselves are wanting in. Now, my son, those words of the Philosophers are true; it is impossible for common gold or silver to perfect other imperfect bodies, except --- as I have said before --- the *Corpus Solis* and *Lunae* be born again through the Water and Spirit of Primary Matter, and arise as a transfigured, spiritual, clarified, externally fixed, subtle, penetrating body, which afterwards shall have power to perfect and multiply imperfect bodies. Therefore have our Philosophers said: For this reason are such labours undertaken on our Stone, that its tincture may be improved, for our Stone must be much more subtle and decocted than common gold and silver. Bernhardus says: “We therefore take this body as created by nature. But it is necessary to more than perfect the masculine body by natural art in order that in its more-than-perfection it may render the imperfect perfect, by its superabundant fertility in weight, colour, and substance. And, if its perfection were not greater in degree than that imparted by Nature, what use would our time of nine-and-a-half months be?”. Hence Arnoldus de Villa Nova, in his Epistle concerning our Stone, says: “The power and virtue and nature of gold and silver are in the Stone, else no gold or silver could be made. But the gold and silver in our Stone are better than the common, since the former are living. Hence Philosophers call the Stone their gold and silver, because the same are in it potentially and essentially, but not visibly”. Euclides says: “A perfect thing is unchangeable. For example, bread. Bread, baked and kneaded, is perfect in degree and nature, has attained its final form, and of it can be made nothing but bread. Thus also with philosophical gold. Hence it is impossible to perfect other bodies with common gold, except the perfect *Corpus Solis* be again dissolved into its primary matter, whereupon it is converted by our Art into a veritable Ferment or Tincture, philosophers saying the process is not finished until Sol and Luna are joined into one body. My son, understand here the *Luna Metaphorica*, not the literal, since philosophers explain Luna to be of a cold, moist nature, giving the same definition also to Mercury. Hence by Luna is understood Mercury, or Mercurial Water, or primary matter, which is the Philosophers’ Luna, or *Liquor Lunae* of the *Clangor Buccinae*.

Now, my son, you have a short explanation why it is impossible to do anything in this Art, except we reduce perfect bodies, by philosophical fire or mercurial water, to their primary nature, which primary nature is a Sulphureous Water, and not Quicksilver as Sophists assert. For the primary matter of metals is not Quicksilver, by a sticky, sulphureous steam, and a viscous water, in which water are united in the three principles, Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury. Therefore it is necessary to know the Blessed Water of Mercury, or celestial, supernatural fire, by which bodies are dissolved and fused. This knowledge is the greatest secret and is revealed by God alone. For the Philosopher Bacon says: God Almighty has created man above Nature and all creatures --- although man is of Nature, excepting the Breath of God breathed into him at the creation --- and he shall be the lord of Nature's works. This Divine Spirit fashions the mind and thoughts of man, teaching him to perceive the first principles of Nature. The inspired Apostle, St Peter, tells us that the Earth and its work shall consume therein, and a new world shall be born, beautiful and good, as is described in the Apocalypse. Thence the Philosopher concludes --- like St Peter --- that the elemental world can only be destroyed by fire. Therefore, remember in this Art that fire is the instrument, according to Nature's example, and, next, understand further that this water, whereby Corpus Solis (gold) --- which, as Roger Bacon testifies, is a world perfectly created --- is burnt, destroyed, and melted, is not a common fire -- since common fire can neither burn nor destroy gold --- but a supernatural, inconsumable fire, which alone has power to burn gold and release it from its hard, rigid bonds. Also, my son, understand that this supernatural fire, possessing such power over gold and other metallic bodies, is alone the spiritual, sulphureous, fiery water of Mercury, in which Corpus Solis is fused and burnt; and, out of this melting and destruction, is again born and created a new world, and the Heavenly Jerusalem, i.e., an eternal, clarified subtle, penetrating, stable body, which can penetrate and perfect all other bodies. Hence Bacon says: "Just as a supernatural or elemental fire is that which disintegrates and fuses the elements of the whole world, and as the new Creation will be born from the mortal, molten elements, and will be an eternal Creation; even so has the Holy Trinity in the Celestial Stone also revealed to us a supernatural fire. My son, philosophers in their books have concealed this Fire, describing it in parables, and by countless names; in particular, they call it Mary's Bath, and a horse-dung, Menstruum, Urine, Milk, Blood, Aqua Vitae, etc.". Concerning this Fire, Bernhardus says: "Make a vaporous fire, steady, digesting, not strong, subtle, airy, clear, condensed, inconsumable, penetrating, and equable". And he continues: "Verily, I tell thee, all wisdom is in this fire, for the said vaporous fire performs all things". Hence he directs us to copy his words concerning this fire, word for word. Therefore, a wise man will easily understand that such words refer not to a common, but to a supernatural fire. Hence Maria says: "The Element Water makes white and melts bodies". Concerning the preparation of this fire --- which he calls menstruum --- Raymundus Lullius says in his books (which are *Testam. Test. Noviss., Codicil, Anima Metallorum, Lux Mercuriorum, Liber Mercurius, Liber de Secretis Naturae, de Quintessentia*, and especially in *Elucidarium Testamenti*, Chap. 4: That it is not of men but of Angels to reveal this Celestial Fire, for therein is the greatest secret; and he indicates in figurative words that such Fire of the Sages is composed of horsedung and living chalk. What living chalk represents I will explain elsewhere. As to "horsedung", I have already indicated that it is the water of primary matter, for the same is warm and moist. But it is not common horsedung, as many ignorantly imagine. Therefore the Philosopher Alanus says: "Philosophers have named the moist fire horsedung, in which moisture is retained the latent heat; and it is the property of the fire in the horse's belly not to destroy gold, but to multiply it by reason of its moisture". Alchidonius says: "Verily our medicine is to be hidden in horsedung, which is the Sages' Fire". And Alanus: "Dear son, be diligent in disintegrating, and the same must take place in gentle heat, that is, in tepid horsedung". So also Arnold de Villa Nova, Chap. 9 (Concerning Heat), says that "the heat of horsedung is its fire". And Alphidius: "Let it be boiled and buried in the warmth of horsedung". Alos Aristiteles: "The Earth, or body, will rejoice in no strength unless sublimated by horsedung". Hermes: "Roast and boil it in the warmth of the horse's belly". And Morienus: "If thou find not

what thou seekest in horsedung, spare thyself further expense". Arnoldus: "And seek no other fire but this, for this is the Sages' Fire and Furnace. This water dissolves and calcines all metals, and fuses them white and red". Therefore say the Turba and Senior: Our water is the fire, and our water is stronger than all fire, making out of gold a pure spirit, which natural fire cannot do, although natural fire also belongs to it. For our water, penetrating the natural metal, converts it into primary water, and afterwards into an earth or powder, which burns gold more than natural fire. Hence gold more than natural fire. Hence Calid says: "It is verily a fire burning and destroying all things". But philosophers have concealed the preparation of this philosophical water or fire, i.e., Mercurial Water. Raymundus Lullius has written most plainly concerning the same: "And it will first be necessary to purify Mercury from its external moisture and earthy earthiness, but not with pernicious, destructive things, whereby its noble, fruitful, teeming nature would be destroyed". Avicenna, Arnold, Geber, Raymundus in the Codicil, and others, assert that Mercury is best purified by the sublimation of common, prepared salt. By treating the sublimate with hot water, the spirit of salt is dissolved out. Dry the sublimate, and mix with Tartaric Salt. Heat several times in a retort, when the Mercury will distill over vivified, and in this way will be somewhat freed from external moisture and impurities. This purgation, says Bernhardus, is not injurious, since the hot water and salt penetrate it not. But, my son, understand that Mercury cannot be thoroughly purified by external treatment, since it is a homogeneous, indivisible substance, "whose impurities penetrate its inmost being, and can therefore be removed by no sublimation". Hence another means must here be sought, viz., that of dissolving purified Quicksilver and loosing its natural bonds, and changing it into its primary, which is a sulphureous, spiritual water. Bacon and Raymundus Lullius both testify that unless purification and solution be effected, the menstruum will not be worth a fig.

When now Mercury is freed from its bond and resolved into its primary water, we can inwardly purify it, and, by distillation, separate the spirit from the water and earthy earthiness. Concerning which separation the philosophers have written mysteriously, and in particular have discovered the same figuratively in the distillation of wine. For in vinous distillation we see that the spirit of wine is mixed with much water and earthy impurity. But, by artificial distillation, the spirit can be separated from phlegmatic wateriness and earthy impurity, a residue remaining. From which residue, after calcinations, is extracted a white salt which --- added to the spirit, and repeatedly distilled --- produces a spirit mightily strengthened and sharpened by this salt of nitre. Verily the above is a figurative description given us by philosophers, which we should follow in the preparation of Mercurial Water. Since the same --- after disintegration and solution, i.e., similarly to wine --- can, by sublimation, be separated from the water or phlegm, rectified, etc. And, verily, no one has written more clearly concerning the preparation of his Mercurial Water than Raymund Lullius, viz., in *Test. Noviss.*, also in *Liber Mecurorium* (Test. I), etc., etc., in which he plainly enough declares that, after putrefaction, distillation, and separation of philosophical spirits of wine, the spiritual water is again mingled into its earth, and distilled over the alembic, further explaining how the said philosophical wine, or menstruum, is sharpened and strengthened with a salt.

This Water Menstruum, or philosophical spirits of wine, therefore, dissolves its own body, or animated Mercury, into the primary matter, or water, by which it can then be indefinitely multiplied with the help of putrefaction and distillation. Arnold de Villa Nova writes concerning this water thus: "There is a crumbling substance containing a fatty mixture, from which substance the master separates Philosophers' Liquid, which is suitable for the work and exceedingly clear. Therein dwells the Fifth Essence (Quintessence) Metallically, and the same has affinity to metals, and in it is the Tincture to be brought together, as being a perfect metal, for it has within itself the nature of Quicksilver and of Sulphur".

I will here (although forbidden) quote *Rosarium Philosophorum* concerning the distillation of this menstruum, or water: "In the distillation of the spirit care must be taken, and the vessels in which thou purifiest thy spirit must be of glass, that the spirit find not a place to flow out, by reason of its quickness. For if the Red Spirit escape, the Artist labours in vain. Artists call the Red Spirit a blood, and menstruum; therefore take heed with thy vessels that thou collect the dry spirit with its blood by itself in a receptacle, without diminution of its strength, so that thou mayst store up the same for future use". But, in distillation, seeing is more than writing. Hence nobody should be a master before having been a disciple. Therefore be careful in the work. Place a receptacle beneath, and distil first --- with gentle heat --- the element of water. Set the same aside, substituting another receptacle; close well the joints, that the spirit escape not, and increase the fire a little. Then will rise in the helmet, and distill over, a dry, yellow spirit; keep the fire steady while the helmet is yellow. Afterwards, when the helmet begins to get red, increase the fire slowly, and deep it so until the Red Spirit and the Blood have quite distilled out, passing through the helmet like clouds in the air. When the Red Spirit has distilled over, the helmet will become white. Then cease quickly, and thou hast in the receptacle the two elements, Air and Fire, and thus hast extracted the right dry spirit, and hast separated the pure from the impure. Behold, thou hast now the primary matter of metals, having thus separated the pure from the impure! Behold, thou hast now the water in which all metals have their origin, which is of all metals the root! Hence are they dissolved into water, even as frozen ice is resolved into water, since the same clearly was water in the first place. Therefore marvel not at this, for all things upon earth have their root in water. Oh, how many are there that, working, never think of this root, which is the key of the whole work? The same immediately dissolves bodies, is father and mother, opens out and locks up, and reduces bodies to their primary matter. It dissolves bodies, coagulating itself with them, and the Spirit of the Lord is led forth upon the Water, i.e., the strength of the spirit is seen to be active therein, and this takes place when the body is placed in this water. And the philosopher adds: "Behold the base thing with which our Sanctuary has been opened! For it is a thing well known by everyone; ye, he who understands it not finds it seldom or never. The wise man keeps it, the fool throws it away, and its reduction is easy to the initiated". But, my son, the freeing of this Stone, or Mercury, from its natural bonds, and its resolution into primary water, is the greatest and most secret of mysteries. And, without it, all else were vain, for we could not separate or extract the right spirit or Watery Essence that dissolves bodies. And this dissolving has been kept secret by all philosophers, and they have paced the revealing of the same in God's hand, and have cursed the man who should punish it. Hence they have spoken briefly and with subtlety of this resolution, that the same might remain hidden from the ignorant. But, thou, my son, observe that such resolution of Animated Mercury can hardly be effected without the proper means (coagulation). But, observe further, that here are not to be used sophisticated means, like those used by ignorant fools who, reducing common Mercury to water by sophisticated contrivances, vainly imagine they possess the true water. They sublime Mercury with all manner of corrosive salts and vitriols (whereby the sublimate generates Spirits of Salt), and, afterwards, dissolve the sublimate into water in a bath, cellar, and otherwise. They also make it into a water by means of Salmiac, herbs, soaps, aquafortis, with strange vessels, and such like sophisticated methods, which are, altogether, great phantasy, foolishness, and vanity; and then they imagine they can again separate such things from Mercurial Water, and thus obtain the true water desired of philosophers. But all is false, and they find not what they seek. And the cause of their failure is their neglect of the teaching of philosophers, who plainly declare that it should be mixed with no foreign matter. Bernhardus says in his Epistle: When Mercury is dried by Salt, Aquafortis, or other thing, it is no more suitable for philosophical work; for, dried by Salts, Alums, and Aquafortis, it dissolves not any more. But, thou, my son, remember what I now tell thee, and what philosophers have, in their books. Revealed to the understanding, that this water is to be prepared with no foreign matter in the world, but alone by Nature, with Nature, and out of Nature. These are to the understanding plain, clear words, which I will not in this



place explain more at length, but will embody them in a Treatise. Yet as an aid to memory give you the following verses:

Take it fresh, pure, living white and clear,  
Then bind firmly both hands and feet  
With the very strongest cords,  
That it suffocate and die.  
In the closed House of Putrefaction,  
According to nature's example,  
Let the same Nature dissolve it  
Into the same Nature dissolve it  
Into pure and beautiful primary matter.  
Then shall it be a living, spiritual Fount,  
Flowing from heaven pure and clear;  
Eating its own flesh and blood,  
Whereby it is multiplied.

He who, by Divine Aid, has attained this Blessed Water, let him praise God; for he holds in his hands the key with which he can unlock the treasure houses containing gold, silver, precious stones, honour, power, and health. This Blessed Water is by philosophers called Pluto's Daughter, having power over all treasures. She is also called the white, pure, tender, undefiled Virgin Bega, without whom no bringing forth nor mingling can take place. Therefore have philosophers married this pure, tender Virgin to Gabricus, that she might bear fruit; and Gabricus, having known her, died. Bega, by reason of her great love, swallowed and devoured her great love, swallowed and devoured him, as Aristotelese cleverly shews in Turba Philosophurum; and Bernhardus in his Practica says: "The fount is to the king as a mother, whom she bears within herself, and kills him. But the king rises again, and becomes so strong that no man can wound him". Hence philosophers say: "Although the king is, before the world, more precious and worthy than Bega, yet alone can he bear no fruit". This Virgin and Blessed Water have philosophers in their books called by a thousand names, as a Heaven, Celestial Water, Heavenly Rain, Heavenly or May Dew, Water of Paradise, Aqua Regia, Corrosive Aqua Fortis, a sharp vinegar and brandy, a Quintessence of Wine, a waxy green juice, a waxy Mercury, a water becoming green, and Green Lion, a Quicksilver, a Menstruum, a Blood and Mesntruum, urine and horse-urine, Milk, and Virgin's Milk, white *Arsenic*, Silver, a moon and a humour of the moon, a woman and woman's seed, a sulphureous, steamy water and smoke, a fiery burning spirit, a mortal penetrating poison, a basilisk which kills everything, an envenomed worm, a poisonous snake, a dragon, a poisonous serpent which devours its offspring, a strong fire, and a clear fire, a fire of horse dung and horse dung, a sharp salt and sal armoniac, a saltary and common salt, a sharp soap, lye, and viscous oil, an ostrich-stomach which devours and digests an eagle, a vulture and hermetic bird, a seal and vessel of Hermes, a smelting and calcining stove. Innumerable other names of beasts, birds, vegetables, waters, humours, of milk, of blood, and of men have been given to it. Philosophers have spoken of it in their books, moreover, in a figurative manner, that such a water should be made out of such things, and all the fools who have sought it in such things, have never found the desired water.

But, know this, my dearest son, that it is only made out of live Mercury, and from no other foreign thing in the world. The philosophers have given it these many names in order that the unwise may never know it. And you, my son, will have concluded the first part of this treatise, when you understand and know, that without this fire all the toil of the whole world and of alchemy is mere loss, and all alchemical processes are

a delusion, unprofitable and false. For the Great Rosary says: "The receipt consists of only one thing, and with this key all the books of the philosophers are particularly and universally closed, and surrounded and guarded as with a strong wall. He who has not yet acquired the key can never enter the fortified castle, or obtain anything profitable. For this water is the one only key for opening the metallic walls. Further, this water is the strong aquafortis which Isaac refers to in his fragmentary work, and wherewith he dissolved bodies and made them spiritual. Therefore, diligently note, all alchemical work without this is only lies and falsify, whether metallic, mineral, vegetable, or animal substances are used. It is dissolved, sublimated, distilled, calcinated, extracted, mixed, compounded, as one will. One may dissolve it in cellars, in the bath, in dung, in aquafortis, and in all manner of strong waters, in every possible way, as the alchemical processes direct. We may make oil, water, lime, powder, black, white, yellow, and red. We may burn it, we may melt it in any possible fashion, even as the alchemical receipts tell us, and call it the true means for making gold and silver, yet from beginning to end it is abomination and falsity. I myself, with my own hands (for once I disbelieved this), have experienced such loss and damage.

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# AN EXCELLENT INTRODUCTION TO THE ART OF ALCHEMY

by Peter Bonus

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Those chapters, with the arguments previously determined, are faithfully and diligently compiled from the treatise of master Peter Bonus, of Ferrara, a concordance of all ancient and modern Sages, forming an excellent introduction to the Art of Alchemy, By him it is named the *Precious New Pearl*.

Bonus tells us that as beginners we are apt to consider this an easy Art; but as we get to know more about it, we find that we were grievously mistaken in our first impression. On every side we are confronted with so many doubts, difficulties, and apparent contradictions, that we are apt to wonder, after a time, at the youthful rashness and foolhardiness with which we began the study. But in the following chapters we hope to set all difficulties at rest.

## *Chapter I.*

### **The Matter of the Philosopher's Stone. The Matter of the Metals, and its Causes, Properties, and Qualities.**

The great Geber tells us that metals are substantially composed of quicksilver and sulphur; though sulphur is their active principle rather than part of their substance. Their differences are generally traceable to a difference in the sulphur, which is found white, yellowish, red, saffron-coloured, green, and black, while the quicksilver, considered by itself, is always the same. Sometimes, indeed, the quicksilver has an earthy appearance, but this is owing to an admixture of lead, and can be remedied by a process of purification. Now, as sulphur, which is the proper coagulum of quicksilver, varies in its colour, while quicksilver is always white, it follows that the quicksilver receives its colour from the sulphur, and the sulphur causes the peculiar colour of the different metals. Everything else that is found in metals is more or less immature, and does not really belong to them. It should be noticed that, when metals are mixed, the quicksilver readily combines with quicksilver, because it is the same substance in all metals. But this cannot

be said of the sulphur, because it is not the same in all metals.

*Note.*

Hence, fixed sulphur retard the fusion and liquefaction in metals, and entirely prevents it where its quantity exceeds that of the quicksilver. The latter is the case in iron, and the said metal is, therefore, not fusible. This fact we are taught by experience, for when we desire to make fixed sulphur, we must calcine it, and that which is calcined is not susceptible of fusion. But sulphur which is not fixed accelerates fusion, as we see in the case of *arsenic*, which is of the nature of sulphur, and brings about the fusion of red-hot iron. That it is sulphur which prevents fusion, we see from the fact that when miners smelt ore, there ascends a sulphureous vapour before fusion takes place, and if we collect this substance in a vessel, it is found to resemble *orpiment*. But both its smell and its properties shew that it consists largely of sulphur. In the same way, fixed sulphur is said to be the cause of the hardness of metals, as we see in iron and brass. Therefore, also, sulphur, which is not fixed, on the other hand, is the cause of metallic softness, and of volatilization under the test of fire, as we see in lead and tin. But quicksilver, whether fixed or not, is the cause of metallic fusion. Whatever substances are fused with great difficulty are quickly coagulated (on account of the sulphur which they contain) and vice versa.

Sulphur easily adheres to iron and brass, and readily mingles with silver, which has a proportion of combustible sulphur, and also with lead, the latter because lead contains many parts of sulphur which is not fixed. It does not mingle well with tin because of the large quantity of quicksilver which the latter contains. With gold it does not mix at all, because gold is purged of all its sulphur. Quicksilver, on the other hand, enters gold very readily, as it also does silver, and --- in a lesser degree --- tin and lead, because of the large quantity of undigested quicksilver contained in them. Brass will receive it with difficulty, and iron not at all, except by an artifice. To tin it adheres on account of its undigested state, and on account of its large quantity of quicksilver. To gold it adheres most easily of all, because gold abounds in quicksilver. The fixed fusible quicksilver, then, is the cause of perfection in metals, and the less fixed it is, the further it is from perfection. Sulphur, on the other hand, whether fixed or volatile, is the cause of corruption and imperfection, so long as it remains in metals. Hence, we conclude that our noble Stone consists of quicksilver exclusively without any trace of external sulphur. This we see from the fact that quicksilver takes to nothing in the whole world more kindly than to gold; nothing, on the other hand, is more unlike gold than sulphur. Whoever denies that quicksilver is the true substance of metals, is like one who says that snow is not white. And because the Stone must enter the metals in all their parts, it is clear that it must consist entirely of quicksilver. Our assertion is borne out by the authority of Rhasis, Alphidius, and Geber. Rhasis, in his *Seventy Precepts*, affirms that Mercury is the root of all things, it only should be prepared, and from it is derived a good tincture, and a strong and conquering impression. Alphidius declares, on the evidence of all the Sages, that the work of wisdom consists solely in quicksilver. So also Geber says, in his chapter on the procreation of iron: Let us raise the Blessed, Glorious, and most High God, Who created quicksilver, and gave it a substance, and imparted to its substance properties which no other substance on earth can possess. It is the perfection of our Art, it is our victory which overcomes fire, and is not overcome by it, but delights in its heat, and gently and amicably reposes in it, etc. Though in his book on *The Coagulation of Mercury by Precipitation* he says that this medicine is elicited from metallic bodies with their sulphur and *arsenic*, he really means the same thing, but he expresses himself somewhat obscurely. We do not, however, need the testimony of the ancients to convince us that quicksilver without external sulphur must be the substance of the Stone, which, as has been said, is the form of gold. The fact is brought home to us with sufficient force by the evidence of our eyes, if, indeed, we have ever observed the facility and amicable readiness with

which quicksilver joins itself to gold.

*Query: Is Sulphur a material part of Gold and of our Stone?*

But it may be objected that our argument proves too much, and that sulphur must actually form a material part of gold and of the Stone of the Philosophers. If quicksilver must be the matter of the Stone, because it readily unites with gold, we may say with quite as much justice that sulphur must form part of this matter, because it very easily mingles with quicksilver, and especially because sulphur is the proper coagulum of quicksilver. If any one, says the philosopher Aristotle, would coagulate quicksilver so as to change it into gold or the Stone, he must do so by means of sulphur, for whenever sulphur is withdrawn from the quicksilver it becomes liquid as before; unless, therefore, the sulphur remain permanently with the quicksilver, it cannot become gold or the Stone. Moreover, quicksilver is white, and the Stone is universally admitted to be red --- hence sulphur must form part of its substance. Yet we answer as before, that quicksilver alone is the whole material cause, and the whole substance of the Stone.

You should, however, know that quicksilver in its first creation has many parts of an earthy, white, sulphureous matter mingled with it, which are most subtle and belong to its own material substance, and without which it would have no consistency. These particles cause first its white and then its red colour in the operation of the magistry. Thus Aristotle calls quicksilver a water mingled with a certain subtle sulphureous earth. A hint to the same effect is thrown out by Geber in his chapter on the nature of quicksilver. There is an inward sulphur as well as an outward, he tells us, and this internal sulphur forms part of the substance of the quicksilver, and is the true agent in coagulating it. At least, both are not fixed, and both are instrumental in coagulating the Mercury. But when the quicksilver with its own inward sulphur is mixed and coagulated, and has received from it either the white or red colour, then the external sulphur can no longer combine with it, because they have become dissimilar. Hence it may be urged that it cannot form part of the substance of our Stone.

Here we come upon the great secret of our Art, that quicksilver is coagulated, not by mixture with anything else, but is both coagulated and coloured into perfection by its own internal sulphur, while it is coloured and coagulated to corruption by external sulphur. If the quicksilver could be coagulated by any other substance, whether mineral, vegetable, or animal, it would be a foreign coagulum, and the coagulation would not be that which we require. We see, then, that this external sulphur, though it be active in metallic generation, cannot itself form part of the substance of our Stone; and the task before us is to get the quicksilver by itself, and to coagulate it without the contaminating influence of the outward sulphur, since that which generates cannot be part of the substance generated.

## *Chapter II.*

**Explains the Dictum of the Ancient Sages that "Sulphur alone is the matter of the Stone and of Gold".**

Those who superficially skim the writings of the sages might arrive at the conclusion that sulphur alone is the substance of our Stone. So Rosinus says that incombustible sulphur, which has prevailed against fire, is that which the Sages are in search of, and, elsewhere, that no tincture can be obtained except through pure

water of sulphur. Again, the precious colour of the philosophers is derived from sulphur. So, also, Solomon, the son of David, calls sulphur the Stone which God has placed above all other stones, which is prized by those who know it, and thought vile by the multitude. Bulus, in the *Turba Philosophorum*, asserts that the pure water is obtained from sulphur, yet not from one sulphur only, but from several things which make up one sulphur. And Anaxagoras exclaims: "Know that the perfection of this work is the water of sulphur".

To this question we, nevertheless, answer, as above, that the perfection of our Magistry consists in quicksilver alone, which contains in its composition dry sulphureous particles, which tinge and colour it white in actuality, and red in potentiality, and are that which gives to it perfection and form. But, as this internal sulphur cannot be active without some outward impulse, Nature has added to it, in all metallic ore, a certain external sulphur which stirs it into action. Our Magistry, of course, imitates Nature in this respect. Because of this inward sulphur, which coagulates the quicksilver, and forms part of it, and is unknown to the multitude, the ancient Sages have spoken of quicksilver as sulphur, and this hidden sulphur is made manifest in the Magistry of our Art by a grand artifice. Our sulphur, say they, is not the sulphur of the multitude, because common sulphur burns with a black smoke and is consumed; but the sulphur of the Sages burns with a white smoke and is perfected thereby. It is this sulphur which whitens and imparts the red colour, and coagulates and perfects the quicksilver into the substance gold in nature, and of the Philosopher's Stone in our Art.

It should be observed that, as everything is composed of matter and form, and is what it is by virtue of its form, a thing has the more being to more it possesses of the form. Quantity does not enter into the definition of form, since quantity and passivity belong to matter. When the substance is small in proportion of the form, there is much activity, much virtue, with great intensity of being, because there is proportionately much form. Concentrated force is more powerful than that which is divided. If this be so, we may say that, as the red luminous sulphur hidden in the quicksilver is the form of gold, it is that which tinges and transforms every kind of metal into gold. For this reason, the tincture is said to be derived rather from the quality and form, or sulphur, than from the quantity, or quicksilver. The intense redness thereof approaches black, or the colour of liver and of aloes, as declared in the Book of Three Words. Since one part of it tinges and forms a thousand parts of any metal into gold, according to the consensus of the philosophers, it must have much strength, a concentrated entity, and much form, or, rather, itself is the pure form of gold. Hence, on account of its redness, its operation can be extended to a great quantity of any kind of metal, so as to tinge and perfect it into gold. When the Stone is brought into loving contact with common metals, it purges away the external corrupting sulphur; thus they become white, and of the nature of pure quicksilver, and the form of gold being added to its substance, of course they become gold. This tincture, by means of which the perfecting process is brought about, is the sulphur of the Sages, the divine sulphur, and the Stone of the Philosophers, the secret sulphur with which all things are aureated and beautified. It is the precious substance which the sages call by so many mysterious names; the Shadow of the Sun, the coagulum of quicksilver, that which flies with tings flying and rest with things at rest, the gold of the philosophers, that which is sought of many and found of few, the Quintessence, the salt of armonia, the Vinegar of the Sages, the Golden Tree, of whose fruit whosoever eats shall not hunger again; that which is nourished and generated in the fire, and delights in it as in its native element; that which, like man, is a microcosm or little world. It is the second sulphur which is joined to the first sulphur, producing a third sulphur, of which it is said that sulphurs are contained in sulphurs.

*Note Concerning the Water and the Oil of Sulphur.*

The water of sulphur, or oil of sulphur, is quicksilver extracted from this composite sulphur. It is a living water, and that which the Sages call the Virgin's Milk, the pure, heavenly, and glorious water. It is sometimes referred to as the flying bird, which is substantially identical with the said sulphur, but diverse from the vulgar kind.

*Is Sulphur alone the whole material of Gold?*

Some have said that gold is a substance which is digested in the bowels of the earth out of a most pure orange-coloured sulphur alone, with an admixture of quicksilver just sufficient to give it brightness and malleability. But they say that gold receives from sulphur its substance, colour, fusibility, and all the rest of its proper accidents. We answer that the ancient sages had some good reason for connecting each of the seven metals with one of the seven planets, as the heavenly influence from which it derived its peculiar properties. Thus, lead was assigned to Saturn, tin to Jupiter, iron to Mars, gold to the Sun, copper to Venus, silver to the Moon. But to Mercury they assigned no metal, because only these six have attained to coagulation, with fusibility and malleability. In the seventh place, however, they did place mercury, not as a metal, but as the First Matter of all metals. If they had thought that this place belonged to sulphur, they would have associated sulphur, and not Mercury, with the seventh planet. Hence, it must be concluded that quicksilver, and not sulphur, is the origin, matter, and substance of metals.

The question now arises as to what Aristotle meant by refusing to identify the material of a thing with its form, as was done by the Platonist and the Pythagoreans. It is clear from his words that he did not take the meaning of the ancient Sages. The material of Alchemy --- the first matter, or chaos, according to the ancients, is that in which everything exists in a confused state, i.e., the quicksilver of the Sages in its primary condition, generated by a kind of preliminary digestion. This is the Stone which they seek, concealed from the senses, but manifested to the mind, the form and flower of gold. The knowledge of this material is more important than anything else in Alchemy. For it opens up the knowledge of all other causes, properties, and conditions, and, finally, of the form itself. But if we do not know the right material, it is simply impossible for us to know anything about it. Hence, this question: What is the material? --- must be the first problem solved by the student of Alchemy.

This material is, of course, by its very nature, disposed to receive its own proper form, just as the grain of wheat has in it the disposition to become wheat. Thus, if we define matter as that in which the form inheres, there is, after all, not so much difference between material and form, but that, in our Art, at least, we may confidently identify them. There could be no such thing as a substantial form, if there were no material possessing a capacity of being developed in a certain direction. If anyone, then, would know the form of gold, he must first know the material of the Stone. Hence, we see that real insight into the nature of a thing depends on an accurate knowledge of its material.

### *Chapter III.*

**We must now proceed to enquire what are the Elements of the Stone, and how they are the same in Gold as in all Composite Substances, not only on Earth, but also in the Heavens.**

We affirm that all elements of the Stone must be first purified, and then evenly mixed in the right proportions, so that the resultant compound may be permanent. Hence it is necessary to say something about the elements. There are many persons at the present day, even as there were some in the past, and will be others in the future, so long as investigators abide by the literal words of the Sages, who know not the meaning of our Art, and are endeavoring to extract the Philosopher's Stone from all sorts of fantastic animal and vegetable substances. These substances they have subjected to all the processes described in our orthodox treatises. And have obtained in the end something white, and something red, which, however, have none of the blessed properties of our Stone. These persons do not know that every form must be extracted from that proximate matter in which it is potentially contained; that is to say, the material and the form must both belong to the same natural genus. If we wish to understand the nature of a man, we shall not waste our time in studying the essential properties of a tree or of a stone; for them we should never get beyond these substances, which, however interesting in themselves, are quite foreign to our subject. Alchemy sets itself to transmute metals into gold; hence we must study the essential properties of gold and of the other metals, and we must look for our first substance among metals, and not in the animal or vegetable world. Know, then, that a knowledge of the essence and nature of a thing is obtained from a knowledge of its first principles, or proximate causes. We cannot understand the changes of bodies, or even of quicksilver itself, if we have no radical knowledge of its essential properties. The principles of being and of knowing, says Aristotle, are the same --- as things are, so they must also be understood and known. If we understand the substance of our Stone as it is, there is nothing left to study but the method of treatment, and this method will be suggested by the knowledge we already possess.

Every compound consists of a mixture of four elements, two of which are enclosed, viz., fire and air, while two enclose them, viz., earth and water, whence we see that in every composite there is a superabundance of earth and water. Fire and air are the formal and moving principles, the two others are the material and passive principles. The virtue of fire and air can appear only in the earth and water, as the virtue of the form can appear only in the substance. For even as the form is included or hidden in the matter, so are fire and air included in earth and water. Rhasis calls fire and air the occult, water and earth the manifest principles of a compound. Since, then, the strong are enclosed by the weak, the compound is easily corrupted, and the formal principles by their exhalation give to the others form, colour, taste, smell, etc.; but so long as the material principles remain, they are not wholly deserted by the formal. If, on the other hand, the compound is not easily destroyed, it is on account of the strength of the enclosing principles. If both are weak, the whole compound is very perishable, e.g., camphor. If both are equally strong, even smallest part of the compound coheres in a permanent union with every other. When the humid and the dry, and the hot and the cold, are so evenly balanced that there is an equilibrium of the elements, they are perfectly united, and the compound is indestructible.

The elements of our Art, then, are the humid and the dry, i.e., water and earth. In water there is enclosed air, and in earth fire. But the radical element from which all others are derived, is humidity, or water, that is, liquefaction, or, according to others, earth. We may reconcile the two views by stating, on the authority of Empedocles, that when water is thickened, it becomes earth: earth floats upon the waters, and is founded upon the waters, as we learn from Morienus and Hermes. When wax is in a liquid state, it is like water; when it becomes coagulated, it is dry, like earth; and yet its weight is the same in both cases. Alexander sets forth, in his *Epistle*, that all the Philosophers apply the name of fire to everything that is hot, of water to all that is flexible, and of earth or stone to whatsoever is coagulated. But neither water nor any other element by itself is of much use to us in this Art. They must all be first separated and severally purified, and then recombined in even proportions --- that is to say, when the water has been purified, we must add to it the



purified earth, and then we shall have all the four indissolubly united, and the work will be perfect. If they are not so united, the fire resolves the water into steam, together with the earth, and the whole compound perishes. If, then, you would succeed in mixing elements, you must know their nature and properties. Convert the elements, says Alexander; make the humid dry, and the volatile fixed, and you have what you seek. Know that, then, all elements are actually converted into earth, and the other elements are, and remain, with it potentially and virtually. Hence, Hermes says that earth is the element out of which everything is made, and into which everything is converted. In the composition of the Stone and of gold we have a perfect equation of the elements. This well-tempered substance can neither be destroyed by the violence of the fire, nor vitiated by the impurity of the earth, nor spoiled by an excess of water or air. The Stone and gold are thus generated in the fire, and, like everything else, flourish in their native element. They are, therefore, indestructible by fire, and are rather perfected and improved by it than otherwise.

These remarks, in the opinion of the ancient Sages, had a direct bearing upon the constitution of the heavenly bodies. They, like the Philosopher's Stone, are composed of such an evenly balanced mixture of the elements as to be indestructible. The active and passive elements are so accurately matched in their composition that the formal cannot be separated from the material principles. Hence, Nature has placed nearest to them the sphere of fire, which conserves rather than destroys them. For elementary fire is related to the heavenly bodies as material fire is related to gold and our Stone. It is through this wise natural arrangement that the heavenly bodies may be said to be practically indestructible and eternal.

There are, then, four elements, by reason of the four primary qualities; and they are mutually convertible, because every one is potentially in every other, and they are constantly generating and destroying each other. In substance, there is from the beginning of the world only one element, or First Matter, out of the conflicting qualities of which the four elements are generated by division. Similarly, there are in the first substance of this Stone four elements potentially, which by our Art are separated, and then again combined. Moreover, we believe our Stone to be incorruptible, not only through the equation of its elements, but also through the addition to it to the fifth element, just as the great world is composed of four corruptible elements, and an incorruptible one, which is the quintessence. It is this quintessence which, in the small world of our Art, holds the four elements together in indissoluble union, which also, according to Alexander, is neither hot nor cold, neither moist nor dry. This soul of our Art is the divine incorruptible sulphur. Other elements are the body, soul, and spirit, the dry and the humid, the fixed and the volatile, the white and the red. As of all the elements earth alone is fixed, and as the elements at the end of our Magistry must become fixed, it is clear that they must all be converted into earth, or the fixed state of the philosophers.

#### *Chapter IV.*

##### **Of the Ferment, and the Modes, Conditions, Properties, and Conversion brought about by it.**

Of the ferment, which is the great secret of our Art, and without which it cannot attain its goal, the Sages speak only in the very obscurest terms. They seem to use the word in two senses, meaning either the elements of the Stone itself, or that which perfects and completes the Stone. In the first sense our Stone is the leaven of all other metals, and changes them into its own nature --- a small piece of leaven leavening a whole lump. As leaven, though of the same nature with dough, cannot raise it, until, from being dough, it

has received a new quality which it did not possess before, so our Stone cannot change metals, until it is changed itself, and has added to it a certain virtue which it did not possess before. It cannot change, or colour, unless it have first itself been changed and coloured, as we learn from the *Turba Philosophorum*. Ordinary leaven receives its fermenting power through the digestive virtue of gentle and hidden heat; and so our Stone is rendered capable of fermenting, converting, and altering metals by means of a certain digestive heat, which bring out its potential and latent properties, seeing that without heat, as Theophrastus tells us, neither digestion, operation, nor motion are possible. The difference between ordinary leaven and our ferment is that common leaven loses nothing of its substance in the digestive process, while digestion removes from our ferment all that is superfluous, impure, and corruptive, as is done by Nature in the preparation of gold. It is because our ferment assimilates all metals to itself, just as common leaven assimilates to itself the whole mass of dough, that it has received this name from the Sages. Hence it appears that quicksilver (being of the same substance with the metals), when fermented and changed into the same substance as the ferment, transmutes into its own nature every fusible substance of its own kind, and, as its nature is that of gold, it converts all metals into gold.

It is true the action of this ferment is not quite analogous to that of leaven. For leaven changes the whole lump of dough into a kind of leaven; but our Stone, instead of converting metals into the Tincture, transmutes them only into gold. Our Stone rather changes all metals into a kind of intermediate substance, such as is the substance of gold, between that which they were before and the alternative ferment. The colour, too, of gold is intermediate between the blackness of iron, the redness of copper, the livid grey of lead, and the whiteness of silver. The degree of digestion which is obtained is also intermediate between that of copper and iron on the one hand, and that of tin and lead on the other. Its fusibility further represents the golden mean, since copper is melted with difficulty, iron with more difficulty, while tin and lead are melted with the greatest ease, and silver and gold not so readily as the latter, but more readily than the former. The same intermediate quality of gold is noticeable also in its ring, that of lead and tin being dull, and that of silver and gold moderately clear. To this middle state all metals are reduced by our Stone. For, though the virtue of our Stone is great, yet, on being mixed with common metals, its action is slightly affected by their impurity, and does not change them quite into its own likeness, but only into gold.

More difficult is the second sense of the ferment, which is the truly philosophical ferment, and wherein is the whole difficulty of our Art, for in this sense it signifies that which perfects our Stone. The word ferment is derived from a root which denotes seething or bubbling, because it makes the dough rise and swell, and has a hidden dominant quality which prevails to change the dough into its own nature, rectifying and reducing it to a better and nobler state. It is composed of divers hidden virtues inherent in one substance. In the same way that ferment which is mixed with our quicksilver makes it rise and swell, and prevails to assimilate it to its own nature, thus exalting it into a nobler condition. In itself quicksilver has no active virtue, but if it be mortified together with this ferment it remains joined to it forever, and is thenceforward changed into the nature of the Sun, the whole being developed into ferment, which in turn develops all things into gold.

The ferment of which we speak is invisible to the eye, but capable of being apprehended by the mind. It is the body which retains the soul, and the soul can shew its power only when it is united to the body. Therefore, when the Artist sees the white soul arise, he should join it to its body in the very same instant; for no soul can be retained without its body. This union takes place through the mediation of the spirit, for the soul cannot abide in the body except through the spirit, which gives permanence to their union, and this conjunction is the end of the work. Now, the body is nothing new or foreign; only that which was before

hidden becomes manifest, and vice versa. The body is stronger than soul and spirit, and if we are to retain them, we must do so by means of the body, as the *Turba* and Plato agree. Without this hidden spiritual body the Stone can neither ferment nor be perfected. Of course, the body, soul, and spirit of pure Stone are only different aspect of the same thing, and according to these aspects the Sages call it now by one name, and now by another. The soul, says Plato, must be reunited to its own body, or else you will fail, because the soul will escape you. And Hermes insists that it must be its own original body, and not one of an extraneous or alien nature, as attempted by some who are ignorant of this Arcanum. Rhasis says that the body is the form, and the spirit the matter; and rightly, because as no substance can exist without form, which is its real being, so the soul, through the mediation of the spirit, cannot be in the Stone except by the body, because its being and perfection depend on the body. Hence, the body is their bond and form, though they are the same thing. As that which imparts its form to the Stone and to gold, is something fixed, and a body, while Mercury is that which receives fixation and a form, it follows that the body is the form.

The body, then, is that which is the form, and the ferment, and the perfection, and the Tincture of which the Sages are in search. It is also the Sol and gold of the philosophers. It is white actually and red potentially; while it is white it is still imperfect, but it is perfected when it becomes red. The Sun, says Rosinus, is white in appearance, and red by development. Anaxagoras teaches that the Sun is an ardent red, but the soul to which the Sun is united by the bond of the spirit is white, being of the nature of the Moon, and is called the quicksilver of the philosophers. Hermes tells us that without the Red Stone there can be no true Tincture. The red slave, says Rhasis, has wedded a white spouse. We now see the truth of the saying that there are two kinds of gold, one white and one red; but the one must be in the other. This white gold is, according to Rhasis, a neutral body, which is neither in sickness nor in health, and it is, of course, quicksilver. Geber says that no metal is submerged in it except gold, which is the medium of conjunction between the tinctures. That it is the true ferment, Hermes tells us in his seventh book, when he says: Note, that the ferment whitens the compound, prevents combustion, holds the tincture together, and makes them enter each other and remain in union, etc. So also Morienus affirms that the ferment of gold is gold, as the ferment of dough is dough.

From these considerations we see clearly how silver and gold are of the same nature, and that silver precedes gold, and is predisposed to gold, while gold is hidden in silver, and is extracted from its womb. Hence, Senior says that the rising sun is in the waxing moon. Know, ye students of this Art, cries Zeno in the *Turba Philosophorum*, that unless you first make it white, you will not be able to make it red, because the white potentially contains the red. If there be too little gold in the compound, says Dardanus, the Tincture will be brilliantly white. Alphidius says: Know that the dealbation must come first, for it is the beginning of the whole work, and then the rubefaction must follow, which is the perfection of the whole work. Since the entire substance, viz., the soul united to the body by the spirit, is of the pure nature of gold, it is clear that whatever it converts, it must convert into gold. At first, indeed, the whole mass is white, because quicksilver predominates; but because gold is dominant, though hidden, in it, when it is ferment, the mass in the second stage of our Magistry becomes red in the fullness of the potential sense, while in the third stage, or the second and last decoction, the ferment is actively dominated, and the red colour becomes manifest, and possesses the whole substance. Again, we say that this ferment is that strong substance which turns everything into its own nature. Our ferment is of the same substance of gold; gold is of quicksilver, and our design is to produce gold.

The Ancients gave the name of body to whatsoever is fixed and resists the action of heat; moreover, it has the power of retaining in a compound that which is essentially incorporeal and volatile, and attempts to

volatilize the body, viz., the soul. Spirit they called that which constitutes the bond between body and soul, and, by abiding with the body, compels the soul to return to it. And yet, body, soul, and spirit are not three things, but different aspects of the same thing. As bond between body and soul, the spirit is said to prevail during the Magistry from beginning to end; so long as the substance is volatile and flees from the fire, it is called soul; when it becomes able to resist the action of the fire, it is called body. The force of the body should prevail over the force of the soul, and instead of the body being carried upward with the soul, the soul remains with the body, the work is crowned with success, and the spirit will bind with the two in indissoluble union forever. Since, then, the body perfects and retains the soul, and imparts real being to it and the whole work, while the soul manifests its power in this body, and all this is accomplished through the mediation of the spirit, it has been well said that the body and the form are one and the same thing, the other two being called the substance.

But how are we to understand Plato's remark that he who has once performed this work need not repeat it, as his fortune is made forever? The words do not mean that he who has once prepared the Tincture can multiply its quantity indefinitely, just as he who has once struck a fire out of a stone can always keep himself provided with fire simply by adding fuel to it. The authority of Plato is supported by that of Rhasis, who speaks in a similar fashion. They should be interpreted, however, not according to the letter, but according to the spirit. He who has once succeeded in preparing this Medicine need not any more go through the experience of his failures and mistakes: he now knows how to perform all the processes of our Magistry properly, and, therefore, if ever he should need a fresh supply of the Medicine, he will be able to provide himself with it without much trouble.

When the Alchemist, in the course of course of his decoction and putrefaction, has reached the end of the first part of our Magistry, in which is seen the simple white colour, before the appearance of any other colours, then he must straightway set about the second part of the work, and this second part is the ferment and the fermentation of the substance. Then, if all elements are evenly combined without being touched by hand, the artist is a rich man, and has no need, thenceforth, in repeating the work, to repeat all his former mistakes. But, if he does not combine the elements evenly, the whole substance will vanish into thin air, and the Alchemist will have lost his hoped-for riches. If, says Haly, you do not find this Stone, when it germinates, no other will arise in its place. Beware, says Plato, lest in the fermentation you come to a bitter end. If there be any hindrance or obstacle in the solution, there will most likely be corruption in the augmenting. The right moment must be seized here, as in all other things. When you are baking bread or sweetmeats, or any other solid substance, the moment will arise when they are perfectly done; and if after that moment you leave them in the oven ever so short a time, they will be marred, burnt, and destroyed. Haly compares the preparation of our Stone to that of soap, which is spoiled if boiled beyond a certain point. Hence the artist must be extremely watchful, and as soon as the substance has reached its most subtle stage, he must put an end to the digestive process; if he pushes it any further, the combined forces of the fire and the volatile part of the substance overcome its fixed part, and the whole evaporated. He who knows how to pacify and assuage the hostility of the elements will be successful in our Magistry, but no other.

The object of what has been said is to shew that at the close of the perfect decoction and putrefaction, Nature, by the ministration of our Art, generates a bare simple matter, not united to its form; this matter the Ancients called first matter, on account of its resemblance to the first matter of the world, before it received its form. This matter needs to be united to its form, which form is the ferment, and is hidden in its womb. This conjunction must take place immediately the matter is born; the same will then become durable and imperishable. Nature, unassisted, cannot effect this union, because it is irrational, and its operations go on

forever in successive renovation and destruction; but the Artist can watch the proper moment, and preserve that which the fire has generated. Now, when the conjunction has taken place, the substance has nothing more to fear from the fire. If one only knows the right moment, the conjunction is a very easy process; and when it takes place, there are many wonderful phenomena, as Morienus testifies. It is brought about by a well-tempered fire, the action of which is stopped by a watchful artist. And this conjunction accomplished, it is open to the artist to rest. Socrates, in the *Turba Philosophorum*, says that what follows is woman's work and child's play. Rhasis says that nothing but vigilance is requisite, for as the ablution and depuration of the elements are accomplished by the presence of fire, so are the conjunction, perpetuation, and fermentation of the purified matters performed in the absence of fire.

### *Concerning the Time of Fermentation*

It should further be noticed that the time for fermenting the substance is the moment when the Stone germinates, germination being the revival of a seed after apparent death. The quicksilver first melts through the digestive action of the fire, and then is coagulated with its ferment or body: this process is that which we call germination. What a man sows, says Rhasis, that shall he also reap. Seeds can only spring up after their kind, and bear fruit after their kind. So minerals do not become something else, but return to that from which they arose.

Yet, how can Nature generate a simple substance not united to its form? This is, nevertheless, a fact according to the Ancients, but in a metaphorical sense. Aristotle says that as the reason comes to a man from without, so the vegetative and sensitive soul comes from within. There is in seed the soul and the body, but there is added to it from without the rational spirit. In the same way we are to understand the metaphorical dicta in our Art.

Again, the action of heat in itself is not determined in any particular direction, or towards any particular end; but for the attainment of any such purpose it has to be used and regulated by an intelligent mind. When I say heat, I mean the elementary fire which is generated in all things, both animals, and vegetables, and metals. This natural fire, without which there is neither growth nor generation, is the instrument of the mind, and is regulated by the Artist, in respect of quantity, quality, and time, for the attainment of a certain well-defined end. If the heat be continued beyond a certain point, the form which it had generated is again destroyed. The action of fire in itself only tends to combustion, but man may regulate it so as to effect many other objects. Hence, Pythagoras says that man is the measure of all things. Nature is blind and its action indefinite; it follows all the influences which are brought to bear on it, in this or in that direction; but the will of man is free, and can regulate and modify the working of Nature so as to bring about its own ends. If the will of man follow Nature, Nature will go beyond the proper point, and spoil everything.

The object of Nature in all things is to introduce into each substance the form which properly belongs to it; and this is also the design of our Art. When, therefore, the quicksilver of the Sages has been generated by the skill and wisdom of the artist, the form must be added to it, and then the work stopped at once, since its end is reached, and anything more can only spoil it.

If the Mercury were coagulated by some foreign (non-metallic) substance, it would not be of the slightest use, since in Nature only homogeneous things will combine. The coagulation by means of *arsenic* and common sulphur, though they are mineral substances, tends only to corruption.

## *Chapter V.*

### **What is Theriac, and What is Called the Poison in the Philosopher's Stone?**

The Ancients have mentioned, as component parts of this Stone, theriac and poison. Like the ferment, they are either the perfect Stone, or that which perfects it. In the first sense it is improperly, in the second more properly, so-called. Because theriac has remarkable cleansing properties, and poison possess considerable medicinal virtues, they may mean the Stone, which cleanses common metals from all impurities, and converts them into gold. The four corrupt metals suffer from four different kinds of leprosy, and therefore, each needs this poison for its cure. Iron is infected with leprosy from corruption of the bile, tin from corruption of the phlegm, and lead from simple melancholic corruption, which is also called elephantiasis. All these corruptions are due to the presence of impure sulphur, which is removed by our poison, or washed away by means of our theriac. Silver suffers from a phlegmatic leprosy, because it contains a proportion of combustible sulphur. But wise Nature in the generation thereof has combined a certain theriac therein, and when the sulphur has been purged of by the Stone, gold immediately results. Gold alone is free from impurity and is perfectly healthy, like pure blood in a sound body. In its correct sense, theriac or poison is that which is properly called ferment. If the Artist stops at the right moment, all will be well; otherwise, the process of fermentation will go too far, and everything will be spoiled. Hence Hamec says that at this stage the ferment may become poison, and the Artist must very carefully beware of its smell, for, if he inhale it, it will prove fatal to him. He means to say that if it be allowed to evaporate, the Artist will be ruined. This Stone, says Morienus, heals the infirmities of metals, as theriac cures the diseases of the human body; hence it is sometimes called poison, on account of its medicinal use.

*Note: --- Of the Union of Soul and Body with their Spirit.*

At the close of our Magistry, when the soul seeks its body, we should see that it is able to unite itself to it, and receive life and activity. This union and composition take place through the operation of the spirit. When the soul is united to the body, it lives with its body forever. The conjunction occurs at the moment of the soul's resurrection: for, though it existed before, yet it could not manifest itself in the body, on account of the defilement and impurity of the body. Hence it lays like a thing dead and useless, and, as it were, buried with its body. But when it is purified and made white by means of our Magistry, it rises clean and white, and finds the body from which it had been separated also clean and pure, and so it seeks its body, and longs to be united with it, in order that it may live for ever: for it cannot be united to a strange body. If, therefore, the Artist does not take care, it will seek to escape with its body, and carry it upward, when the whole work will be annihilated, and the end of the experiment made void. Hence the body is called the theriac of its soul when the soul is saved by it and is beatified with it; it is called poison when it is the cause of the eternal death of the soul, through a failure in conjunction by reason of the Artist's folly. But if he seizes the right moment to stop the heat, the union is perfected and is rendered indissoluble. In this conjunction the body is spiritual, like the soul itself. Thus they unite, as water unites with water, and body, soul, and spirit are now the same thing, nor can they be separated for ever. Because of the insight which their Art gave to them, the Ancient Sages knew all about the resurrection of the body and the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, as also about the Trinity in Unity, and all the other verities of our faith. I am firmly persuaded that any unbeliever who got truly to know this Art, would straightway confess the truth of our Blessed Religion, and believe in the trinity and in our Lord Jesus Christ. Such was the experience of

Hermes, Plato, and other ancient Sages.

But we will now return to the point. We were speaking of theriac and poison. When this Stone is born in the coction, it is in the likeness of brilliantly white quicksilver, and is called the quicksilver of the sages. This quicksilver, to be of any utility, must be joined to its body and mortified; it is killed by its body, and therefore the body may be called poison, in the second and proper sense. And as this death tends to healing and glorious restoration, it is, in the same way, designated theriac. So it is with men: death is the means of giving to them a more glorious life. Our poison, or theriac, is thus identical with the above-mentioned ferment, and is the key of the whole work, the form of the Sun, and the flower of gold. Hence it is advanced by Seno, in the *Turba Philosophorum*, that no body is more precious and pure than the Sun, and that no tinging poison can be generated without the Sun and its shadow; whoever thinks otherwise errs grievously, but he who tinges the poison of the Wise by the Sun and its shadow, the same attains unto the great Arcanum. Without this theriac and poison our Magistry cannot be accomplished; though, of course, they are not added from without, but form an integral part of our substance.

## *Chapter VI.*

### **The Coagulum and the Milk in the Philosopher's Stone, and its Male and Female Agents.**

The terms used in the superscription are some of the most secret phrases of our Art, and if we do not know their meaning, we know nothing about Alchemy. Some suppose that this Stone, when perfect, is related to Mercury, as a coagulating substance to milk. For, as a moderate quantity of a coagulum clots a large quantity of milk, so a small particle of this Stone, when projected upon many parts of Mercury, converts them into silver or gold. This view, however, is a great mistake. If it were true, of what use would the Stone be for the conversion of metals which are already coagulated by Nature?

We say that the coagulation of the Sages is that which, in the preceding chapters, has been called the ferment, or the body, or the poison, or the flower of gold, which is hidden in the Mercury of the Sages when it arises, and that Mercury is called the Milk. The coagulum is that which coagulates the mercury, and the two are one and the same in substance, i.e, Mercury coagulates itself, and is not coagulated by any foreign substance, as you may also see in the case of wax when it is coagulated. Moreover, as coagulum is made of milk alone, but receives the power of coagulation by means of a certain digestion and decoction, so this coagulum which arises in the Mercury of the Philosophers by means of certain digestion and decoction, receives power to coagulate the mercury in which it is; and as the coagulum changes a large quantity of milk into its own nature, so it is with the coagulum of Mercury and its substance. Mercury, thus coagulated, is no longer volatile, but has become the gold of the Sages, and their poison.

Know that this coagulum is the Key of the Sages, because when it coagulates the spirit, it at the same time dissolves the body, the coagulation of the spirit and the solution of the body being the same thing, whence the philosophers have laid down that the spirits cannot be contained except with the waters of their bodies. Our gum coagulates our milk, says Rhasis, and our milk dissolves our gum, after which appears the morning redness. When I saw water coagulate itself, says Senior, I was sure that all I had been told was true; this coagulated water they call the male, and they espouse it to a female, whose son he is, and is also his root and coagulation. Female they call the milk which is coagulated, and male that which coagulates; for

activity belongs to the male, and passivity to the female. The first part is the fixed part of quicksilver, and the second its liquid and volatile part --- out of their mixture arises the Stone. The male and the female, being joined together, become one body. Venerate, says Alexander, the king and his queen, and do not burn them. The male is under the female, and has no wings; the female has wings, and desires to fly, but the male holds her back. Hence the philosophers say: make the woman rise over the man, and the man rise over the woman. So also Rosinus: The woman is fortified by the man.

I must repeat that the male and the female are the same in the same subject, and yet have different and even contrary qualities. It is like the male and female principles in any vegetable seed, or the active and the passive principle in an egg. Thus, when the Stone first comes into existence, it has in it a mixture of the male and female principles, but at first it is liquid, fluent, volatile, bright, and capable of coagulation, i.e., female. The coagulum in its womb is solid, permanent, fixed, and produces coagulation in the other, i.e., is male. The female that flees is passive, white, and easily caught by the male; the male that pursues is red, and seizes and holds the female with great strength.

Similarly, the Sages have compared the two principles in our substance to an old and a young man, because the colour of old age is white, while that of youth is ruddy and bright. Hence Rhasis: The stone of our science in the beginning is an ancient and in the end a boy, because it is first white and afterwards red.

They have also given geographical names to this substance, calling the humid principle the Egyptian, and the dry principle the Persian; Egypt the house of humidity, and Persia the house of dryness. The Egyptians, says Melvoscindus, need the help of the Persians. All putrefaction takes place in humid substances, but the end of putrefaction is dryness and incineration. The putrefaction begins in Egypt, but its end is in Persia. They have also described our substance by saying that the white female has the red male in her womb, and is in the travail throes. The coagulation will then be the accomplishment of the birth; that which was within now coming out, and that which is flexible becoming fixed. Such are a few metaphors under which our substance has been described.

## *Chapter VII.*

### **This is a Chapter of the Different Similitudes of the Generation and Birth of the Embryo out of the Menstrual Blood, and of a Chicken out of an Egg --- Considered as Analogous to the Birth of Gold out of Sulphur and Quicksilver.**

We will now proceed to illustrate our meaning still further by the help of some analogies. The first analogy we shall select is the generation of the foetus in the mother's womb. The generation of the foetus is brought about by the male sperm, in conjunction with the female menstrual blood. The latter is the substance, the former the active principle. As soon as the form is generated, the sperm is purged off. In generation, the male contributes the form and the active principle, the female contributes the substance and the body. The sperm is to the menstrual blood what the carpenter is to the wood in producing a bench, hence the sperm is not part of the thing generated. So gold is caused by sulphur as the efficient or active means and by quicksilver as the substantial or passive means. And as the sperm informs with a form similar to itself, and not foreign, so is it in like manner with sulphur. The outward sulphur acts by digestion upon the inward sulphur which is latent in the quicksilver, and causes it to inform, coagulate, colour, and fix the



quicksilver into the form of gold or of the Stone of the Philosophers.

It should also be observed that the sperm generates out of the substance first the heart, thus impressing upon the heart the generative virtue which belongs to it as part of the living body. Then the sperm is separated from the heart, because now the heart is able of itself to form the other members by means of the generative power imparted to it by the sperm. When the sperm has generated the heart, its work is done, and all that remains is performed by the heart. The same principle holds good in the germination of plants. When the seed, in which all the generative force is at first inherent, has sent forth the germ or shoot, the seed itself withers and decays, as something which has henceforth become useless, and the power of generating the rest of the plant is now inherent in the germ or shoot. When the germ has once been formed, it no longer needs the seed, but produces leaves, flowers, and seed out of itself. Thus the germ is, like the heart, generated and then separated from its sperm.

In the same, we declare that the outward sulphur generates out of the quicksilver a certain sulphur which is like the heart, and to which henceforth belongs all the generative force of the outward sulphur. Thus, the outward sulphur, being no longer needed, is purged off. The sperm, which in our case is the sulphur, having introduced the form into the quicksilver, by means of the internal sulphur, by means of the internal sulphur, having done its work, is no longer wanted.

You should know that since it is unnecessary for the moving principle continually to keep in contact with that which it moves, provided it has once touched it, as you may see from the case of the archer and the arrow, so the sperm, and the heart generated by the sperm, need not always keep up their connection. In the same way, as soon as the outward sulphur has touched the quicksilver, and generated or created another sulphur out of the quicksilver, which now possessed the power of generating and imparting the form of gold, it is not necessary that the outward sulphur should remain any longer in contact with the quicksilver; it is sufficient that it has touched it in the past. Hence it is fitting that what is extrinsic should be separated, as something corruptible from what is incorruptible.

Again, in human generation, if the sperm be sufficiently powerful, and has sufficient heat to assimilate the whole of the menstrual blood to itself, the sperm, coming as it does from a male, will naturally produce a male in the mother's womb. But if the sperm has not sufficient heat or strength, it will not be able to digest the female substance; the latter will, therefore, prevail, and a female will be the result. The consequence of this arrangement is that females have not so much natural heat as males. It is the same with our sulphur and quicksilver. If the inward sulphur has sufficient heat to digest the whole of the quicksilver, it assimilates the quicksilver to itself, and the whole is changed into gold. In the contrary case, the quicksilver will prevail and change the whole substance into silver. Hence gold is yellow like sulphur, and silver is white like mercury. But the yellowness and whiteness in quicksilver are not of double origin; both are of the quicksilver, just as the white and yellow of an egg are both the product of the female bird. In other metals, the sulphur has not yet been able to digest the quicksilver because of its want of heat, as in lead and tin, or it has burnt the quicksilver by means of its excessive heat, as in iron and copper.

For the heat of the sulphur may be in excess as well as too little, and thus digestion may be prevented in two opposite ways. When heat is too great it dries up the humidity of the substance, and when it is too small it is choked by this humidity. Too much fire will spoil the food, and too little will not be sufficient to cook it. Gold alone, of all the metals, is properly digested by temperate heat, and silver in the same way; but all other metals suffer either from excess or defect of heat.

But, after all, we should remember, with Aristotle, that the real motive principle in sperm is not the sperm itself, but the soul of the person who generates with the sperm, as with an instrument to shape the timber or to fashion the sword. The intelligent soul of man, through the medium of the spirit or blood, moves the hand as an instrument, and the hand moves the outward substance. So the soul of the person generating uses the seed or sperm as an instrument, and acts on the substance or menstrual blood indirectly through the sperm. It is the same with sulphur and quicksilver in the generation of metals; sulphur is not the principal agent, but the occult mineral virtue, or chief intrinsic agent, which acts with the heavenly bodies, and makes an instrumental use of the sulphur; which, then, in its turn, moves the quicksilver, as a substance proper for the generation to which it is moved by the first agents. In this Art, the soul or intelligence of the Artist, wherein are the species and the knowledge, is the real, extrinsic, moving cause, and imparts its purpose to the digestive and liquefactive mineral virtue, which again, in its turn, moves directly the outward sulphur, and indirectly the inward sulphur and the quicksilver. Liquefaction, coagulation and other accidents, are brought about the cold and heat, but the form is produced by the movement of instrumental forces which are themselves set in motion by the intelligent mind of the Artist, who modifies, tempers, and aids the action of natural conditions.

#### *The Analogy of Common Quicksilver.*

As the egg of the hen without the seed of the male bird can never become a chicken, so common quicksilver without sulphur can never become gold, or the Stone of the Philosophers, because without sulphur it has no generative virtue; again, sulphur without quicksilver can never become gold, or the Stone, because it is like the seed and sperm of the male, and there is no generation without the menstrual blood of the female, which is the substance and nutriment of generation. The generation of gold is of quicksilver, and its nutriment (like that of the chicken in the egg) is of the yellow substance, namely, sulphur. Hence the Stone is generated of the white, i.e., quicksilver, and the nutriment of the yellow, i.e., its' hidden sulphur digested by the action of the outward sulphur through the regulative power of our Art. Nature has wisely mingled the sulphur and common quicksilver, the male and the female substance, in metals, for the purpose of their generation. And as everything attains to growth and development by the same principles to which it owes its generation, so gold and the Stone must be perfected by the action of homogeneous substances, and not by substances foreign to them. So, also, if imperfect metals are to be changed into gold by means of the Stone, even this agent can make use only of that substance in them which is identical with that of gold, while all foreign corruptive elements must be purged off; this means that only out of quicksilver can gold be generated by the mediation of the Stone, for which reason the sulphureous elements which are in the common metals are heterogeneous, and must be removed, because they will not amalgamate with it. Those, again, who attempt to prepare our Stone out of non-metallic substances are grievously at fault, and spend their labour in vain.

The artist who would prepare the Stone, must take for his substance neither common quicksilver alone, nor common sulphur alone, nor yet a mixture of common quicksilver and common sulphur, but a substance in which Nature herself, who is the handmaid of Art, has combined quicksilver and sulphur. The two substances of which we speak are really one substance, and are never found apart. They are capable of developing into gold, and this development actually takes place under favourable circumstances. For we see that geographical situation has an influence in either elevating or degrading animal and vegetable forms, we may conclude that the same probably holds good in the case of metals. Local influences may sometimes be favourable to the development of sulphur and quicksilver into gold, or they may cause the process of

development to stop short at one of the imperfect metals. Again, the imperfection of the common metals may be owing to a corrupt state of the surrounding earth, or to an excess of bad sulphur.

### *Chapter VIII.*

#### **Refutation of Some Objections. It is said that Copper and Iron cannot become Gold and Silver. How this is possible. The difficulty solved.**

Many admit that those common metals which are still in a crude and half-digested completed so as to become gold. But, they say it is different with iron and copper, which, through the excessive quality of their digestive heat, have already passed the proper point of temperate digestion, and, therefore, can never be brought back to the intermediate state indicated by gold.

It should, whoever, be observed that there are in all varieties of metal, except gold, two kinds of sulphur, one external and scorching, the other inward and non-combustive, being of the substantial composition of quicksilver. The outward is separable from them; the inward sulphur is not. The outward sulphur, then, is not, in any real sense, united to the quicksilver: hence the quicksilver cannot be really scorched by it. If this be so, it follows that when the quicksilver is purified by the removal of the outward sulphur, it is restored to its original condition, and can be transmuted into gold and silver, whether it be found in tin and lead, or in iron and copper; and we may justly conclude from these considerations that when the Philosopher's Stone is projected upon iron or copper in a liquefied state, it mingles in a moment of time with all the particles of quicksilver existing in them, and with these only, as they alone are of a nature homogeneous with its own, and perfects them into the purest gold, while all particles of external sulphur are purged off, because they are not of a nature homogeneous with that of the Philosopher's Stone. For quicksilver always most readily combines with any substance that is of the same nature with itself, and rejects and casts out everything heterogeneous. It does not matter what are the other constituent parts of a metal; if it be a metal, and contain quicksilver, that quicksilver can be changed into gold by means of the Philosophers' Stone. So we see that, in the case of milk, the coagulum clots only those parts of the milk which are of a nature homogeneous with its own. The scorching to which our objectors refer, has taken place only in the sulphur of iron and copper; the quicksilver is not at all affected by this adverse influence, as any experimental chemist will tell you. If we burn or coagulate quicksilver with sulphur, and make from their sublimation what is called uzifur (that is, cinnabar from sulphur and mercury), after the magistry of sublimation, we may separate the substance of the quicksilver from the uzifer, pure and clean, which shews that the quicksilver did not undergo combustion, but the sulphur only. It is the same in the cases of iron and copper, and in this manner the difficulty is settled.

*This is the end of our Golden Investigation, extracted from the world of Bonus of Ferrara by Janus Therapus Lacinius, the Calabrian Minorite friar.*

# **An Explanation of the Natural Philosopher's Tincture, of Theophrastus Paracelsus**

**by Alexander von Suchten**  
**Doctor of Philosophy and Medicine**

The ancient teacher Hieronymus says that it was formerly ordained among the Jews that no one under the age of 30 years might read the first Chapter of Genesis. Be this true or not, it is certainly not the custom among the Jews at the present time. Yet it is undeniable that man by a right contemplation and understanding of this Chapter, may gain a knowledge of many Arcana and secrets of creation. Not to mention other things, this Chapter is especially suitable to our Chemical Art. Indeed, of all books concerning the Theory and Practice of the Philosopher's Stone, I know not of one which, from beginning to end, could more plainly and graphically describe our Art, than the Almighty Himself has done in that whole process of His great Creation. Since, however, Theophrastus diligently, and above all others, in his book, *Tinctura Physicorum*, followed in the way prescribed by God, and in the aforesaid book has sufficiently described both the matter and Practice --- or handiwork --- both of the Ancient Philosophers as well as of his own new corrected opinion, I will in this place substitute no other practice, but simply give a short Guide for better understanding of his book in order that beginners in this Art (I write not for the learned) may, by diligent study, and God's Grace, attain to, not alone an understanding of the above Theoretical Firmament, but also the necessary manual skill in this Art from beginning to end.

Theophrastus, in describing this our philosophical work and creation (which is nothing other than a small world, since in it appear the participation and similitude of all things), follows the same method as Moses in describing the creation of the Great World. For, before Moses treats of the matter, he enumerates the three principles which indistinctly lay therein, but which, by God, were distinctly developed from the same. So also does Theophrastus, for, before giving the matter of his work, he indicates that, although it is one thing, three things lie hidden in it. These must, by fire or water, be extracted, and again be united into one being and substance, according to Christ's saying: "He who knoweth not to extract many things from one thing, the same knoweth also not to make one out of many". Now, Theophrastus says: "The matter of the Tincture is One Thing that, by fire, has been extracted out of three". This is to be understood as the general consensus of all philosophers. What Theophrastus here affirms, Geber also substantiates. There is one Stone, one Medicine, to "which we neither add, nor take from it, anything".

Bernhardus says: "There is a single root from which the two Mercurial Substances and our whole work are extracted or made".

Morienus says: "The first and principal substance of this thing is one, and out of it is one thing".

Agadmon, in the Turba, testifies also: "Therefore dismiss all plurality, for Nature is content with one thing", etc.

Hermes, a father of all philosophers, also says in his Tabula: "Even as all things have been born from one, by the mediation of One, so also all things have been born from this one thing, by adaptation".

Hercules especially agrees with Theophrastus, saying: "This Magisterium proceeds from one root, which afterwards is expanded into several things, returning again to one". (See *Pandor.*, fol. 8,706.).

From all of which the Truth and foundation of this Art is apparent, for Truth is where there appears no contradiction.

Therefore also can false Alchemists be easily detected in this one point alone.

And since God Almighty Himself has created the whole great World, all Celestial, Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral Natures from one single thing and primeval root, how should Man be wiser than God, and for this work --- which, not less than the Great Outer World, contains within itself the seed and qualities of all creatures --- use more than one thing.

For the said Art --- according to the testimony of Gerrariensis, Chap. 22 --- should imitate Nature. The matter of Art will be the matter of Nature and, since the matter of nature is unique, viz., the origin and matter of metals, therefore, also, the matter of Art will be unique. The Book of Genesis relates that this primary matter was of a moist nature, or water, for, when diligently reading the text, although the three principles are first enumerated, viz., Heaven, Earth, and the Spirit of God; yet there soon follows the matter out of which God created Heaven, viz., water, which God took and divided into two parts of pieces, as you will hear. Hermes, or Mercurius Trismegistus, although an Egyptian priest, without enlightenment from God, may yet have derived great wisdom from writings perhaps left behind by Moses after Exodus. Hermes names not alone the matter from which all elements are drawn, a moist nature, but alludes pointedly to the division. (*Pymander*, Chap. I.). This Word (Spirit), moving over humid nature, cherished it. But ardent and light fire straightway flew out from the bowels of humid nature; also light, air, obedient to the Spirit, took the middle place between fire and water. Earth and water lay mixed with each other, so that the face of the earth might nowhere appear, being drowned by the waters. Then these two were separated by the Spiritual Word”.

Also Plato: “Water is the principle of the universe. For, from water are all things produced, and into water all reduced”. Hermes calls water the principle of all things. Theophrastus is herein of the same opinion, except that he does not expressly call matter water or moist nature. But he says it is composed of three substances, calling them here an Eagle, a Lion, and a Golden Glitter.

In *Liber Metamorphoseos* he terms them: Mercury, Salt, and Sulphur. That is just the opinion of Hermes and other philosophers, speaking of Spirit, Body, and Soul. (See *Key of Chemical Philosophy*, by Dornaeus, fol. 411). How, now, these three can, by the artist, by means of Vulcan’s art, be extracted and freed from their prison, and again be united, will follow later. Remember, for the present, that he calls the one thing, from which shall be born the great and also the little world, a Red Lion. Had he desired to indicate it more plainly, he would have called it a moist nature, or water. He does this to prevent the unworthy from sharing this secret with the worthy. Other philosophers have exercised the same caution. For it is written, “This stone is hidden both from men and from demons”. But it is called a Lion on account of its great strength and power. For as a Lion is the strongest and fleetest animal, mastering the other animals, and therefore compared to a king of beasts --- so also, amongst things created, there will not easily be found a fleeter, stronger, more penetrating thing, subjugating, occupying, overcoming, and ruling, without exception, man and others.

Hermes confirms such swift strength, saying: “This matter is the strongest strength of all strength”. This is also experienced by those who know this Lion, and by proper preparation have been instructed how to use

it upon other creatures. Then one sees after what manner this thing occupys, conquers, destroys, kills all things, even changing them from one form into another, nothing being exempted from its rule or untterrified by its roars. Hence by philosophers it is named the Animated Thing. Hermes says: "Behold, it conquers every subtle, and penetrates every solid, substance!". For this reason Dionysius Zacharias calls it a Governor, and Bernhardus a King. For there is nothing that can bear so much rain, wind, work, heat, or cold, while it can be conquered or killed by nothing --- except it be by water --- as those know who have had such monsters in their keeping. Therefore it may be rightly named a strong Lion, by reason of the temperate conjunction of the Elements. For those Elements are separated and purified, and alternately married in a suitable manner, there being generated from them a Tempered Substance, which the Violence of Fire cannot separate, nor earth's corruption vitiate, nor the muddiness of Water condemn, nor the contact of Air cloud. In order that one should not imagine such Lion to be a strange, rare thing, he, Bernhardus says: "This Lion is named by many but known by few". And it is true that it is at the present day carried about by all sorts of men in their mouths, although few, yea, only those whose eyes God has opened to Nature's virtues and powers, can recognize and use it. Yet in its substance, nature, and matter it is so common, often-used a thing that Bernhardus says: "The whole world have it before their eyes". Morienus asserts it to be so universal that Man could not live without it. Verily, "I declare to thee", quoth he to King Calid, "that this Thing by Divine Will has been greatly used in Creation, and nothing made by God can exist without it". Every person knows this thing, and whoso knows it not, he knows nothing else. I should like to see a child of 7 or 8 who is not acquainted with it, and is without a hearty appetite and desire for it immediately he beholds it. This inclination proceeds from man's inner spirit, which well knows that all power to preserve health and long life are hidden in his one thing alone. And, in order that this substance be revealed and made known, he gives you another hint and sign whereby you yourself may recognize it, saying: "Such matter is the Greatest Pearl and Noblest Treasure upon Earth according to God's Revelation and man's desire". These words are literally copied from the Lesser Rosary, which says: "For God has under Heaven created no more precious thing, except the rational mind". Examine one after the other all creatures, you will find among them all no more precious, better, more lovely, or nobler creature created by God. An intelligent man can easily find bottom here by diligently observing the above explanations, together with the Sympathy and Disposition (Diathesis) of God's creation with respect to man's natural life. I will let the above instances and the guiding of Theophrastus suffice, and now refer you to our Author's little Book, *De Viribus Spiritualium*, where he speaks of the Spirit of Life. There you will find that the Spiritis Vitae, or man's life, is itself a celestial, invisible vapour; it is the temperament between the Elements, and is included in the Stars and all Heaven's influences as far as the firmament stretches. Cornelius Agrippa, in Book I, "*Concerning Occult Philosophy*", and the Spirit of the World, teaches how and by what means such Spirit is attracted from the Stars into nether corporeal bodies by their Magnetic Force.

Richard, the Englishman, also teaches the same fully in his *Corrector. Alchy.*, Part V, Chap. 8 and 9: "When you have now found which most abundantly partakes of this Influx and Spirit of life from other, the same you may use for your work, and apply it by right means and preparation, using its Spirit for the strengthening, preservation, and augmentation of you own spirit. This is more than enough concerning the matter".

Now he comes to the preparation, and to the before-mentioned three principles, saying: "That this Lion, by Nature's aid and the artist's art, may be transmuted into the White Eagle, and thus, out of one, two are made".

Here the Author has wished to signify that, in this Art, man must follow the rule left him by God, the First

Chemist. For, God having created all Creatures and Elements out of one thing, viz., Water, it follows that He began by making two things out of the original one thing. The first He has taken up on high, making of it a heavenly water; the other was gathered together below, and by coagulation became Earth. St Peter, II, Chap. 3, briefly mentions these three principles: "By the Word of God the Heavens were of old, and the Earth standing out of the Water and in the Water". Esdras, Book 4, the last chapter, says: "For God hands the Earth over the Waters by His Word".

Thus also in this work the Artist must divide his process into two parts:

(1) By distillation conduct one part on high, making of it a clear, heavenly Spiritual Water, here called a White Eagle. For, as no bird is so keen-sighted, or soars so high as the eagle, so also we know of no water so volatile, so penetrating, as this, for it ascends to the Heavens; and, as the Lion's father and son, penetrates his bone and marrow, as we shall presently shew. Our Eagle is the true key to human renovation, and the bath of new Birth and Rejuvenation, as saith the Psalmist: "Like the Eagle shall thou renew thy youth". It is a white transparent Water of heavenly colour, according to Alanus and Bernhardus, and hence is by many called Heaven (Coelum) by reason of its lofty qualities.

This Eagle is the first part of the water which ascends on high, the Ascendens of Hermes mentioned in his Tabula.

Esdras, Book 4, calls it: "The Spirit of the Firmament". Other philosophers term it Water, Spirit, or Soul of the World, the Middle Nature which is a quasi-body and quasi-not-soul, and quasi-soul and quasi-not body. It is the ligament and vinculum of all Elements --- also, the one universal, generative Nature, dispersed through all the parts of the world".

And, since it has its center in the Supreme Circle (as being very light), whence also it came in the First Universal Generation of things, so when freed it ascends towards Heaven to its Centre. Above it has been called Humor Lunae, or the Humid Radical of all Creatures.

Compare Aurelius Augurellus, Book I, "*To the Lion*", 10.

For this (Anima Mundi) is diffused everywhere,

And everywhere is active;

In the winds of heaven, in the earth, and the bosom of the wide waters.

They enclose the Soul, by which all things of earth do live. Thence the world itself derives its life. But, since the Sol is trammled by no body, and the world, and all parts thereof, are in material form; therefore, between these two the Spirit is the intermediary, which is neither body, nor Soul, sharing in both these natures.

Therefore in this live and increase Sea, Air, and Fire. This, embracing all things. Is always the Bird (Eagle), always the root, ever bringing forth and perpetuating life.

At length, imprisoned in yellow gold, itself seeks the hand of the artificer, who may loose its bonds, and, by

its virtue, become powerful.

(2) The other part of the water --- or of our Lion --- according to the teaching of Moses, became corrupted and dry. That is now the second part of our Art, viz., the investigation of the substance of the Lion, when the aforesaid Eagle has been hatched out from his body, by warmth, as from an egg, and has flown away. To speak plainly concerning it, it is the dry, waste earth, and the cursed earth in Gen. V. It has its first name of Lion by reason of its aforesaid strength and sharpness. For, as a lion has sharp teeth, biting through that which he seizes, so also is this earth so sharp as to be unbearable on the tongue because of its penetrating nature. It cannot be touched without offence so the tongue, as saith the philosopher. Elsewhere Theophrastus calls it “An invisible, consuming fire”.

Bernhardus retains its name of King, and says: “Although Fontin, the aforesaid Eagle, is the King’s Mother, yet is the King nobler than Fontin”. For, although he always retains the name of Lion, yet is he changed from his first nature, is no longer a virgin, but has been fructified by the Spirit brooding over the water --- his original first substance --- and has borne a heavenly, spiritual fruit, viz., the aforesaid Eagle. Hence these verses:

A virgin, not one day old,  
By Nature’s decree espoused a man,  
And, before she had reached the age of one year,  
To this man a child she bore,  
Yet she died before she was born.

And in The Song of Solomon, Chap. VIII, “I raised thee up under the apple tree, there thy mother brought thee forth; there she brought thee forth that bare thee”.

Hermes calls the inferior substance gross or descending. For, being heavy, it has, and seeks, its center in the lowest circle, as it were, subject to the superior heaven and its influx, or the Soul of Middle nature, or Mundane Spirit. Above it has been called by its right name of Solar and Natural Heat of all corporal and natural things.

Now, as to the third principle, viz., the Spirit brooding, etc. It is, according to Theophrastus the Glitter of Gold. For this Earth is but the real fine Gold, left imperfect by Nature, to be perfected by Art, as Ferrariensis says (Chap. 64): “The terrestrial parts are nothing else than the occult gold of philosophers”.

Other sages define it as “The Soul of the World, whose colour is golden”. Now, since in the first Universal Creation, the third principle, the Spirit of God, has never been separated from the other two, but the two have remained in one as the Spirit above, and in the water, so also is it in our microcosmic, particularistic, and philosophical Creation. We cannot obtain this third principle, this golden flitter, this beautiful gold-red colour, separate by itself. “It shines not to the Spagyryus”, saith Theophrastus, i.e., it conceals itself and is lost when one is made into two. What, then, becomes of it? According to Gen. Chap. 1, and the opinion of philosophers, it remains with the aforesaid water, and since that water ascends towards heaven, this Golden Glitter must accompany it in its center. Theophrastus, however, considers that it remains with the earth, perhaps on account of the Old Testament saying that the Soul is in the Blood, wherefore the Israelites were forbidden to eat it.



Now, it should be noted this Golden Glitter, as the third principle, is often called the Soul, and cannot be produced other than as a red, thick, stagnant blood --- sometimes called the Lion's Blood by our author --- and Theophrastus ascribes it to that body which, in the first distillation, goes not over out of the retort (crucible). For herein, say Alchemists, is the whole art, that the gold go out of the retort. And this is true did they but understand the Gold and its Glitter aright. How the glittering spiritual Soul of this third principle --- when duly extracted from the Lion's body --- hovers above the water, and there yet remain two in one, you will hear afterwards. For the soul cannot exist, out of its center, as an impalpable, invisible entity without a body. "For a spirit is neither visible nor palpable, except it hath assumed a body from some Element. Hence this spirit --- by reason of its noble nature --- receives a Body in the highest and noblest Sphere of the Elements, viz., in the Igneous Sphere. Yet, in the fire, this spirit loses not its nature, neither is it Fire, nor of an igneous nature; although it dwells in Fire, and by many is called Fire of Nature".

Aurelius Augurellus hath these words in his second book: "But another elicits these various hidden parts from pure Blood, and has ordained the Elements to lead them forth;

"That thus these occult spirits might perchance be seen or touched with the hands, or enclosed in a vessel.

"For otherwise they would straightway penetrate the vessel, although imprisoned in hard atrament.

"By violence can no Spirit be forced to remain in any part of the Vast Orb, so greatly does it rejoice to dwell quietly in its own habitation:.

Such external Body is the Lion, or dry earth, which retains its redness, its outward aspect, its stagnant blood, which has no exit, the body being not yet open --- as one sees in those hanged or suffocated, who stifle in their blood --- as the Book of the Trinity relates in Figures. Raymundus Lullius says briefly, in *Testamentum Novissimum*, thus: "My son, Quicksilver is water distilled from its earth, and similarly earth is Animated Quicksilver, while the Anima (Soul) is Natural Heat which is bound in the primary Essence of the Elements of Animated Mercury.

Now that this jewel has been presented to you through the Faculty of Philosophy, you have a short guide to the teaching of Theophrastus. Having taken the right philosophical matter, you are now to extract from it two things contained therein, viz., the Eagle (Mercury), and then the Body (the Salt), which, as Everlasting Balsam, contains also the third thing, the Spiritual Soul, the Golden Glitter, or true gold seed. These you shall extract according to the counsel given in Ovid by Medea to Old Jason, who would become young again, viz., that he --- by Anatomy --- should divide his limbs, and, reuniting them in a warm bath, he should become younger and of great strength.

But that you may apply the theory, and learn the modus operandi whereby from Unity, two things, and from two, three are obtained. Theophrastus comes to the Practice. "It is the mark of a wise man first to know the causes before putting his hand to the task". Theophrastus shews you two ways --- one Ancient, the other discovered and used by himself --- saying the Ancients had a very long way "before accomplishing the aforesaid separations and achieving their object". In the beginning they, out of a Simplex --- or also out of a Subjectivum like God Himself --- and also Theophrastus, have made two things, viz., Water and Earth". And he continues to say: "that Artists have to these two Simplices given the name Lili --- afterwards using the said Simplices and not one". But know it is indifferent whether you, in the beginning, use one or two things. If our matter is found in one thing, it will equally well be found in two (Nature

having already converted the original One into Two). Such simplicity of the subject Ferrariensis describes well, Chapter 12: “The first radical Element, whence all the Elements derive their origin, is Humidity, or Water, i.e., liquefaction”. Or, according to others, it is the earth.

Shortly after he says: “For the Beginning of the World there is One Sole Element, which is Primary Matter, from the Division of which, by reason of opposing qualities, were generated the four Elements, which were in it potentially”.

Aurelius Augurellus, Book II, says:

“Besides within there is ordained a double force,  
Which always acts and suffers,  
As a female and male when together ---  
Even as a chicken grows in the shell,  
By the action of the one and the suffering of the other in turn,  
And by cherishing heat externally applied”.

If you begin with one thing you must first make two of it. But, by taking two, such as Earth and Water --- Nature having educed this Binary from one --- you are saved the trouble, and have only to generate the third, which, as aforesaid, is always hidden in one of these two. Thus Lion’s Blood is the Bride around whom they dance, viz., the natural red Sulphur or Seed of Gold, ordained by God and nature to bear its like. But, being mixed and bound up too much with earth and superfluities, it cannot perform its office, except it be freed by one of Vulcan’s smiths from all bolts and bands of its natural prison. Therefore have both the Ancient Sages and Theophrastus taken great pains to liberate these Captive Souls from their Eternal Darkness by the Descent to Hell of our Heavenly Eagle --- according to Isaias: Those in darkness and the shadow of death see a great light. Thus have the Ancients united the two things, and, after a month’s putrefaction, extracted the spirit, that is, the water, with gentle fire by distillation. For this water will not stand a great fire, and if vexed with the same it becomes impatient, angry, and wrath to such an extent that it “knocks all of a heap”, as Bernhardus says, the residual matter they treated with strong water until the same went over as a dry spirit. Compare Solomon’s Song, II. C.: “Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?”.

Now, this dry spirit is the substance or body of the Lion himself, the sharp earth, the old, miserly, jealous man, who breaks not willingly into the treasury, or likes to give up his golden-yellow oil, and only by force will let his palace be plundered. It is called a dry spirit by reason of the quantity of dominating fire therein, which is none other than the true philosophical Sulphur, as Bernhardus relates in the *Book Concerning the Transmutation of Metals*. But sulphur is none other than the pure action of Air and Fire, heating and digesting, or decocting, Earth and Water proportionately and homogeneously to themselves. Richardus, the Englishman, also says: “Philosophers’ Sulphur is a simple, living Fire, vivifying and maturing, and nothing but a hot and dry vapour generated from the purest terrestrial dryness in which Fire rules in every way”.

Now, since all the oil or spirit does not go over at once --- in order that none of this gold seed or potable gold as the Lion’s greatest treasure might remain behind --- they moistened the corpus mortuum (residuum) with spirits and, after a month’s putrefaction, again distilled over as at first, thus obtaining more of the oil. This moistening, putrefying, and distilling they repeated until the earth was wholly dissolved, and had given up its entire treasure, all the gold having distilled over and become a Mercury, i.e., Water, which has its

coagulation or its sulphur in its depths, as Geber says: "Our Mercury has in its depths fixed Sulphur, and nothing sinks in it except Gold". Dionysius well describes this process in this Practice: "After the Governor of the Firetown (oven, furnace) had retreated, his remaining warriors had long fought the enemy with fire, until they escaped the said enemy by retreating over the water and bridges which they had thrown up behind themselves".

That is the same thing that Aeneas did with the tree bearing golden branches. As often as he broke a branch off two grew in its place. Those are the lovely golden-yellow drops falling from the beak of the retort into the receiving vessel, one dripping down after the other, until the Lion has lost his whole heart, blood and strength. For that is the true Lion of Judah, sent by God to deliver His Peoples from their enemies and sins, in pain and torture to shed His Blood for them. The wound in His Side, whence flowing two long streams of Blood and Water, shall be a Fount of Purification to all those drinking therefrom. In these shall such water become the spring of a long, healthy life.

Bernhardus goes on to relate that the Ancients --- having got so far that nothing further distilled over from the earth --- they again purified the water and oil, removing all remaining bonds, until they at length reached the Pure Fount, and the true, beautiful, golden leaves of the Golden Book. Here are our Adam and Eve naked, for their eyes are opened, and now they see themselves, what was good and bad in their own substance. This is the Rectification whereby they cleansed these two of the accidental impurities of the first Distillation (for the unclean Spirits guarding the treasure in the earth love not to leave the same). This is the first process of our Philosophical Birth, the Returning into the Mother's Womb, whereby the Rule of God is followed, and the first precepts of chemists are fulfilled, viz., the Reduction into Primary Matter, into the Three Natural Principles, i.e., Animated Spirit, Mercury, and Sulphureous Vapour of Earth. Thereby are separated the Elements and the Pure from the Impure, and, finally, the Seeds of Gold are brought from the Darkness to Light, which is nothing less than the Generation of Nature in the Generation of Metals, and The Process with Double Smoke of Paracelsus. But the above method entailed heavy expenses and much time and labour, all of which the Ancient Sages could have avoided, and obtained the Lion's treasure by a shorter cut, had they enquired into the matter as diligently as Theophrastus.

Now, I wot there is no one who would not wish to know this shorter method; and that you may not have to complain of Theophrastus, he shews you another short way, admonishing you also to let the above tedious process be, and to take from the Lion nought but his rosy blood, and from the Eagle the white gluten. These two bodies you must coagulate together and bring into one body, as it were male and female seed.

Now, someone might object thus. Dear Theophrastus, that is the old story which I have heard long ago. The Ancients took nothing more than the Lion's blood and water, and coagulated them. Yet you tell me the same is a brief way to obtain the aforesaid two Mercurial Substances, with little labour and in a short time.

Well, that is true so far. Theophrastus is not so clear here as he might be. But you may easily imagine what the mode of preparation must be if you have diligently studied Theophrastus's other books and preparations, and are otherwise experienced in Chemical labours. You will then find that Chemistry, in the preparation of all arcana (secrets), has two methods, viz., Distillation and Extraction. Whatsoever is to be prepared by Chemistry and brought into its Arcanum, its Tincture, or Quintessence (in which is the power and virtue of all creatures), or is to be cleansed from impeding impurities, that must be done by Distillation or Extraction (which is the same as Solution). There is no other means. As Bernhardus says: "The King never goes forth except the Fountain attract him".

Now, having already heard that he rejects the tedious process of much distillation and purification by reason of its expense, etc., you perceive that he must have used the only other means, viz., Extraction by Solution.

According to Calid, son of Jazichus: "Solution is the Extraction of the Interior of Things to their Superficies, so that the hidden become manifest". Hence his (Theo.'s) meaning is this: When you of one thing have made two --- or have taken two things differently constituted by Nature --- let the old process alone; take from the Lion his blood only --- i.e., cut out his heart with his own sharp spear --- or as Bernhardus says: "Slay the King with his own sharp, poisonous Mercurial Water". In plain words: Extract but from the earth its Tincture or Arcanum, and the blood, the sunshine, the dry spirit immediately all distills over. By such extraction or solution more will be done in a few hours than the Ancient Sages could effect in six months. By the above process the whole work may be completed in ten or twelve months, in which time the Ancients could barely achieve the first step --- i.e., Reduction into Primary Matter --- as all those know whom God has enlightened, and thought worthy you know this Solution and Extraction.

But misunderstand me not! I speak here, not of the second solution of the earth, but of the first solution of the crude body.

How this solution and extraction is effected it behooves not to tell here more plainly --- as our author says -- - not to put the food right into the bad birds' beaks. As the saying is: He who would reach the open sea must first pass through the narrow straits. That is the blessed place of which Esdras writes (Bk. IV, Chap. 2): The path to it is narrow, so that but one man can walk on the same. On one side is Fire, on the other Water. He who would inherit or possess these good things must first undergo much trouble and danger until he finds the narrow footpath between Fire and Water, and pass over. Now, having revealed this to you indirectly as far as may be, I would refer you to other philosophers. Remember Geber's rule: "That no Solution should be made, except in its own blood, and that calcined things are more soluble than non-calcined. For, by calcinations, they are reduced to the natures of Slats and Alums, which alone are soluble". If you are a true searcher after knowledge, the above will tell you more than too much.

Compare Aurelius Augurell., Book 3: "First, taking thin plates and filings of pure gold,

"Thou shalt crush and pound them into the form of fine powder, or river sand, with frequent blows:

"Until, at length, they become liquid, dissolved by putrid humour from within themselves.

"It will be well here sometimes to pour in large quantities of liquor of their own seed, but by no chance anything foreign".

This is also the aforesaid short process of Theophrastus, whereby you, in a short time, and with little trouble and expense, may find the two said things (of which one is the Father, or Sun, or Red Water, and the other the Mother, or Moon, or White Water) which are necessary for the perpetration of the miracle of the One Thing, and for which good counsel you owe Theophrastus many thanks. Thus, by God's help, is effected the first step of this process, which is done by the hand through Sublimation and Purification. By this the fleshly, corporeal Adam is killed, and Body, Soul, and Spirit, by the natural death, are separated from one another.

## **Second Operation: Conjunction ~**

Now follows the second operation, in which are brought about, by rest and without labour, the fixation and stability of those things which are sublimated and purified. This is the Resurrection from the Dead, in which Soul, Body, and Spirit, after Purification, come together again; and --- on our philosophical Last Day --- will arise as a new glorified body and a new spiritual man without blemish and sin. In this conjunction of Resurrection are comprised the whole spiritual body and the soul, and thus form One --- even as water mixed with water --- and are not separated in all Eternity. For in them is no diversity, yea, a Unity and Identity of all three substances, Spirit, Soul, and Body.

Even so it is plain concerning the Identity and Unity of the trinity in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which in the Deity are One and the Same, with distinction and diversity in substance.

The aforesaid process would have been no use to the Ancients, or to Theophrastus, had they not known how to bring to fruition, in its due season, the seed thus obtained. But, in order successfully to effect this, they had again to learn from Nature, and more especially from God as a Preceptor, in Genesis, Chap. 2, for there it is written thus: Although God had caused the earth bring forth all kinds of grass, herbs and trees, yet they could produce no fruit or propagate and increase their kind, until God had first let rain again upon the earth, the water first separated and taken up to heaven by Himself. And daily experience teaches us that the earth, when dry, is barren, and that nothing can grow unless frequently refreshed by rain and dew. Hence God has again united the water --- which He, as the first Distiller, took up on high --- with the dry earth, the Inferior with the Superior. The Ancients, following this rule, have often united white water with the Red Lion's Blood, as with the Earth (for, coagulated, such blood is earth), according to the teaching of Hermes: "It ascends from the earth into heaven, and again descends to earth, and receives the strength of inferior and superior things". And elsewhere: "Red Sun is father, White Moon is mother; join them together in one life and disposition". Morienus: Make the Red Smoke hold the White Smoke in a strong embrace and in a strong vessel, without exhalation of spirits".

Theophrastus also means that, when you have obtained the two things by the short method, viz., the rosy blood and the Eagle's white gluten, you shall thereto add nothing foreign. Compare Solomon's Cong, chapter 1:7: "Tell me, I thou whom my soul loveth, where thou makest the flock to rest at noon, for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?". Take these two things alone, and of them again produce Unity --- of two Mercurial Substances make one --- like body and soul. Of two waters make one by coagulation. For Quicksilver, or our Mercury, is not coagulated by the coagulation caused by extrinsic mixture (except for corruption); but the same is, by its intrinsic Sulphur, coagulated to perfection. This is the Union of Heaven and Earth, the marriage of Adam and Eve, the Conjunction of Sun and Moon, the right Union of the World's Soul and Spirit with the Earth by the Union of their Centres, as Calid says: "Of all experiments there is none equal to that of conjoining two or more things whose centres are diverse, unless it be the conversion of their matter, and the mutation of their substance and properties from their original nature. Therefore, he who shall be able to change Soul into Body and Body into Soul, and to mix with the same subtle spirits, shall attain all things".

Compare Aurel. Augurellius, Book III: "Perchance here thou mayest seek the numbers and the weight of the things required by the for perfecting this work.

"Remember, therefore, there are of Things Primordial but Three.

From these take two; and from these again --- if thou judge rightly – one more.

The Triple Thing will then consist of Gold alone.

The decocted substances will form one homogenous mass.

For, joined together, they differ among themselves in nothing.

Each ingredient fuses its mass with that of the others”.

By this influx our earth is made fruitful, producing in due time all kinds of animal, vegetable, and mineral natures. This is the warm bath in the beginning of may of Bernhardus, expressed of old in the following figure of speech: “The Water of the Air between Heaven and Earth is of all things the Life. For, by its moisture and warmth, it is the medium between water and fire. The Heavens opening rained and dewed these Waters upon the Earth, rendering it moist and sweet as honey. Wherefore also the Earth blossoms, bringing forth divers colours and fruits; and, in the midst, there has grown up a great tree, with silver stem, stretching to the ends of the world; on its branches have sat many birds which have all flown away towards the East; and the raven’s head has become white”. All the above means but the spiritual generation and new birth of our Adam, through Water and the Spirit, for the same, in its former nature and earthly tabernacle, could not enter the Kingdom of heaven. Our old Adam must first put on its original pure nature, and thus, born again through spiritual water, and changed into a spiritual man, may, through much tribulation, enter the Promised Land.

### **Coagulation and Imbibition ~**

But how can such things be?, asks the learned and wise Nicodemus. Art thou a Master in Israel, taking upon thyself the highest works in Physics, and knowest not that? Well, Theophrastus tells it to you plainly in Chap. 3, viz., that it is done through the Pelican (for this is the grave in which shall rest our deceased Adam until his resurrection), even unto the third and fourth time, until the whole Lili, both matters, earth, and water, are dry on the ground. The words, “for the third and fourth time”, are to be interpreted as indicating the frequent rainfall necessary for fruition.

The ancient philosophers in their Small World, following Nature’s example, have been wont to divide the white water (which they first produced from their matter) into two or more parts. The first portion they quickly coagulated with the Lion’s Blood, by circulation in the Pelican, according to the formula: “Nature knows Nature, Nature rejoices in Nature, Nature receives Nature, and yet there is but one Nature, One Genus, One Substance, and One Essence”. Song of Solomon, Chap. 3:4 --- “But I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother’s house, into my mother’s chamber”. To this coagulated, dry earth they have added the other portion of the water, moistening and drying by heat three or four times, until the earth has again received into itself the whole of its white water, and thus the whole Lili has become a dry body, Thus the ancients augmented the stone for fixation in the very beginning. Bernhardus says: “The king’s bath may be repeated. For the more frequently he be bated in such saline, Mercurial water, or sulphureous baths, the purer and stronger does he become. It is optional to do this three or four times in the beginning with coagulation, or only once. By frequent moistening you will get more fruit, also the further advantage (by augmenting in the beginning) of not having to do so at the finish”.

For the highest degree of purification, wash seven times in Jordan, and you will have many cwts. of water as your reward. Compare Solomon’s Song, Chap. 1: “Draw me, and we will run after thee; the King hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee”.

For our multiplication (according to Raymundus) is nought but the reiteration of the process of our primordial creation. So also Bernhardus, in his book Concerning the Transmutation of Metals: “As in this process nothing extraneous enters into its first composition, so also the same multiplies nothing that is not if its first composition” But since all generations and corruptions in nature are caused by heat; and, especially since Nature, in the bringing forth of metals and earths, has no other instrument but a steady, gentle heat, therefore, also, all imitators of this art have be obliged to follow Nature. The steady warmth of the sun ripens every fruit, and the warmer the sun (yet not too dry and alternating with due rains), the better do fruits mature and turn out.

Hence the ancient sages have ever matured this our philosophical Seed by the heat of a sun shining steadily upon our earth and water, in which the other two are included, for “the virtue of fire and air cannot become apparent except in earth and water, virtue only acting through matter”. And, as the great world’s sun in summer gets hotter and hotter, until it has reached its highest ascension in the Zodiac, so also have all artists always augmented their “little Summer” in temperature until the matter, having been duly boiled and simmered, from black (through various changes of colour) became blood-red. We can assist our matter by heat alone. Hermes says: “Fire is the Regimen”. And Bernhardus also states: “That no one goes with the King to the bath but the stoker, whose sole duty it is to keep up the heat, and that his work is easily inflammable”. Ferrarianus is of the same opinion: “The whole strength lies in the fire. By this we discern and unravel the four Elements in that gross mass. By this we further join and combine things into one. By this we imitate the Sun, and perfect the imperfect”. In such warmth it attains maturity, ordained but never completed by Nature. For (quoth Theophrastus) Nature brings nothing complete to Light, but man, by spagyric preparation, must lead up to that ordained of Nature. Hence it is said: “Where Nature ends, there Art begins”. And: “Through God was our Philosophical Stone by Nature created, and to the same there is nothing wanting but purification and perfection”.

It also learns to fight with the fire, so that the same --- however great --- may gain no advantage over it. Compare Farrianus: “It rejoices in its own fire, just as anything, Vegetable, Animal, or Mineral, is better preserved in the place of its generation than elsewhere”.

### **The Foundation of Art ~**

The contents and foundation of this Art consist in dissolving gold and silver by the right means --- with water, or drying with fire of the volatile Philosopher’s mercury --- until the same be changed into a powder which cannot be again reduced to a solid body. This powder --- if it smokes not when laid on the fire --- tinges every imperfect body and mercury with a lasting gold or silver colour. The gold colours not except it be first changed by the white gold --- i.e., by their Philosopher’s Mercurial Water --- into a black substance they call their earth and caput corvi crow’s head), giving the same many names, which white gold is further changed into a vapour, and is our Fortified Spirit.

*Question* --- Whether in the Antimony of Philosophers or marcasita the Philosophers’ secret is hidden? He white gold is the secret, for out of the antimony of our black earth is extracted the highest arcanum of Philosophers, which is in effect a ruby liquor, sweet, and red as blood.

The Salt of Metals is the Philosopher’s Stone. Hence make salt of the metals without corrosives.

“Adam”, said God, “in fixed and not fixed, in these two lie hidden all Secrets: Thou art the Lesser World”.

Abel has written, that his father Adam gave names to all things.

Noah praises the oilstone (soapstone?) saying there is no stone possessing greater virtues.

Attain, therefore, in time a spiritual earth, not fleeing from fire: Because, among all elements the earth alone is fixed, and the Art of Alchemy wished that its Stone be fixed. Hence it is necessary that at the end of the operation all things should return to earth, i.e., fixation. Hermes' dictum is true: Its strength is integral, if poured into the earth. In such coction or digestion divers colours are to be seen, not less than in Great Nature in the earth.

For when the wet winter is passed, when the sun shines again, and the earth, during winter covered with water and snow, becomes dry, all manner of curious colours are seen, especially thee, viz., black, white, and red. Between these appear divers colours, as a yellowish colour after the virginal white or red; but this is not permanent. The other yellow remains longer, yet not so long as the black, white, or red. Crauser says, in *Turba*: “Know that it is a twofold thing to make white and red; the one thing is solution, the other decoction”. The former takes place in winter, when the earth is covered with snow and water, a certain indication of Putrefaction, a sign of commixture and of the changing of one thing into another, and is the colour of death. Solomon's Song: “I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me!”.

The time of its duration is unequal. In the Bible one finds that the waters of the Flood lasted 156 days.

Bernhardus says: “In 130 days the King puts off his blackness, and appears in his white shirt”. Scala Phil. gives 140 days for such putrefaction. Vide *Pandor.*, fol 36. After these follow the other perfect colours, as the white of complete coagulation. Thus, putrefaction takes place in humidity, but the end of putrefaction is dryness; and inceration is a gentle induration, the occultation of humour, the fixation of spirit, the collecting of things diverse, the Renovation of Homogeneity, the adaptation to fire of things fleeing therefrom, and is the colour of regeneration and of semi-coction. It lasts also a long time --- according to Bernhardus almost 82 days --- which is a sign of fixation according to the Dictum of Lucas in the *Turba*: “When our Magnesia is white it lets not the spirit go from it”. Theophrastus sets no limit of time to such colours, as, in truth, none can be set, for it depends on the matter.

Compare Aurel. Augurell., Book III:

“Ye scarcely will anyone so exactly compute the years,  
As not either to diminish or add to their number”

For suitable material will sometimes accelerate the process, and unsuitable retard the same.

Or intense heat will by a little exceed the measure, but water by much.

And time and place will vary”.

The time will vary according as the artist tends his fire diligently or not. For this our work is a true woman's or cook's work. They simmer and boil and roast until the spit is done to a turn; they wash and dry the linen in the sun until it is snow white. Also this white colour is like unto the earth when dry; then the



corn soon gets white also, and is no far from maturity, viz., from the third colour, the yellow. As soon as the same appears in the corn it is cut; the winter is past, the rain over, the flowers have appeared, summer is come, and the turtledove is heard in our land. Thus also is the maturing of our matter, when its yellow colour appears, As regards its metallic nature, and the perfection of the same, we must bring that to a higher grade, says Bernhardus, viz., to its red colour, that it may thus communicate to other imperfect metals some of its superabundant perfection. For this redness is the sign of incorruptibility and complete digestion.

Just so Christ became more than perfect in the highest exaltation of His humanity through His rosy blood, in obedience, in fulfilling and satisfying the Law, and in love towards God, in order to communicate to us, His people, to its fullness, through the Holy Spirit, whereby we might become heirs and sharers of His Kingdom. In this our Elias goes up to Heaven in a storm and seated in a fiery chariot. Now go forth, ye daughters of Jerusalem, and behold King Solomon crowned by his mother on the day of his marriage and of his heart's joy. Every diligent student will now, without further explanation, be able to find these colours. Consult the philosophers concerning the same: Bernhardus, Scala Phil., etc., etc.

Attention must, during such coction, be paid to the proper order of the colours produced, for with them change the qualities of the active agent, demanding a corresponding mutation in the passive reagent. For, in our solution, the water is first active, the earth then attracting the King, but in coagulation it is passive. This change of mode cannot take place without development of divers colours, which is expressed by philosophers thus: "Heat acting on moisture generates blackness, and, acting on dryness, generates whiteness, in which redness is hidden.

Solomon mentions such coction and colours in his Song, Chap. 5:10 --- "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy and black as a raven. His eyes are as doves' eyes by rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings, set with the beryl: is belly is as bright ivory, overlaid with sapphires. His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold". The ancient Sages have also mentioned the same in parables, as when they saw a mist rise in the distance (possibly the mist that watered the whole earth). They saw also the violence of the sea and of the water-floods upon the face of the earth, that the same stank in the darkness (putrefaction). They also beheld the King of the Earth sink, and heard him cry with a terrible voice: He who delivers me shall live forever, and rule in my glory on my royal throne, and all things shall be given into his power (i.e., blackness). On the following day they beheld above the King a most beautiful morning star, and the light of day illumining the darkness (i.e., whiteness), the bright sun rising through brilliant clouds of various forms and colours (i.e., yellowness and redness). Then, in fullness of time, the King was crowned with three costly crowns, of iron, of silver, and of pure gold. In his right hand they saw a scepter with seven glittering stars, and in his left a golden apple, upon which was sitting a white dove, with silvery body and golden wings.

But particularly is the frequent imbibition (moistening) of dry earth with water described and indicated in complete parables --- (Philosophers have given this process of imbibition many other names, such as Exaltation, Fermentation, etc., but they are all one, viz., the subtilization of White and Red, and the augmentation of excellence and quantity). They beheld a man, as black as a Moor, stuck fast in a black stagnant bog, to whose assistance came a young woman, beautiful of countenance, and clad in bright apparel. Her back was adorned with glorious white wings and golden feathers, and on her knees she wore fine pearls. On her head she had a crown of pure gold, set with a silver star, around her neck a necklet of

gold, set with precious stones, and on her feet golden shoes. From her proceeded the most sweet scent, above all aromas. She clothes man with a purple robe, inspires him with highest wisdom, and leads him to heaven. By diligently exercising yourself in suchlike parables, and --- at the same time --- paying attention to the works of Nature in the great generation, you will not only be able to await a plentiful harvest in due course, but will so increase the store of your philosophical oil, or tincture, as to be sort of vessels into which to pour the same; even as the widow of Elisha. Thus shall you be free from debt and feed your house in plenty; for your meal shall not diminish nor your cruse be wanting.

There is nothing said here of the fire whereby this artificial coction takes place. Perhaps it is the everlasting fire, of which many Alchemists boast, the fire used aforetime by the Jews for their burnt offerings, which burnt continually without becoming extinguished, which also was hidden by the Prophet Jeremiah before the first destruction of Jerusalem, and afterwards was discovered by Ezra. The same is said to have been thick and oily, like oil or honey, as Josephus describes it. If you can and will prepare it, good, if not, refer to the Turba, Chrysippus, etc., for they will give you a good account, saying that this fire may be prepared in many ways, always taking care not to let the active principle escape, or, as Bernhardus explains it: Not to let the bath take fire, and flee away like a fugitive eagle, thus causing a dissipation of seed and preventing generation. "For then the Elements will not combine, but will vanish by fire, on account of the strength of the spirit and of the dominating and operating volatile thing; so wilt thou become poor, and lose that which thou hast".

Hence the "triple vase" commonly used by Philosophers. And the "old hollow oak split through the middle", viz., the oaken sphere of Bernhardus, in whose middle is the clear stone, in which stood the bath. All this was done to ward off the too strong rays of the Sun, that our male and female seed might, without hindrance, remain together to the birth: "For the separation of active and passive necessarily prevents generation".

Compare Solomon's Song, Chap. 2: "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye wake not my love till he pleases".

When Theophrastus further speaks of Hungary, Istria, the South, or Cyprus, he gives you to understand in which countries our matter ought to be sought, and he leaves it to you whether you will have two different substances which, as regards their genus, are of one and the same nature. Therefore, seek the one, the Lion, in Hungary; but the Eagle in Istria. But if you rule your work through one thing, thus proceeding from Unity to Duality, and thence to three things, then travel to Cyprus. There you will be refused nothing.

Bernhardus has traveled yet farther, saying that he fetched his man, viz., the chosen jewel, the golden book, from India. Christophorus Parisiensis also went far for the same, and says: "When you quit the town of Venice, go far to the right until you find a pleasant level country: there is our Mercury". Whether in liquid or coagulated form, it is best to obtain it from the above-mentioned places, by reason of its beautiful red colour. Although found also in Germany and other countries --- Theophrastus saying elsewhere that of the perfect Medicine enough is found in Germany --- yet the native article is not so good and strong as the foreign. "For the virtue is dispersed, and less united, therefore less strong. For here masculine and feminine are substantively the same, and in the one subject are combined different and contrary virtues, since our Lion is hermaphrodite".

If you use but one thing, make of the same two, but, lastly, of one of these three. Afterwards for these three

build a tabernacle, and diligently take heed that the sacred Threefoldness be reduced through Duality to Unity, the Author of all consummate perfection. So from our New Earth and New Heaven (the old Earth and heaven having been destroyed by fire, together with their works) you will have a New World, the Holy Place, the New Jerusalem, as a bride for the bridegroom, wherein all tears, lamentation, and sorrow shall be no more, whose gates also are adorned with all manner of precious stones and pearls, the streets are of pure gold like unto a beautiful mirror, and the names of the dwellers therein are all written in the Book of Life.

There all things are new, for the former things have passed away; and, as Hermes briefly says: “Thou shalt have the World’s Glory and all thy desire”.

Finally, as regards the utility of the Medicine thus prepared, the same is sufficiently described in other books. That this medicine is of great use with respect to the health of the human body may easily be gathered from the aforesaid Medicinal Foundation. For this our philosophical Son, a Son of Sun and Moon, which rule the whole world, as a learned Astronomer has traversed all planetary spheres and the whole firmament in his colours. He also is born out of the Adamic clay (which is an extract of the Fifth Essence --- quintessence --- of all creatures and of the whole world), ascending to Heaven and descending thence to Earth, and thus acquiring all power and might both in Heaven and Earth. Hence he is a Lord over all Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral Natures, and can act according to his pleasure, and the same with his influence --- especially on man as the Microcosmus --- if applied to man’s Spirit of Life in an appropriate affinitive Vehicle.

But, as regards his other powers and influence over the metals, a means is necessary whereby to reduce, punish, and humble his rebellious people. Theophrastus here indicates as this means. Our Stone is first to conclude unity and friendship with the same, i.e., they are both to be fused together.

Aurel. Augurellius says likewise, in his third book:

“First mingle a little of the prepared medicament with the yellow metal, and thou wilt presently see the same take to itself the strength of the Blessed Powder.

Or, when thou shalt have collected again, by great and difficult art, the teeming seed from the pure gold, Then quickly mix with it an equal portion of purple powder, And warm the same with gentle heat, simmering for two months; In which space of time thou mayst behold produced the whole series of colours, Which, otherwise, thou hadst marveled to see in three years. As often as thou repeatest the operation again and again, so often shalt thou increase the virtue and quantity of thy powder”.

But he conceals the important point, for this fusion suffices not, if such molten matter be not heated during the proper time in a vessel with philosophical coction. For by this means the operator obtains full power over his Lord the King, thereupon reducing the subjects to obedience, as related by Dionysius Zacharius, a knack unknown to many operators, who have consequently not known how to set about the projection. For, although our Stone of itself colours, yet, according to Theophrastus, it does this less than when the Medium of Incorporation and Ingression of the Stone --- i.e., Fermentation --- is added.

Different philosophers have used different Media, each according to his own opinion. Farreanus, Berhardus, Roger Bacon, etc., etc., having some applied augmentation by means of repeated solution,

others by fermentation. Use which you will; either will lead to the desired result. (Vide *Pandor.*, Fol. 252). But here I call a Ferment a Stone already complete in its elements in comparison with the metals; Even as the ferment of dough overcomes the dough, converting it into itself, so also this stone converts metals into itself, just as dough is changed and converted by its ferment, because it derives its origin its ferment, because it derives its origin from the same, and not from anything foreign. Thus, also, the Ferment of metals is of their own substance, changing into itself. And since metals are generated from mercury and Sulphur, therefore, also, this ferment is generated from them; and because this our Ferment is of the form, nature, and digestion of gold, therefore, it will reduce metals to the nature and digestion of gold. For the form of individuals of the same species is one alone.

As regards its third use, our Stone matures all immature precious stones, and brings tem to their highest perfection. For this I refer you to others, being of opinion that such great gifts are given by God to man more to assist his neighborhood by works of charity than to enrich himself. Would that man recognized the resources of Nature and God's wonderful wisdom in the implanting of such powers in His creation! Then, by means of this Igneous Sulphur or Lion's Blood, or Philosopher's Stone, he might attain the highest Rubinical Gradation of all Jewels, as well as the White Eagle, making large pearls of small ones; and finally, might perform all philosophical works by the processes Theophrastus describes as digesting or putrefying sublimating or distilling, calcining, extracting, fermenting, etc., These are the steps by which you may attain to wisdom and to Solomon's throne, on the right hand of which are found long life and the tree of life, and on the left, riches and honour. That is, says Theophrastus, the object of our art, viz., long life and the honourable maintenance of the same in this vale of tears.

Now will I briefly recapitulate to you the whole process: Take first thy golden Man, thy red Adamic earth. For this earth is the middle nature between Mercury and metals, and the third composed of the same principles, Quicksilver and Sulphur. By noiseless metallic liquefaction of this earth the matter of its metallic ore acquires, virtues, and properties of the aforesaid principles, so that from it may be generated each and every metal, according to diversity of digestion; and to it is there nothing wanting but purification and complete digestion. This Red Adam lay in a warm bath that he may go to sleep. If he will not fall asleep, give him a good, strong, sleeping draught of his saturated liquor, which he loves to drink. Then, during his sleep, cut open his right side that the fair white woman, concealed within him, may come forth. When, now, this maiden has become marriageable, bring her to Adam --- lying on his bed and sick with love --- as his bed and sick with love --- as his daughter, sister, and wife. Whereupon Adam will know the woman, and she will become pregnant. Take then this pregnant woman --- letting the man go --- and guard her well for ten months, until the day of her parturition. She will then bear her first-born son, whom she has conceived from her father's spirit, a young spiritual Adam, to whom no other man is equal in deeds and miracles, who --- if daily fed with his young mother's milk --- when he reaches man's estate, will subdue all his brethren, will deliver them from death, and bring them to eternal death, and bring them to eternal joy in the kingdom of Honour, in which all creatures under heaven will rejoice with joy unspeakable. And, finally, the whole world will become full of gold, and pearls, and precious stones. For Solomon's vineyard bears him 1000, and to those that keep the fruit thereof, 200.

# **An Open Entrance to the Closed Palace of the King**

*( Introitus apertus ad oclusum regis palatium )*

by

**An Anonymous Sage and Lover of Truth**

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**The Author's Preface**

I, being an anonymous adept, a lover of learning, and a philosopher, have decreed 'to write this little treatise of medicinal, chemical, and physical arcana, in the year 1645, after the Birth of Christ, and in the 23rd year of my age, to assist in conducting my straying brethren out of the labyrinth of error, and with the further object of making myself known to other Sages, holding aloft a torch which may be visible far and wide to those who are groping in the darkness of ignorance. The contents of this Book are not fables, but real experiments which I have seen, touched, and handled, as an adept will easily conclude from these lines. I have written more plainly about this Art than any of my predecessors; sometimes I have found myself on the very verge of breaking my vow, and once or twice had to lay down my pen for a season; but I could not resist the inward prompting of God, which impelled me to persevere in the most loving course, who alone knows the heart, and to whom only be glory for ever. Hence, I undoubtedly gather that in this last age of the world, many will become blessed by this arcanum, through what I have thus faithfully written, for I have not willingly left any-thing doubtful to the young beginner. I know many who with me do enjoy this secret, and am persuaded that many more will also rejoice in its possession. Let the holy Will of God perform what it pleases, though I confess myself an unworthy instrument through whom such great things should be effected.

**Chapter I  
Of the need of Sulphur for roducing the Elixir**

Whoever wishes to possess this secret Golden Fleece, which has virtue to transmute metals into gold, should know that our Stone is nothing but gold digested to the highest degree of purity and subtle fixation to which it can be brought by Nature and the highest effort of Art; and this gold thus perfected is called "our gold," no longer vulgar, and is the ultimate goal of Nature. These words, though they may be surprising to some of my readers, are true, as I, an adept, bear witness; and though otherwise persons entertain chimerical dreams, Nature herself is most wonderfully simple. Gold, then, is the one true principle of purification. But our gold is twofold; one kind is mature and fixed, the yellow Latten, and its heart or centre is pure fire, whereby it is kept from destruction, and only purged in the fire. This gold is our male, and it is sexually joined to a more crude white gold -- the female seed: the two together being indissolubly united, constitute our fruitful Hermaphrodite. We are told by the Sages that corporal gold is dead, until it be conjoined with its bride, with whom the coagulating sulphur, which in gold is outwards, must be turned inwards. Hence it follows that the substance which we require is Mercury. Concerning this substance, Geber uses the following words: "Blessed be the Most High God who created Mercury, and made it an all-prevailing substance." And it is true that unless we had Mercury, Alchemists might still boast themselves, but all their boasting would be vain. Hence it is clear that our Mercury is not common mercury; for all common

mercury is a male that is corporal, specific, and dead, while our Mercury is spiritual, female, living, and life-giving. Attend closely to what I say about our Mercury, which is the salt of the wise men. The Alchemist who works without it is like a man who draws a bow without a string. Yet it is found nowhere in a pure state above ground, but has to be extracted by a cunning process out of the substance in which it exists.

## **Chapter II**

### **Of the Component Principles of the Mercury of the Sages**

Let those who aim to purify Mercury by means of salts, faeces and other foreign bodies, and by strange chemical processes, understand that though our water is variously composed, it is yet only one thing, formed by the concretion of divers substances of the same essence. The components of our water are fire, the vegetable "Saturnian liquid," and the bond of Mercury. The fire is that of mineral Sulphur, which yet can be called neither mineral nor metallic, but partakes of both characters: it is a chaos or spirit, because our fiery Dragon, that overcomes all things, is yet penetrated by the odour of the Saturnian liquid, its blood growing together with the Saturnian sap into one body which is yet neither a body (since it is all volatile) nor a spirit (since in fire it resembles melted metal). It may thus be very properly described as chaos, or the mother of all metals. From this chaos I can extract everything --- even the Sun and Moon --- without the transmutatory Elixir. It is called our Arsenic, our Air, our Moon, our Magnet, and our Chalybs: these names representing the different stages of its development, even unto the manifestation of the kingly diadem, which is cast out of the menstruum of our harlot. Learn then, who are the friends of Cadmus; who is the serpent that devoured them; what the hollow oak to which Cadmus spitted the serpent. Learn who are the doves of Diana, that overcome the green lion by gentleness: even the Babylonian dragon, which kills everything with its venom. Learn, also, what are the winged shoes of Mercury, and who are those nymphs whom he charms by means of his incantations.

## **Chapter III**

### **Concerning the Chalybs of the Sages**

Our Chalybs is the true key of our Art, without which the Torch could in no wise be kindled, and as the true magi have delivered many things concerning it, so among vulgar alchemists there is great contention as to its nature. It is the ore of gold, the purest of all spirits; a secret, infernal, and yet most volatile fire, the wonder of the world, the result of heavenly virtues in the lower world --- for which reason the Almighty has assigned to it a most glorious and rare heavenly conjunction, even that notable sign whose nativity is declared in the East. This star was seen by the wise men of old, and straightway they knew that a Great King was born in the world. When you see its constellation, follow it to the cradle, and there you will behold a beautiful Infant. Remove the impurities, look upon the face of the King's Son; open your treasury, give to him gold, and after his death he will bestow on you his flesh and blood, the highest Medicine in the three monarchies of the earth.

## **Chapter IV**

## **Of the Magnet of the Sages**

As steel is attracted towards the magnet, and the magnet turns towards the steel, so also our Magnet attracts our Chalybs. Thus, as Chalybs is the ore of gold, so our Magnet is the true ore of our Chalybs. The hidden centre of our Magnet abounds in Salt, which Salt is the menstruum in the Sphere of the Moon, and can calcine gold. This centre turns towards the Pole with an archetic appetite, in which the virtue of the Chalybs is exalted into degrees. In the Pole is the heart of Mercury, the true fire (in which is the rest of its Master), sailing through this great sea that it may arrive at both the Indies, and direct its course by the aspect of the North Star, which our Magnet will manifest.

### **Chapter V Of the Chaos of the Sages**

Let the student incline his ear to the united verdict of the Sages, who describe this work as analogous to the Creation of the World. In the Beginning God created Heaven and Earth; and the Earth was without form and void, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. These words are sufficient for the student of our Art. The Heaven must be united to the Earth on the couch of friendship, so shall he reign in glory for ever. The Earth is the heavy body, the womb of the minerals, which it cherishes in itself, although it brings to light trees and animals. The Heaven is the place where the great Lights revolve, and through the air transmit their influences to the lower world. But in the beginning all was one confused chaos. Our Chaos is, as it were, a mineral earth (by virtue of its coagulation), and yet also volatile air --- in the centre of which is the Heaven of the Sages, the Astral Centre. which with its light irradiates the earth to its surface. What man is wise enough to evolve out of this world a new King, who shall redeem his brothers from their natural weaknesses, by dying, being lifted on high, and giving his flesh and blood for the life of the world ? I thank Thee, O God, that Thou hast concealed these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes!

### **Chapter VI Of the Air of the Sages**

Our air, like the air of the firmament, divides the waters; and as the waters under the firmament are visible to us mortals, while we are unable to see the waters above the firmament, so in "our work" we see the extracentral mineral waters, but are unable to see those which, though hidden within, nevertheless have a real existence. They exist but do not appear until it please the Artist, as the author of the *New Light* has testified. Our air keeps the extracentral waters from mingling with those at the centre. If through the removal of this impediment, they were enabled to mingle, their union would be indissoluble. Therefore the external vapours and burning sulphur do stiffly adhere to our chaos, and unable to resist its tyranny, the pure flies away from the fire in the form of a dry powder. This then should be your great object. The arid earth must be irrigated, and its pores softened with water of its own kind, then this thief with all the workers of iniquity will be cast out, the water will be purged of its leprous stain by the addition of true Sulphur, and you will have the Spring whose waters are sacred to the maiden Queen Diana. This thief is armed with all



the malignity of arsenic, and is feared and eschewed by the winged youth. Though the Central Water be his Spouse, yet the youth cannot come to her, until Diana with the wings of her doves purges the poisonous air, and opens a passage to the bridal chamber. Then the youth enters easily through the pores, presently shaking the waters above, and stirring up a rude and ruddy cloud. Do thou, O Diana, bring in the water over him, even unto the brightness of the Moon ! So the darkness on the face of the abyss will be dispersed by the spirit moving in the waters. Thus, at the bidding of God, light will appear on the Seventh Day, and then this sophic creating of Mercury shall be completed, from which time, until the revolution of the year, you may wait for the birth of the marvellous Child of the Sun, who will come to deliver his brethren from every stain.

## **Chapter VII**

### **Of the First Operation --- Preparation of Mercury by Means of the Flying Eagles**

Know, my brother, that the exact preparation of the Eagles of the Sages, is the highest effort of our Art. In this first section of our work, nothing is to be done without hard and persevering toil; though it is quite true that afterwards the substance develops under the influence of gentle heat without any imposition of hands. The Sages tell us that their Eagles must be taken to devour the Lion, and that they gain the victory all the sooner if they are very numerous; also that the number of the work varies between 7 and 9. The Mercury of the Sages is the Bird of Hermes (now called a goose, now a pheasant). But the Eagles are always mentioned in the plural, and number from 3 to 10. Yet this is not to be understood as if there should be so many weights or parts of the water to one of the earth, but the water must be taken so oftentimes acuated or sharpened as there are Eagles numbered. This acuation is made by sublimation. There is, then, one sublimation of the Mercury of the Sages, when one Eagle is mentioned, and the seventh sublimation will so strengthen your Mercury, that the Bath of your King will be ready... Let me tell you now how this part of the work is performed. Take 4 parts of our fiery Dragon, in whose belly is hidden the magic Chalybs, and 9 parts of our Magnet; mingle them by means of a fierce fire, in the form of a mineral water, the foam of which must be taken away. Remove the shell, and take the kernel. Purge what remains once more by means of fire and the Sun, which may be done easily if Saturn shall have seen himself in the mirror of Mars. Then you will obtain our Chameleon, or Chaos, in which all the virtues of our Art are potentially present. This is the infant Hermaphrodite, who, through the bite of a mad dog, has been rendered so fearful of water, that though of a kindred nature, it always eschews and avoids it. But in the grove of Diana are two doves that soothe its rabid madness if applied by the art of the nymph Mercury. Take it and plunge it under water till it perish therein; then the rabid and black dog will appear panting and half suffocated -- drive him down with vigorous blows, and the darkness will be dispelled. Give it wings when the Moon is full, and it will fly away as an Eagle, leaving the doves of Diana dead (though, when first taken they should be living). Repeat this seven times, and your work is done, the gentle coction which follows is child's play and a woman's work.

## **Chapter VIII**

### **Of the Difficulty and Length of the First Operation**

Some Alchemists fancy that the work from beginning to end is a mere idle entertainment; but those who

make it so will reap what they have sown -- viz., nothing. We know that next to the Divine Blessing, and the discovery of the proper foundation, nothing is so important as unwearied industry and perseverance in this First Operation. It is no wonder, then, that so many students of this Art are reduced to beggary; they are afraid of work, and look upon our Art as mere sport for their leisure moments. For no labour is more tedious than that which the preparatory part of our enterprise demands. Morienus earnestly entreats the King to consider this fact, and says that many Sages have complained of the tedium of our work. "To render a chaotic mass orderly" says the Poet, "is matter of much time and labour" --- and the noble author of the Hermetical Arcanum describes it as an Herculean task. There are so many impurities clinging to our first substance, and a most powerful intermediate agent is required for the purpose of eliciting from our polluted menstruum the Royal Diadem. But when you have once prepared your Mercury, the most formidable part of your task is accomplished, and you may indulge in that rest which is sweeter than any work, as the Sage says.

## Chapter IX

### On the Superiority of our Mercury over All Metals

Our Mercury is that Serpent which devoured the companions of Cadmus, after having first swallowed Cadmus himself, though he was far stronger than they. Yet Cadmus will one day transfix this Serpent, when he has coagulated it with his Sulphur. Know that this, our Mercury, is a King among metals, and dissolves them by changing their Sulphur into a kindred mercurial substance. The Mercury of one, two, or three eagles bears rule over Saturn, Jupiter, and Venus. The Mercury of from three to seven eagles sways the Moon; that of ten eagles has power over the Sun; our Mercury is nearer than any other unto the first *ens* of metals; it has power to enter metallic bodies, and to manifest their hidden depths.

## Chapter X

### On the sulphur which is in the Mercury of the Sages

It is a marvellous fact that our Mercury contains active sulphur and yet preserves the form and all the properties of Mercury. Hence it is necessary that a form be introduced therein by our preparation, which form is a metallic sulphur. This Sulphur is the inward fire which causes the putrefaction of the composite Sun. This sulphureous fire is the spiritual seed which our Virgin (still remaining immaculate) has conceived. For an uncorrupted virginity admits of a spiritual love, as experience and authority affirm. The two (the passive and the active principle) combined we call our Hermaphrodite. When joined to the Sun, it softens, liquefies, and dissolves it with gentle heat. By means of the same fire it coagulates itself; and by its coagulation produces the Sun. Our pure and homogeneous Mercury, having conceived inward Sulphur (through our Art), coagulates itself under the influence of gentle outward heat, like the cream of milk --- a subtle earth floating on the water. When it is united to the Sun, it is not only not coagulated, but the composite substance becomes softer day by day; the bodies are almost dissolved; and the spirits begin to be coagulated, with a black colour and a most fetid smell. Hence it appears that this spiritual metallic Sulphur is in truth the *moving principle in our Art*; it is really volatile or unmaturred gold, and by proper digestion is changed into that metal. If joined to perfect gold, it is not coagulated, but dissolves the corporal gold, and remains with it, being dissolved, under one form, although before the perfect union death must precede, that

so they may be united after death, not simply in a perfect unity, but in a thousand times more than perfect perfection.

## Chapter XI Concerning the Discovery of the Perfect Magistry

There are those who think that this Art was first discovered by Solomon, or rather imparted to him by Divine Revelation. But though there is no reason for doubting that so wise and profoundly learned a sovereign was acquainted with our Art, yet we happen to know that he was not the first to acquire the knowledge. It was possessed by Hermes, the Egyptian, and some other Sages before him; and we may suppose that they first sought a simple exaltation of imperfect metals into regal perfection, and that it was at first their endeavour to develop Mercury, which is most like to gold in its weight and properties, into perfect gold. This, however, no degree of ingenuity could effect by any fire, and the truth gradually broke on their minds that an internal heat was required as well as an external one. So they rejected aqua fortis and all corrosive solvents, after long experiments with the same -- also all salts, except that kind which is the first substance of all salts, which dissolves all metals and coagulates Mercury, but not without violence, whence that kind of agent is again separated entire, both in weight and virtue, from the things it is applied to. They saw that the digestion of Mercury was prevented by certain aqueous crudities and earthy dross; and that the *radical* nature of these impurities rendered their elimination impossible, except by the complete inversion of the whole compound. They knew that Mercury would become fixed if it could be freed from their defiling presence --- as it contains fermenting sulphur, which is only hindered by these impurities from coagulating the whole mercurial body. At length they discovered that Mercury, in the bowels of the earth, was intended to become a metal, and that the process of development was only stopped by the impurities with which it had become tainted. They found that that which should be active in the Mercury was passive; and that its infirmity could not be remedied by any means, except the introduction of some kindred principle from without. Such a principle they discovered in metallic sulphur, which stirred up the passive sulphur in the Mercury, and by allying itself with it, expelled the aforesaid impurities. But in seeking to accomplish this practically, they were met by another great difficulty. In order that this sulphur might be effectual in purifying the Mercury, it was indispensable that it should itself be pure. All their efforts to purify it, however, were doomed to failure. At length they bethought them that it might possibly be found somewhere in Nature in a purified condition --- and their search was crowned with success. They sought active sulphur in a pure state, and found it cunningly concealed in the House of the Ram. This sulphur mingled most eagerly with the offspring of Saturn, and the desired effect was speedily produced --- after the malignant venom of the " air" of Mercury had been tempered (as already set forth at some length) by the Doves of Venus. Then life was joined to life by means of the liquid; the dry was moistened; the passive was stirred into action by the active; the dead was revived by the living. The heavens were indeed temporarily clouded over, but after a copious downpour of rain, serenity was restored. Mercury emerged in a hermaphroditic state. Then they placed it in the fire; in no long time they succeeded in coagulating it, and in its coagulation they found the Sun and the Moon in a most pure state. Then they considered that, before its coagulation, this Mercury was not a metal, since, on being volatilised, it left no residue at the bottom of the distilling vessel; hence they called it unmaturing gold and their living (or quick) silver. It also occurred to them that if gold were sown, as it were, in the soil of its own first substance, its excellence would probably be enhanced; and when they placed gold therein, the fixed was volatilised, the hard softened, the coagulated dissolved, to the amazement of Nature herself. For this reason they wedded these two to each other, put them in a still over

the fire, and for many days regulated the heat in accordance with the requirements of Nature. Thus the dead was revived, the body decayed, and a glorified spirit rose from the grave; the soul was exalted into the Quintessence --- the Universal Medicine for animals, vegetables, and minerals.

## **Chapter XII**

### **The Generic Method of Making the Perfect Magistry**

The greatest secret of our operation is no other than a cohobation of the nature of one thing above the other, until the most digested virtue be extracted out of the digested body of the crude one. But there are hereto requisite: Firstly, an exact measurement and preparation of the ingredients required; secondly, an exact fulfilment of all external conditions; thirdly a proper regulation of the fire; fourthly, a good knowledge of the natural properties of the substances; and fifthly, patience, in order that the work may not be marred by overgreat haste. Of all these points we will now speak in their proper order.

## **Chapter XIII**

### **Of the Use of Mature Sulphur in the Work of the Elixir**

We have spoken of the need of Mercury, and have described its properties more plainly and straightforwardly than has ever been done before. God knows that we do not grudge the knowledge of this Art to our brother men; and we are not afraid that it can ever become the property of any unworthy person. So long as the secret is possessed by a comparatively small number of philosophers, their lot is anything but a bright and happy one; surrounded as we are on every side by the cruel greed and --- the prying suspicion of the multitude, we are doomed, like Cain, to wander over the earth homeless and friendless. Not for us are X the soothing influences of domestic happiness; not for us the delightful confidences of friendship. Men who covet our golden secret pursue us from place to place, and fear closes our lips, when love tempts us to open ourselves freely to a brother. Thus we feel prompted at times to burst forth into the desolate exclamation of Cain: "Whoever finds me will slay me." Yet we are not the murderers of our brethren; we are anxious only to do good to our fellow-men. But even our kindness and charitable compassion are rewarded with black ingratitude- ingratitude that cries to heaven for vengeance. It was only a short time ago that, after visiting the plague-stricken haunts of a certain city, and restoring the sick to perfect health by means of my miraculous medicine, I found myself surrounded by a yelling mob, who demanded that I should give to them my Elixir of the Sages; and it was only by changing my dress and my name, by shaving off my beard and putting on a wig, that I was enabled to save my life, and escape from the hands of those wicked men. And even when our lives are not threatened, it is not pleasant to find-ourselves, wherever we go, the central objects of human greed... I know of several persons who were found strangled in their beds, simply because they were suspected of possessing this secret, though, in reality, they knew no more about it than their murderers; it was enough for some desperate ruffians, that a mere whisper of suspicion had been breathed against their victims. Men are so eager to have this Medicine that your very caution will arouse their suspicions, and endanger your safety. Again, if you desire to sell any large quantity of your gold and silver, you will be unable to do so without imminent risk of discovery. The very fact that anyone has a great mass of bullion for sale would in most places excite suspicion. This feeling will be strengthened when people test the quality of our gold; for it is much finer and purer than any of the gold which is brought from

Barbary, or from the Guinea Coast; and our silver is better even than that which is conveyed home by the Spanish silver fleet. If, in order to baffle discovery, you mix these precious metals with alloy, you render yourself liable, in England and- Holland at least, to capital punishment; for in those countries no one is permitted to tamper with the precious metals except the officers of the mint, and the licensed goldsmiths. I remember once going, in the disguise of a foreign merchant to a goldsmith's shop, and offering him 600 pounds worth of our pure silver for sale. He subjected it to the usual tests, and then said: "This silver is artificially prepared." When I asked him why he thought so, his answer was: "I am not a novice in my profession, and know very well the exact quality of the silver which is brought from the different mines." When I heard these words I took myself away with great secrecy and dispatch, leaving the silver in the hands of the goldsmith. On this account, and by reason of the many and great difficulties which beset us, the possessors of this Stone, on every side, we do elect to remain hidden, and will communicate the Art to those who are worthily covetous of our secrets, and then mark what public good will befall. Without Sulphur, our Mercury would never be properly coagulated for our supernatural work; it is the male substance, while Mercury may be called the female; and all Sages say that no tincture can be made without its latten, which latten is gold, without any double speaking. Wise men, notwithstanding, can find this substance even on the dunghill; but the ignorant are unable to discern it even in gold. The tincture of gold is concealed in the gold of the Sages, which is the most highly matured of bodies; but as a raw material it exists only in our Mercury; and it (gold) receives from Mercury the multiplication of its seed, but in virtue rather than in weight. The Sages say that common gold is dead, while their's is living; and common gold is dead in the same sense in which a grain of wheat is dead, while it is surrounded by dry air; and comes to life, swells, softens, and germinates only when it is put into moist earth. In this sense gold, too, is dead, so long as it is surrounded by the corporeal husk, always allowing, of course, for the great difference between a vegetable grain and metallic gold. *Our* grain is quickened in *water* only; and as wheat, while it remains in the barn is called grain, and is not destined to be quickened, because it is to be used for bread making --- but changes its name, when it is sown in the field, and is then called seedcorn; *so* our gold, while it is in the form of rings, plate, and coins, is called common gold, because in that state it is likely to remain unchanged to the end of the world; but *potentially* it is even then the gold of the Sages, because if sown in its own proper element, it would in a few days become the Chaos of the Sages. Hence the Sages bid you revive the dead (i.e., the gold which already appeared doomed to a living death) and mortify the living, i.e., the Mercury which, imparting life to the gold, is itself deprived of the vital principle. Their gold is taken in a dead, their water in a living, state, and by their composition and brief coction, the dead gold revives and the living Mercury dies, i.e., the spirit is coagulated, the body is dissolved, and thus both putrefy together, until all the members of the compound are torn into atoms. The mystery of our Art, which we conceal with so great care, is the preparation of the Mercury, which above ground is not to be found made ready to our hand. But when it is prepared, it is "our water" in which gold is dissolved, whereby the latent life of the gold is set free, and receives the life of the dissolving Mercury, which is to gold what good earth is to the grain of wheat. When the gold has putrefied in the Mercury, there arises out of the decomposition of death a new body, of the same essence, but of a glorified substance. Here you have the whole of our Philosophy in a nutshell. There is no secret about it, except the preparation of Mercury, its mingling with the gold in the right proportions, and the regulation of the fire in accordance with its requirements. Gold by itself does not fear the fire; hence the great point is, to temper the heat to the capacity of the Mercury. If the Mercury is not properly prepared, the gold remains common gold, being joined with an improper agent; it continues unchanged, and no degree of heat will help it to put off its corporeal nature. Without our Mercury the seed (i.e., gold) cannot be sown; and if gold is not sown in its proper element, it cannot be quickened any more than the corn which the West Indians keep underground, in air-tight stone jars, can germinate. I know that some self-constituted "Sages" will take exception to this teaching, and say that common gold and running

Mercury are not the substance of our Stone. But one question will suffice to silence their objections: Have they ever actually prepared our Tincture? I have prepared it more than once, and daily have it in my power; hence I may perhaps be permitted to speak as one having authority. Go on babbling about your rain water collected in May, your Salts, your sperm which is more potent than the foul fiend himself, ye self-styled philosophers; rail at me, if you like; all you say is conclusively refuted by this one fact --- you cannot make the Stone. When I say that gold and Mercury are the only substances of our Stone I know what I am writing about; and the Searcher of all hearts knows also that I say true. The time has arrived when we may speak more freely about this Art. For Elias the artist is at hand, and glorious things are already spoken of the City of God. I possess wealth sufficient to buy the whole world -- but as yet I may not use it on account of the craft and cruelty of wicked men. It is not from jealousy that I conceal as much as I do: God knows that I am weary of this lonely, wandering life, shut out from the bonds of friendship, and almost from the face of God. I do not worship the golden calf, before which our Israelites bow low to the ground; let it be ground to powder like the brazen serpent. I hope that in a few years gold (not as given by God, but as abused by man) will be so common that those who are now so mad after it, shall contemtuously spurn aside this bulwark of Antichrist. Then will the day of our deliverance be at hand when the streets of the new Jerusalem are paved with gold, and its gates are made of great diamonds. The day is at hand when, by means of this my Book, gold will have become as common as dirt; when we Sages shall find rest for the soles of our feet, and render fervent thanks to God. My heart conceives unspeakable things, and is enlarged for the good of the Israel of God. These words I utter forth with a herald's clarion tones. My Book is the precursor of Elias, designed to prepare the Royal way of the Master; and would to God that by its means all men might become adepts in our Art --- for then gold, the great idol of mankind, would lose its value, and we should prize it only for its scientific teaching. Virtue would be loved for its own sake. I am familiar with many possessors of this Art who regard silence as the great point of honour. But I have been enabled by God to take a different view of the matter; and I firmly believe that I can best serve the Israel of God, and put my talent out at usury, by making this secret knowledge the common property of the whole world. Hence I have not conferred with flesh and blood, nor attempted to obtain the consent of my Brother Sages. If the matter succeeds according to my desire and prayer, they will all rejoice that I have published this Book.

## **Chapter XIV**

### **Of the Circumstantial and Accidental Requisites of our Art**

We have weeded out all vulgar errors concerning our Art, and have shewn that gold and Mercury are the only substances required. We have shewn that this gold is to be understood, not metaphorically, but in a truly philosophical sense. We have also declared our Mercury to be true quicksilver, without any ambiguity of acceptance. The latter, we have told you, must be made by art, and be a key to the former. We have made everything as clear as noonday; and our teaching is based, not on hearsay, or on the writings of others, but on our own personal and oft repeated experience. The things we faithfully declare are what we have both seen and known. We have made and do possess the Stone --- the great Elixir. Moreover, we do not grudge you this knowledge, but wish you to attain it out of this Book. We have spoken out more plainly than any of our predecessors; and our Receipt, apart from the fact that we have not called things by their proper names, is perfectly trustworthy. It remains for us to give you some practical tests by which the goodness or unsuitableness of your Mercury may be known. and some directions for amending its defects. When you have living Mercury and gold, there remains to be accomplished, first, the purging of the

Mercury and the gold, then their espousal, and finally the regulation of the fire.

## **Chapter XV**

### **Of the Incidental Purging of Mercury and Gold**

Perfect gold is found in the bowels of the earth in little pieces, or in sand. If you can meet with this unmixed gold, it is pure enough; if not, purge it with antimony or royal cement, or boil it with aqua fortis, the gold being first granulated. Then smelt it, remove the impure sediment, and it is ready. But Mercury needs inward and essential purging, which radical cleansing is brought about by the addition of true Sulphur, little by little, according to the number of the Eagles. Then it also needs an incidental purgation for the purpose of removing from its surface the impurities which have, by the essential purgation, been ejected from the centre. This process is not absolutely necessary, but it is useful, as it accelerates the work. Therefore, take your Mercury, which you have purified with a suitable number of Eagles, sublime it three times with common salt and iron filings, and wash it with vinegar and a moderate quantity of salts of ammonia, then dry and distil in a glass retort, over a gradually increasing fire, until the whole of the Mercury has ascended. Repeat this four times, then boil the Mercury in spirits of vinegar for an hour, stirring it constantly. Then pour off the vinegar, and wash off its acidity by a plentiful effusion of spring water. Dry the Mercury, and its splendour will be wonderful. You may wash it with wine, or vinegar and salt, and so spare the sublimation; but then distil it at least four times without addition, after you have perfected all the eagles, or washings, washing the chalybeat retort every time with ashes and water; then boil it in distilled vinegar for half a day, stirring it strongly at times. Pour off the blackish vinegar, add new, then wash with warm water. This process is designed to purge away the internal impurities from the surface. These impurities you may perceive if, on mixing Mercury with purest gold, you place the amalgam on a white sheet of paper. The sooty blackness which is then seen on the paper is purged away by this process.

## **Chapter XVI**

### **Of the Amalgam of Mercury and Gold, and of their Respective Proportions**

When you have done all this, take one part of pure and laminated gold, or fine gold filings, and two parts of Mercury; put them in a heated (marble) jar, i.e., heaved with boiling water, being taken out of which it dries quickly, and holds the heat a long time. Grind with an ivory, or glass, or stone, or iron, or boxwood pestle (the iron pestle is not so good; I use a pestle of crystal): pound them, I say, as small as the painters grind their colours; then add water so as to make the mass as consistent as half melted butter. The mixture should be fixable and soft, and permit itself to be moulded into little globules --- like moderately soft butter; it should be of such a consistency as to yield to the gentlest touch. Moreover, it should be of the same temperature throughout, and one part should not be more liquid than another. The mixture will be more or less soft, according to the proportion of Mercury which it contains; but it must be capable of forming into those little globules, and the Mercury should not be more lively at the bottom than at the top. If the amalgam be left undisturbed, it will at once harden; you must therefore judge of the merits of the mixture, while you are stirring it; if it fulfils the above conditions, it is good. Then take spirit of vinegar, and dissolve in it a third part of salt of ammonia, put the amalgam into this liquid, let the whole boil for a quarter-of-an-hour in a long necked glass vessel; then take the mixture out of the glass vessel, pour off the liquid, heat the mortar,

and pound the amalgam (as above) vigorously, and wash away all blackness with hot water. Put it again into the liquid, let it boil up once more in the glass vessel, pound it as before, and wash it. Repeat this process until the blackness is entirely purged out. The amalgam will then be as brilliant and white as the purest silver. Once more regulate the temperature of the amalgam according to the rules given above; your labour will be richly rewarded. If the amalgam be not quite soft enough, add a little Mercury. Then boil it in pure water, and free it from all saltiness and acidity. Pour off the water, and dry the amalgam. Make quite sure that it is thoroughly dried, by waving it to and fro on the point of a knife over a sheet of white paper.

## Chapter XVII

### Concerning the Size, Form, Material, and Mode of Securing the Vessel

Let your glass distilling vessel be round or oval; large enough to hold neither more nor much less than an ounce of distilled water in the body thereof. Let the height of the vessel's neck be about one palm, hand-breath, or span, and let the glass be clear and thick (the thicker the better, so long as it is clear and clean, and permits you to distinguish what is going on within) --- but the thickness should be uniform. The substance which will go into this vessel consists of 1/2 oz. of gold, and one oz. of mercury; and if you have to add 1/3 oz. of mercury, the whole compound will still be less than 2 oz. The glass should be strong in order to prevent the vapours which arise from our embryo bursting the vessel. Let the mouth of the vessel be very carefully and effectually secured by means of a thick layer of sealing-wax. The utensils and the materials required are not then very expensive --- and if you use my thick distilling-vessel you will avoid loss by breakage. The other instruments that are requisite are not dear. I know that many will take exception to this statement; they will say that the pursuit of our Art is a matter of all but ruinous expense. But my answer consists in a simple question: What is the object of our Art? Is it not to make the Philosopher's Stone --- to find the liquid in which gold melts like ice in tepid water? And do those good people who are so eager in their search after "Mercury of the Sun," and "Mercury of the Moon," and who pay so high a price for their materials, ever succeed in this object? They cannot answer this question in the affirmative. One florin will buy enough of the substance of our water to quicken two pounds of mercury, and make it the true Mercury of the Sages. But, of course, glass vessels, coals, earthen vessels, a furnace, iron vessels, and other instruments, cannot be bought for nothing. Without a perfect body, our ore, viz., gold, there can be no Tincture, and our Stone is at first vile, immature, and volatile, but when complete it is perfect, precious, and fixed. These two aspects of our Stone are the body, gold, and the spirit, or quicksilver.

## Chapter XVIII

### Of the Furnace or Athanor of the Sages

I have spoken about Mercury, Sulphur, the vessel, their treatment, etc. etc.; and, of course, all these things are to be understood with a grain of salt. You must understand that in the preceding chapters I have spoken metaphorically; if you take my words in a literal sense, you will reap no harvest except your outlay. For instance, when I name the principal substances Mercury and gold --- I do not mean common gold in the state in which it is sold at the goldsmiths -- but it must be prepared by means of our Art You *may* find our gold in common gold and silver, but it is easier to make the Stone than to get its first substance out of common gold. "Our gold" is the Chaos whose soul has not been taken away by fire. The soul of common



gold has retired before the fiery tyranny of Vulcan into the inmost citadel. If you seek our gold in a substance intermediate between perfection and imperfection, you will find it: but otherwise, you must unbar the gates of common gold by the first preparatory process (ch. xv.), by which the charm of its body is broken, and the husband enabled to do his work. If you choose the former course, you shall use only gentle heat; in the latter case, you will require a fierce fire. But here you will be hopelessly lost in a labyrinth, if you do not know your way out of it. But whether you choose our gold, or common gold, you will in either case need an even and continual fire. If you take our gold, you will finish the work a few months sooner, and the Elixir will be ten times more precious than that prepared from common gold. If you work with "our gold," you will be assisted in its calcination, putrefaction, and dealbation by its gentle inward (natural) heat. But in the case of common gold, this heat has to be applied externally by foreign substances, so as to render it fit for union with the Virgin's Milk. In neither case, however, can anything be effected without the aid of fire. It was not, then, in vain that Hermes counts fire next to the Sun and Moon as the governor of the work. But this is to be understood of the truly secret furnace, which a vulgar eye never saw. There is also another furnace, which is called our common furnace, made of potter's earth, or of iron and brass plates, well compacted with clay. This furnace we call Athanor, and the shape which I like best is that of a tower with a "nest" at the top. The "tower" should be about three feet high, and nine fingers wide within the plates. A little above the ground, let there be a little opening of about three or four fingers wide, for removing the cinders; over that, there should be a fire-place built with stones. Above this, we place the furnace itself, which should be such as to exclude all draughts and currents of air. The coals are put in from above, and the aperture should then be carefully closed. But it is not necessary that your furnace should exactly correspond to the description which I have given so long as it fulfils the following conditions: firstly, it must be free from draughts; secondly, it must enable you to vary the temperature, without removing your vessel; thirdly, you must be able to keep up in it a fire for ten or twelve hours, without looking to it. Then the door of our Art will be opened to you; and when you have prepared the Stone, you may procure a small portable stove, for the purpose of multiplying it.

## Chapter XIX

### Of the Progress of the Work during the First Forty Days

When you have prepared our gold and Mercury in the manner described, put it into our vessel, and subject it to the action of our fire; within 40 days you will see the whole substance converted into atoms, without any visible motion, or perceptible heat (except that it is just warm). If you do not yet rightly know the meaning of "our gold," take one part of common gold (well purified), and three parts of *our* Mercury (thoroughly purged), put them together as directed (cap. xvi), place them over the fire, and there keep them at the boiling point, till they sweat, and their sweat circulates. At the end of 90 days you will find that the Mercury has separated and reunited all the elements of the common gold. Boil the mixture 50 days longer, and you will discover that our Mercury has changed the common gold into "our gold," which is the Medicine of the first order. It is already our Sulphur, but it has not yet the power of tinging. This method has been followed by many Sages, but it is exceedingly slow and tedious, and is only for the rich of the earth. Moreover, when you have got this Sulphur do not think that you possess the Stone, but only its true Matter, which you may seek in an imperfect thing, and find it within a week, by our easy yet rare way, reserved of God for His poor, contemned, and abject saints. Hereof I have now determined to write much, although in the beginning of this Book I decreed to bury it in silence. This is the one great sophism of all adepts; some speak of this common gold and silver, and say the truth, and others say that we cannot use it,

and they too, say the truth. But in the presence of God I will call all our adepts to account, and charge them with jealous surliness. I, too, had determined to tread the same path, but God's hand confounded my scheme. I say then, that both ways are true, and come to the same thing in the end --- but there is a vast difference at the beginning. Our whole Art consists in the right preparation of our Mercury and our gold. Our Mercury is our way, and without it nothing is effected. Our gold is not common gold, but it may be found in it; and if you operate on our Mercury with common gold (regulating the fire in the right way), you will after 150 days have our gold, since our gold is obtained from our Mercury. Hence if common gold have all its atoms thoroughly severed by means of our Mercury, and then reunited by the same agency, the whole mixture will, under the influence of fire, become our gold. But, if, without this preparatory purging, you were to use common gold with our Mercury for the purpose of preparing the Stone, you would be sadly mistaken; and this is the great Labyrinth in which most beginners go astray, because the Sages in writing of these ways as two ways, purposely obscure the fact that they are only one way (though of course the one is more direct than the other). The gold of the Sages may then be prepared out of our common gold and our Mercury, from which there may afterwards be obtained by repeated liquefactions, Sulphur and Quicksilver which is incombustible, and tinges all things else. In this sense, our Stone is to be found in all metals and minerals, since our gold may be got from them all --- but most easily, of course, from gold and silver. Some have found it in tin, some in lead, but most of those who have pursued the more tedious method, have found it in gold. Of course, if our gold be prepared in the way I have described, out of common gold (in the course of 150 days), instead of being found ready made, it will not be so effectual, and the preparation of the Stone will take 1 1/2 years instead of 7 months. I know both ways, and prefer the shorter one; but I have described the longer one as well in order that I may not draw down upon myself the scathing wrath of the "Sages." The great difficulty which discourages all beginners is not of Nature's making: the Sages have created it by speaking of the longer operation when they mean the shorter one, and *vice versa*. If you choose common gold, you should espouse it to Venus (copper), lay them together on the bridal bed, and, on bringing a fierce fire to bear on them, you will see an emblem of the Great Work in the following succession of colours: black, the peacock's tail, white, orange, and red. Then repeat the same operation with Mercury (called Virgin's Milk), using the "fire of the Bath of Dew," and (towards the end) sand mixed with ashes. The substance will first turn a much deeper black, and then a completer white and red. Hence if you know our Art, extract our gold from our Mercury (this is the shorter way), and thus perform the whole operation with one substance (*viz.*, Mercury); if you can do this, you will have attained to the perfection of philosophy. In this method, there is no superfluous trouble: the whole work, from beginning to end, is based upon one broad foundation --- whereas if you take common gold, you must operate on two substances, and *both* will have to be purified by an elaborate process. If you diligently consider what I have said, you have in your hand a means of unravelling all the apparent contradictions of the Sages. They speak of three operations: the first, by which the inward natural heat expels all cold through the aid of external fire, the second, wherein gold is purged with our Mercury, through the mediation of Venus, and under the influence of a fierce fire; the third, in which common gold is mixed with our Mercury, and the ferment of Sulphur added. But if you will receive my advice, you will not be put out by any wilful obscurity on the part of the Sages. Our sulphur you should indeed strive to discover; and if God enlightens you, you will find it in our Mercury. Before the living God I swear that my teaching is true. If you operate on Mercury and pure common gold, you may find "our gold" in 7 to 9 months, and "our silver" in 5 months. But when you have these, you have not yet prepared our Stone: *that* glorious sight will not gladden your eyes until you have been at work for a year-and-a-half. By that time you may obtain the elixir by subjecting the substance to very gentle continuous heat.

## **Chapter XX**

### **Of the Appearance of Blackness in the Work of the Sun and Moon**

If you operate on gold and silver, for the purpose of finding our Sulphur, let your substance first become like a thin paste, or boiling water, or liquid pitch; for the operation of our gold and Mercury is prefigured by that which happens in the preparation of common gold with our Mercury. Take your substance and place it in the furnace, regulate the fire properly for the space of twenty days, in which time you will observe various colours, and about the end of the fourth week, if the fire be continuous, you will see a most amiable greenness, which will last for about ten days. Then rejoice, for in a short time it will be as a black coal, and your whole compound shall be reduced to atoms. The operation is a resolution of the fixed into the not fixed that both afterwards, being conjoined, may make one matter, partly spiritual and partly corporal. Once more, I assure you, the regulation of the fire is the only thing that I have hidden from you. Given the proper-regimen, take the Stone, govern it as you know how, and then these wonderful phenomena will follow: The fire will at once dissolve the Mercury and the Sulphur like wax; the Sulphur will be burnt, and change its colours from day to day; the Mercury will prove incombustible, and only be gradually tinged (and purified, without being infected) with the colours of the Sulphur. Let the heaven stoop to the earth, till the latter has conceived heavenly seed. When you see the substances mingle in your distilling vessel, and assume the appearance of clotted and burnt blood, be sure that the female has received the seed of the male. About seventeen days afterwards your substance will begin to wear a yellow, thick, misty, or foamy appearance. At this time, you must take care not to let the embryo escape from your vessel; for it will give out a greenish, yellow, black, and bluish vapour and strive to burst the vessel. If you allow these vapours (which are continuous when the Embryo is formed) to escape, your work will be hopelessly marred. Nor should you allow any of the odour to make its way through any little hole or outlet; for the evaporation would considerably weaken the strength of the Stone. Hence the true Sage seals up the mouth of his vessel most carefully. Let me advise you, moreover, not to neglect your fire, or move or open the vessel, or slacken the process of decoction, until you find that the quantity of the liquid begins to diminish; if this happens after thirty days, rejoice, and know that you are on the right road. Then be doubly careful, and you will, at the end of another fortnight, find that the earth has become quite dry and of a deep black. This is the death of the compound; the winds have ceased, and there is a great calm. This is that great simultaneous eclipse of the Sun and Moon, when the Sea also has disappeared. Our Chaos is then ready, from which, at the bidding of God, all the wonders of the world may successively emerge.

## **Chapter XXI**

### **Of the Caution Required to Avoid Burning the Flowers**

The burning of the flowers is fatal, yet soon committed: it is chiefly to be guarded against after the lapse of the third week. In the beginning there is so much moisture that if the fire be too fierce it will dry up the liquid too quickly, and you will prematurely obtain a dry red powder, from which the principle of life has flown; if the fire be not strong enough the substance will not be properly matured. Too powerful a fire prevents the true union of the substances. True union only takes place in water. Bodies collide, but do not unite; only liquids (and spirits) can truly mingle their substance. Hence our homogeneous metallic water must be allowed to do its work properly, and should not be dried up, until this perfect mutual absorption has taken place in a natural manner. Premature drying only destroys the germ of life, strikes the active principle

on the head as with a hammer, and renders it passive. A red powder is indeed produced, but long before the time: for redness should be preceded by blackness. It is true that, in the beginning of our work, when heaven is wedded to earth, and earth conceives the fire of nature, a red colour does appear. But the substance is then sufficiently moist; and the redness soon gives way to a green colour, which in its turn gradually yields to blackness. Do not be in a hurry; let your fire be just powerful enough, but not too powerful; steer a straight course between Scylla and Charybdis: you will behold in your vessel a variety of colours and grotesque transformations --- until the substance settles down into a powder of intense blackness. This should happen within the first fifty days. If it does not, either your Mercury, or the regulation of your fire, or the composition of your substance is at fault --- if, indeed, you have not moved or shaken your glass vessel.

## **Chapter XXII**

### **Of the Regimen of Saturn**

All the Sages who have written on our Art, have spoken of the work and regimen of Saturn; and their remarks have led many to choose common lead as the substance of the Stone. But you should know that our Saturn, or lead, is a much nobler substance than gold. It is the living earth in which the soul of gold is joined to Mercury, that they may bring forth Adam and his wife Eve. Wherefore, since the highest has so lowered itself as to become the lowest, we may expect that its blood may be the means of redeeming all its brethren. The Tomb in which our King is buried, is that which we call Saturn, and it is the key of the work of transmutation; happy is he who can salute this planet, and call it by its right name. It is a boon which is obtained by the blessing of God alone; it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth; but God bestoweth it on whom He will.

## **Chapter XXIII**

### **Of the Different Regimens of this Work**

Let me assure you that in our whole work there is nothing hidden but the regimen, of which it was truly said by the Sage that whoever knows it perfectly will be honoured by princes and potentates. I tell you plainly that if this one point were clearly set forth, our Art would become mere women's work and child's play: there would be nothing in it but a simple process of "cooking." Hence it has always been most carefully concealed by the Sages. But I have determined to write in a more sympathetic and kindly spirit: know then that our regimen throughout consists in coction and digestion, but that it implies a good many other processes, which those jealous Sages have made to appear different by describing them under different names. But we intend to speak more openly in regard to this subject.

## **Chapter XXIV**

### **Of the First Regimen, which is that of Mercury**

This first regimen has been studiously kept secret by all the Sages. They have spoken of the second regimen, or that of Saturn, as if it were the first, and have thus left the student without guidance in those operations which precede the appearance of that intense blackness. Count Bernard, of Trevisa, says, in his Parable, that When the King has come to the Fountain, he takes off the golden garment, gives it to Saturn, and enters the bath alone, afterwards receiving from Saturn a robe of black silk. But he does not tell us how long it takes to put off that golden robe; and thus, like all his brethren, leaves the poor beginner to grope in the dark during 40 or 50 days. From the point where the stage of blackness is reached to the end of the work their directions are more full and intelligible. It is in regard to these first 40 days that the student requires additional light. This period represents the regimen of Mercury (of the Sages), which is alone active during the whole time, the *othersubstance* being temporarily dead. You should not suffer yourself to be deluded into the belief that when your matters are joined, namely, our Sun and Mercury, the "setting of the Sun" can be brought about in a few days. We ourselves waited a tedious time before a reconciliation was made between the fire and the water. As a matter of fact, the Sages have called the substance, throughout this first period, *Rebis*, or *Two-thing*: to shew that the union is not effected till the operation is complete. You should know, then, that though our Mercury consumes the Sun, yet a year after you shall separate them, unless they are connected together by a suitable degree of fire. It is not able to do anything at all without *fire*. We must not suppose that when our gold is placed in our Mercury it is swallowed up by it in the twinkling of an eye. This conception rests on a misunderstanding of Count Bernard's teaching about the King's plunge in the fountain. But the solution of gold is a more difficult matter than these gentry appear to have any idea of. It requires the highest skill so to regulate the fire in the first stage of the work as to solve the bodies without injuring the tincture. Attend to my teaching therefore. Take the body which I have shewed you, put it into the water of our sea, and bring to bear on the compound the proper degree of heat, till dews and mists begin to ascend, and the moisture is diminished night and day without intermission. Know that at first the two do not affect each other at all, and that only in course of time the body absorbs some of the water, and thus causes each to partake of the other's nature. Only part of the water is sublimed; the rest gradually penetrates the pores of the body, which are thereby more and more softened, till the soul of the gold is enabled gently to pass out. Through the mediation of the soul the body is reconciled and united to the spirit, and their union is signalized by the appearance of the black colour. The whole operation lasts about 40-50 days, and is called the Regimen of Mercury, because the body is passive throughout, and the spirit, or Mercury, brings about all the changes of colour, which begin to appear about the 20th day, and gradually intensify till all be at last completed in black of the deepest dye, which the both day will manifest.

## Chapter XXV

### The Regimen of the Second Part, which is that of Saturn

The Regimen of Mercury, the operation whereof despoils the King of his golden garments, is followed by the Regimen of Saturn. When the Lion dies the Crow is born. The substance has now become of a uniform colour, namely, as black as pitch, and neither vapours, or winds, or any other signs of life are seen; the whole is dry as dust, with the exception of some pitch-like substance, which now and then bubbles up; all presents an image of eternal death. Nevertheless, it is a sight which gladdens the heart of the Sage. For the black colour which is seen is bright and brilliant; and if you behold something like a thin paste bubbling up here and there, you may rejoice. For it is the work of the quickening spirit, which will soon restore the dead bodies to life. The regulation of the fire is a matter of great importance at this juncture; if you make it too fierce, and thus cause sublimation at this stage, everything will be irrecoverably spoilt. Be content,

therefore, to remain, as it were, in prison for forty days and nights, even as was the good Trevisan, and employ only gentle heat. Let your delicate substance remain at the bottom, which is the womb of conception, in the sure hope that after the time appointed by the Creator for this Operation, the spirit will arise in a glorified state, and glorify its body -- that it will ascend and be gently circulated from the centre to the heavens, then descend to the centre from the heavens, and take to itself the power of things above and things below.

## **Chapter XXVI**

### **Of the Regimen of Jupiter**

Black Saturn is succeeded by Jupiter, who exhibits divers colours. For after the putrefaction and conception, which has taken place at the bottom of the vessel, there is once more a change of colours and a circulating sublimation. This *Reign* or Regimen, lasts only three weeks. During this period you see all conceivable colours concerning which no definite account can be given. The "showers" that fall will become more numerous as the close of this reign approaches, and its termination is signalized by the appearance of a snowy white streaky deposit on the sides of the vessel. Rejoice, then, for you have successfully accomplished the regimen of Jupiter. What you must be particularly careful about in this operation, is to prevent the young ones of the Crow from going back to the nest when they have once left it; secondly, to let your earth get neither too dry by an immoderate sublimation of the moisture, nor yet to swamp and smother it with the moisture. These ends will be attained by the proper regulation of the outward heat.

## **Chapter XXVII**

### **Of the Regimen of the Moon**

When the Reign of Jupiter comes to an end (towards the close of the fourth month) you will see the sign of the waxing moon (Crescent), and know that the whole Reign of Jupiter was devoted to the purification of the Laton. The mundifying spirit is very pure and brilliant, but the body that has to be cleansed is intensely black. While it passes from blackness to whiteness, a great variety of colours are observed; nor is it at once perfectly white; at first it is simply white --- afterwards it is of a dazzling, snowy splendour. Under this Reign the whole mass presents the appearance of liquid quicksilver. This is called the sealing of the mother in the belly of the infant whom she bears; and its intermediate colours are more white than black, just as in the Reign of Jupiter they were more black than white. The Reign of the Moon lasts just three weeks; but before its close, the substance exhibits a great variety of forms; it will become liquid, and again coagulate a hundred times a day; sometimes it will present the appearance of fishes' eyes, and then again of tiny silver trees, with twigs and leaves. Whenever you look at it you will have cause for astonishment, particularly when you see it all divided into beautiful but very minute grains of silver, like the rays of the Sun. This is the White Tincture, glorious to behold, but nothing in respect of what it may become.

## **Chapter XXVIII**

## **Of the Regimen of Venus**

The substance, if left in the same vessel, will once more become volatile and (though already perfect in its way) will undergo another change. But if you take it out of the vessel, and after allowing it to cool, put it into another, you will not be able to make anything of it. In this Reign you should also give careful attention to your fire. For the perfect Stone is fusible and if the fire be too powerful the substance will become glazed, and unsusceptible of any further change. This "vitrification" of the substance may happen at any time from the middle of the Reign of the Moon to the tenth day of the Reign of Venus, and should be carefully guarded against. The heat should be gentle so as to melt the compound very slowly and gradually; it will then raise bubbles, and receive a spirit that will rise upward, carrying the Stone with it, and imparting to it new colours, especially a copper-green colour, which endures for some time, and does not quite disappear till the twentieth day; the next change is to blue and livid, and at the close of this Reign the colour is a pale purple. DO not irritate the spirit too much --- it is more corporeal than before, and if you sublime it to the top of the vessel, it will hardly return. The same caution should be observed in the Reign of the Moon, when the substance begins to thicken. The law is one of mildness, and not of violence, lest everything should rise to the top of the vessel, and be consumed or vitrified to the ruin of the whole work. When you see the green colour, know that the substance now contains the germ of its highest life. DO not turn the greenness into blackness by immoderate heat. This Reign is maintained for forty days.

## **Chapter XXIX Of the Regimen of Mars**

When the Regimen of Venus is over, and therein has appeared the philosophical tree, with all its branches and leaves, the Reign of Mars begins with a light yellow, or dirty brown colour, but at last exhibits the transitory hues of the Rainbow, and the Peacock's Tail. At this stage the compound is drier, and often shews like a hyacinth with a tinge of gold. The mother being now sealed in her infant's belly, swells and is purified, but because of the present great purity of the compound, no putridness can have place in this regimen, but Some obscure colours are chief actors, while some middle colours come and go, and they are pleasant to look on. Our Virgin Earth is now undergoing the last degree of its cultivation, and is getting ready to receive and mature the fruit of the Sun. Hence you should Weep up a moderate temperature; then there will be seen, about the thirtieth day of this Reign, an orange colour, which, within two weeks from its first appearance, will tinge the whole substance with its own hue.

## **Chapter XXX Of the Regimen of the Sun**

As you are now approaching the end of the work, the substance receives a golden tinge, and the Virgin's Milk which you give your substance to drink has assumed a deep orange colour. Pray to God to keep you from haste and impatience at this stage of the work; consider that you have now waited for seven months, and that it would be foolish to let one hour rob you of the fruits of all your labour. Therefore be more and more careful the nearer you approach perfection. Then you will first observe an orange-coloured sweat

breaking out on the body; next there will be vapour of an orange hue. Soon the body below becomes tinged with violet and a darkish purple. At the end of fourteen or fifteen days, the substance will be, for the most part, humid and ponderous, and yet the wind still bears it in its womb. Towards the 26th day of the Reign it will begin to get dry, and to become liquid and solid in turn (about a hundred times a day); then it becomes granulated; then again it is welded together into one mass, and so it goes on changing for about a fortnight. At length, however, an unexpectedly glorious light will burst from your substance, and the end will arrive three days afterwards. The substance will be granulated, like atoms of gold (or motes in the Sun), and turn a deep red --- a red the intensity of which makes it seem black like very pure blood in a clotted state. This is the Great Wonder of Wonders, which has not its like on earth.

### **Chapter XXXI**

#### **Of the Fermentation of the Stone**

I forgot to warn you in the last chapter to be on your guard against the danger of vitrification; too fierce a fire would render your substance insoluble and prevent its granulation. You now possess the incombustible red Sulphur which can no longer be affected in any way by fire. In order to obtain the Elixir from this Sulphur by reiterate solution and coagulation, take three parts of purest gold, and one part of this fiery Sulphur. Melt the gold in a clean crucible, and then cast your Sulphur into it (protecting it well from the smoke of the coals) Make them liquid together, when you will obtain a beautiful mass of a deep red, though hardly transparent. This you should permit to cool, and pound into a small powder. Of this powder take one part, and two parts of our Mercury; mix them well, and put them in a glass vessel, well sealed. They should be exposed to gentle heat for two months. This is the true fermentation, which may be repeated if needful.

### **Chapter XXXII**

#### **The Imbibition of the Stone**

Many authors take fermentation in this work for the invisible external agent, which they call ferment; by its virtue the fugitive and subtle spirits, without laying on of hands, are of their own accord thickened, and our before-mentioned fermentation they call cibation with bread and milk. But I follow my own judgment There is another operation, called Imbibition of the Stone, by which its quantity rather than its quality is increased. It is this: Add to three parts of your perfect Sulphur (either white or red) one part of water, and after six or seven days' coction the water will become thick like the Sulphur Add again as much water as you did before; and when this is dried up, with a convenient fire, add three distinct times so much water as shall be equal to one-third of the original quantity of Sulphur. Then add (for the 7th imbibition) five parts of water (the parts being equal to the original parts of the Sulphur). Seal up the vessel; subject it to gentle coction, and let the compound pass through all the different Reigns of the original Substance, which will be accomplished in a month. Then you have the true Stone of the third order, one part of which will perfectly tinge 1,000 parts of any other metal.

### **Chapter XXXIII**



## **The Multiplication of the Stone**

Take the perfect Stone; add one part of it to three or four parts of purified Mercury of our first work, subject it to gentle coction for seven days (the vessel being carefully sealed up), and let it pass through all the Reigns, which it will do very quickly and smoothly. The tinging power of the substance will thus be exalted a thousandfold; and if you go through the whole process a second time (which you can do with ease in three days) the Medicine will be much more precious still. This you may repeat as often as you like; the third time the substance will run through all the Reigns in a day, the fourth time in a single hour, and so on -- and the improvement in its quality will be most marvellous. Then kneel down and render thanks to God for this precious treasure.

### **Chapter XXXIV Of Projection**

Take four parts of your perfect Stone, either red or white (of both for the Medicine): melt them in a clean crucible. Take one part of this pulverisable mixture to ten parts of purified Mercury; heat the Mercury till it begins to crackle, then throw in your mixture, which will pierce it in the twinkling of an eye; increase your fire till it be melted, and you will have a Medicine of an inferior order. Take one part of this, and add it to a large quantity of well purged and melted metal, which will thereby be transmuted into the purest silver or gold (according as you have taken white or red Sulphur). Note that it is better to use a gradual projection, for otherwise there may be a notable loss of the Medicine. The better the metals are purged and refined, the quicker and more complete will the transmutation be.

### **Chapter XXXV Of the Manifold Uses of this Art**

He that has once found this Art, can have nothing else in all the world to wish for, than that he may be allowed to serve his God in peace and safety. He will not care for pomp or dazzling outward show. But if he lived a thousand years, and daily entertained a million people, he could never come to want, since he has at hand the means of indefinitely multiplying the Stone both in weight and virtue, and thus of changing all imperfect metals in the world into gold. In the second place, he has it in his power to make stones and diamonds far more precious than any that are naturally procured. In the third place, he has an Universal Medicine, with which he can cure every conceivable disease, and, indeed, as to the quantity of his Medicine, he might heal all sick people in the world. Now to the King Eternal, Immortal, and sole Almighty, be everlasting praise for these His unspeakable gifts and invaluable treasures. I exhort all that possess this Treasure, to use it to the praise of God, and the good of their neighbours, in order that they may not at the last day be eternally doomed for their ingratitude to their Creator.

*To God Alone be the Glory*

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## **Aphorisms of Urbigerus**

*Aphorismi Urbigerani, Or Certain Rules Clearly demonstrating the Three Infallible Ways of Preparing the Grand Elixir or Circulatum majus of the Philosophers*  
*London, 1690*

### **To our Dear Disciples, Honor'd Coadepts, and all Well-Wishers to our Hermetic Art.**

Finding you, dear Sons who have through our means attained to the true knowledge of our first Matter, worthy to receive our farther Instructions in the remainder of the Process, to extirpate all such Ambiguities, as you may have conceived in our Absence, to facilitate your Labors, and to precaution you in the bringing your Work to its Highest Perfection. We here, according to your desire, expose to you, and for your sakes, to the Public, all the most infallible Rules, necessary for preventing of Errors in this great Undertaking And tho you, ever - honored Coadepts, could never yet so far prevail on yourselves as to come to a Resolution of presenting the World with the full Practice of this our Art, joined to the Theory, we are nevertheless most certain, that we shall not receive any Reprimand from you for bringing to light these our Rules which we have so penned, that even those, who know not our Person, will not only soon perceive, that all we have written, is the real Truth, clearly exhibiting both the Theory and Practice of the whole Hermetic Art, but also conclude, that these Operations must of necessity have very often passed through our own hands from our giving such positive Rules and infallible Instructions, elucidating all the most obscure and intricate Enigrns of time Philosophers, and warning them of all the Accidents, that may happen is the working of our Subject. We are, we say, confident, you neither will, nor can blame us for this: since you will easily discern, that our Design is purely to instruct our Disciples, and prevent all the Well-wishers to this most noble Art from being imposed upon, and cheated, by any false pretended Adept : to the end that those, who shall from the Divine Benignity, by the help of these our Aphorisms, or otherwise, have received the blessed knowledge of our first Matter, which is the very same in all our three ways of producing the grand Elixir, may through these our certain Rules obtain the accomplishment of their Desires.

Having in our Travels fortun'd to meet with some Persons of true Principles in Philosophy and Religion, we could not but embrace them and instruct them towards its farther Perfection, which cannot be attained without the true knowledge of our Celestial Art. by which comprehending all the Mystery of Mysteries, we learn also how to serve God in Faith and Truth. And since we have no Obligation to any living Soul for time knowledge, we possess, having attained it all by the only Blessing of Almighty God on our Industry and Experiences being therefore at more liberty than those, who receive such a Favor from us, or some other Adept, 'tis our Determination, whenever we meet with Persons so qualified, always to do the same. Wherefore being at present in England though we are no Native of this Kingdom we think it necessary to set forth these our Aphorisms in the English tongue not in the least doubting, but that the Knowing, minding only the sense, will easily pardon any Impropriety, they may find in our Expressions: and when Providence shall carry us into any other Country, we, having attained to some competent Knowledge of most European Languages, shall again take care to publish them in the Speech of the Place, where we shall be. that we may the sooner obtain the effects of our Desires, which aim at nothing, but the undeceiving of the World by setting down certain and evident Marks, distinguishing the Worthy from the Unworthy, and at the bringing of Men to leave their unnecessary Forms, by instructing them in the true way of Serving God, being the only means to render them happy both in this World, and the next.

## Aphorismi Urbigerani

I. The Hermetic Science consists only in the right knowledge of the first Matter of the Philosophers which is in the Mineral kingdom not yet determined by Nature.

II. An undetermined Matter being the beginning of all Metals and Minerals, it follows, that as soon as any one shall be so happy, as to know and conceive it, he shall easily comprehend also their Natures, Qualities, and Properties.

III. Although some Persons, possessed with foolish Notions, dream, that the first Matter is to be found only in some particular places, at such and such times of the year, and by the Virtue of a Magical Magnet; yet we are most certain (according to our Divine Master Hermes) that, all these Suppositions being false, it is to be found every where, at all times and only by our Science.

IV The Hermetic Art consists in the true Manipulation of our undetermined Subject, which before it can be brought to the highest degree of Perfection, must of necessity undergo all our Chymical Operations.

V. Our Chymical Operations are these Amalgamation Sublimation, Dissolution Filtration, Cohobation, Distillation, Separation, Reverberation, Imbibition, and Digestion.

VI. When we call all these Operations ours, they are not all to be understood according to the common Operations of the Sophisters of Metals, whose Industry consists only in disguising of Subjects from their Form, and their Nature: but ours are really to transfigure our Subject, yet conserving its Nature, Quality, and Property.

VII. This our Subject, after its having passed through all those artificial Operations, which always imitate Nature, is called the Philosophers Stone, or the fifth Essence of Metals, being compounded of the Essence of their four Elements.

VIII. Time Metals and Minerals, which Nature already determined, although they should be retrograded into running Mercury Water, and Vapor; yet can they by no means be taken for the first Matter of the Philosophers.

IX. Our true and real Matter is only a Vapor, impregnated with the Metallic Seed, yet undetermined, created by God Almighty, generated by the Concurrence and Influence of time Astrums, contained in the Bowels of the Earth, as the Matrix of all created things.

X This our Matter is called undetermined, because, being a Medium between a Metal and a Mineral, and being neither of them, it has in it power to produce both, according to the Subject, it meets withal.

XI. Such a Metallic Vapor, congealed and nourished in the Bowels of the Earth. is called the undermined, and when it enchants the Serpent with the Beauty of its terminated and additional Fire, the determined Green - Dragon of the Philosopher and without the true knowledge and right Manipulation of it nothing can be

done in our Art.

XII. This Green-Dragon is the natural Gold of the Philosophers, exceedingly different from the vulgar, which is corporeal and dead, being come to the period of its Perfection according to Nature, and therefore incapable of generating, unless it be first generated itself by our Mercurial Water but ours is spiritual, and living, having the generative Faculty in itself, and in its own Nature, and having received the Masculine Quality from the Creator of all things .

XIII. Our Gold is called Natural, because it is not to be made by Art, and since it is known to none, but the true Disciples of Hermes, who understand how to separate it from its original Lump, 'tis called also Philosophical; and if God had not been so gracious, as to create this first Chaos to our hand, all our Skill and Art in the Construction of the great Elixir would be in vain.

XIV. Out of this our Gold, or undetermined Green-Dragon, without the addition of any other created thing whatsoever, we know how through our Universal Menstruum to extract all our Elements. or Principles, necessary for the performance of our great Work: Which is Our first way of preparing the Grand Elixir and since this our first Chaos is to be had without any Expense, as costing only the trouble of digging it out of the Mines, This is not unfitly called the only way of the Poor.

XV The Operations in this our first way being in a manner the same with those of our second, which is, when we join our determined Dragon with our Serpent, we shall (to avoid Repetitions) in the subsequent Aphorisms give Instructions for them both together.

XVI. Our Serpent, which is also contained in the Bowels of the Earth, being of all created things whatsoever the nearest subject of a Feminine Nature to our Dragon, through their Copulation such an astral and metallic Seed, containing our Elements, is also to be brought forth as can, though with somewhat more of Expense and Time, perform the whole Mystery of Hermes.

XVII. Since our Serpent is of all created things the nearest subject of Feminine Nature to our Dragon, she is after her Copulation to be taken for the Basis of our Philosophical Work: for out of her Bowels, without the help of any other Metal or Mineral ,we must draw our Principles or Elements, necessary to our Work, being retrograded by the Universal Menstruum.

XVIII. This Feminine Subject cannot be retrograded, unless to free her from her Impurities, and Heterogeneous Qualities, she is first actuated by her Homogeneous ones, that she may be in better Capacity to receive the spiritual Love of our Green Dragon.

XIX After our Serpent has been bound with her Chain, penetrated with the Blood of our Green-Dragon, and driven nine, or ten times through the combustible Fire into the elementary Air, if you do not find her to be exceeding furious, and extremely penetrating,, 'tis a sign, that you do not hit our Subject, the Notion of the Homogenea, or their Proportion.

XX If this furious Serpent, after it has been dissolved by the Universal Menstruum, filtrated, evaporated, and congealed nine or ten times, does not come over in a Cloud, and turn into our Virgin Milk, or Metallic argentin Water, not corrosive at all, and yet insensibly, and invisibly devouring every thing, that comes near it, 'tis plainly to be seen that you err in the Notion of our Universal Menstruum.

XXI. The Serpent, of which I now speak, is our true Water of the Clouds, or the real Eagle and Mercury of the Philosophers, greatly different from the Vulgar, which is corporeal, gross, dead, and full of Heterogeneous Qualities, and a Subject fallen from its Sphere, like unripe Fruit from the Tree; but ours is spiritual, transparent, living, residing in its own Sphere, like a King on his Throne

XXII. Though the vulgar Mercury is such an unripe fruit, corporeal, and dead; yea, if you know how to amalgamate it with our Dragon, and to retrograde it with the Universal Menstruum, you may assure your self, that out of this also you shall be able to prepare a Sophic Mercury, with which you shall certainly produce the great Elixir, discover the Secret of Secrets, unlock the most difficult Locks, and command all the Treasures in World.

XXIII. Our Mercury is called the Mercury of the Philosophers, because it is a Subject, which is not to be found ready prepared to our hand : for it must of necessity be made by our Philosophical Preparations, out of the first Chaos, and although it is Artificial, yet it is naturally prepared, Nature, which is imitated in the Preparation of it, contributing likewise thereunto.

XXIV. Since our Subject cannot be called the fiery Serpent of the Philosophers, nor have the power of overcoming any created thing, before it has received such Virtue and Quality from our Green-Dragon, and the Universal Menstruum, by which itself is first overcome, devoured, and buried in their Bowels, out of which being born again, 'tis made capable of the same, it follows, that such a Virtue of killing and vivifying is natural to our Dragon and the Universal Menstruum.

XXV. The Universal Menstruum of the Philosophers is that Celestial one, without which nothing can live nor subsist in this World: 'tis also that noble Champion, which delivers time uncorrupted Virgin, Andromeda, who was with a strong Chain fastened to the: Rock in the power of the Dragon, of whole spiritual Love having admitted, for fear of being eternally ruined and devoured by him (which could not have been avoided, if this noble Champion had not come to her assistance) She is to be delivered of a Child, which will be the Wonder of Wonders, and Prodigy of Nature.

XXVI. If our Virgin in her Confinement, before she is set at liberty, does not manifest her extreme Beauty with all her internal, divers, delicate natural Colors wonderfully charming, and very pleasant to the Eye, it signifies, that she has not sufficiently enjoyed the spiritual Company of the Dragon.

XXVII. If the Universal Menstruum has not totally delivered the Virgin from the Claws of the Dragon, it is a sign, either that she was not sufficiently free from her Heterogeneous Qualities, or that she had not received from the external Heat a sufficient penetrating Quality, or that the Universal Menstruum was too weak to perform its Undertaking.

XXVIII. To know, whether the Amalgamation, Sublimation, Dissolution, Filtration, Coagulation, and Distillation have been Natural and Philosophical, the whole Body of the Serpent must come over spiritual and transparent, leaving only some few and very light Feces at the bottom, which can by no Art be reduced! - either into a running Mercury, or and other kind of metallic Substance.

XXIX. After all these above-mentioned Operations, and the Separation, if our Serpent, being amalgamated with any Metal, pure or impure, cannot suffer the Fusion, it will be in vain for you to go any farther with it:

for you may assure your self, that you do not walk in the true Paths of the Hermetic Art.

XXX. Our Philosophical Distillations consist only in the right Separation of our Spiritual and Mercurial Water from all its poisonous oily Substance, which is of no use at all in our Art, and from though Caput Mortuum, which is left behind after the first Distillation.

XXXI. If after the first Distillation an exceedingly corrosive and extremely penetrating red Oil does not ascend (which as soon as it begins to appear in the Neck of the Retort, the Receiver must be changed it signifies that the Distillation has not been rightly performed, and by Consequence, that the internal Fire of our metallic vaporous Water, being burnt up, and corroded by its poisonous Vapor, and the outward Fire, is still mixed with it, and with the Caput Mortuum.

XXXII . In case you should commit so great an Error in the performance of this first Distillation, although it will never be in your power to prepare the Mercury Duplex of the Philosophers, unless you should begin the whole World ager; from the very beginning; yet, if you have any farther Skill in our Art, you may easily prepare our Mercury Simplex, with which you will effect great and miraculous things.

XXXIII. This blood red Oil with its only Fumes penetrates every Part and Atom of all Metals and Minerals, and principally of Gold out of which Dissolution one may easily extract the right Tincture or Essence with highly rectified Spirit of Wine, and bring it over the Alembic with it: which is indeed a great Medicine for humane Bodies.

XXXIV. A deep blood-red Tincture of excellent Virtue is to be extracted also out of the above-mentioned Caput Mortuum. accidentally and unfortunately intermixed with the internal Sulfur of our Mercurial Water, and with the red Oil, with highly rectified Spirit of Wine : with which after it has been evaporated to a Powder, imbibed, and Philosophically digested, you may assure your self of having the Medicine of Medicines, next to the great Elixir, by which you may, imperceptibly and quickly cure all sorts of Distempers, to the great Admiration. Of all Galenists, and to the Astonishment of all Vulgar Chymists.

XXXV. The most part of the Philosophers, whilst their Intention was to go farther to the noblest Perfection of our Celestial Art, either employed this red Oil brought to a Potability, for internal Medicines, or to external Diseases without any farther Preparation of it, till they had obtained the great Elixir.

XXXVI. If the Caput Mortuum has not the Magnetic Quality in attracting the Spiritus Mundi into itself from the Astrums, it is a sign, that at time end of the Distillation of the red Oil the outward fire was so violent, as quite to burn up the Magnet, which is contained in the first Feces of our Mercurial Water.

XXXVII. After the first Distillation, if the least Part of the Virgin Mercurial Water can by any Art whatsoever be brought to running Mercury, or any other kind of a Metallic Substance, it is an evident sign, that either the Subject, or its Preparation and Reduction into Water, has not been real, natural, or Philosophical.

XXXVIII. The above-mentioned Spiritus Mundi, although of no use at all in this our great Work, is yet a great Menstruum in extracting of Tinctures out of Metals, Minerals, Animals, and Vegetables, and in performing great things in the Art volatilizing all fixed Bodies, and principally Gold.

XXXIX. A great many Pretenders to the true Hermetic Knowledge prepare Menstruums, to dissolve common Mercury, and to turn it into Water several manner of ways, and by several additions of Salts, Sulfurs, Metals, and Minerals. but, since all those Preparations are sophistical, any one, expert in our Art, will be able to reduce it to its running Quality again.

XL. The Quality of our Mercurial Water: being to volatilize all fixed Bodies, and to fix all those, that are volatile, fixing It self with those, that are fixed, according to the Proportion of it, dissolving its own Body, it unites inseparably with it, conserving always its own Qualities and Properties, and receives no Augmentation from any other created thing, but only from its crude Body.

XLI. Our Mercurial Water has such a sympathy with the Astrums, that, if it is not kept very close, and Hermetically sealed, it will in a very short time, like a winged Serpent, fly away in a wonderful manner to its own Sphere, carrying along with it all the Elements and Principles of Metals, and not leaving so much as one single drop, or the least remainder, behind.

XLII. Several Pretenders to the Magical Science prepare Magical Magnets, to draw from the Air, and (as they pretend) from the Astrums such Menstruums, as they think necessary for the Production of the Great Elixir; but their Magnets being compounded of several determinate things, although their Menstruums are great Dissolvents yet we do on assured knowledge affirm that they can never perform any real Experiments in our Art.

XLIII. Some are of Opinion, that, unless the Operator is Master in the Magical Science, and fundamentally understands all its Experiments, he will never be able by any other Art whatsoever to bring forth any such things, as can produce the Universal Elixir. Now, although we do not deny, that the Magical Knowledge is required to attain to the highest degree of Perfection in all Sciences, yea; we are most certain, that it is not at all necessary to the Formation of the Grand Elixir upon Animals, Metals, Precious Stones, and Vegetables.

XLIV. Our Virgin Milk, or Metallic Water, being brought to a perfect Spirituality, and excellent Diaphanity, is called the true Chaos of the Philosophers: for out of that alone, without any addition of any created, or artificially prepared thing, we are to prepare and separate all the Elements, which are required to the Formation of our Philosophical Microcosm.

XLV. To understand aright, how out of this our Chaos we are to form our Philosophical Microcosm, we must first of necessity rightly comprehend the great Mystery and Proceeding in the Creation of the Macrocosm: it being extremely necessary to imitate and use the very same Method in the Creation of our little one, that the Creator of all things has used in the Formation of the great. One.

XLVI. When our Chaos or Celestial Water has purified itself from its own gross and palpable Body, it is called the Heaven of the Philosophers, and the palpable Body the Earth, which is void, empty, and dark : And if our Divine Spirit, which is carried upon the face of the Waters, did not bring forth out of the palpable Body that precious Metallic Seed, we should never be able by any Art whatsoever to go on any farther with time perfect Creation of our Microcosm according to our Intent.

XLVII. This Heaven of the Philosophers, after it has separated itself from the Earth, containing our Philosophical Seed, and the Magnet of our Salt of Nature, and from the superfluous Waters, is called the Mercury simplex of the wise men. for whosoever attains it, at the same time attains also the Knowledge and



Power of retrograding Metals, Minerals, &c. so as to reduce them to their first Being, to perfect imperfect Bodies, and to vivify dead ones, conserving always its own Property and Quality to it self, and to produce the Great Elixir according to the usual ways of the Philosophers.

XLVIII. After we have separated the Water from the Water, by which I mean the Mercurial Celestial Water from the superfluous Water, which is the Flegm, by the Blessing of God and the Infusion of our holy Spirit, we do not in the least doubt, but we shall be able to bring forth out of our Earth such Fruits and Subjects, with which we shall certainly perform the whole Creation, carrying our Work to the highest Degree of Perfection.

XLIX. Our Mercurial Water being of the: same Brightness with the Heavens, and our palpable gross Body, which did separate it self from our Celestial Water. having the same Properties and Quality with the Earth, none, but Ignorance, will deny them to be the right Heaven and true Earth of the Philosophers.

L. If, after the Separation of the Spirit from the superfluous Waters, the World, in which it is contained, does not appear mighty clear, and full of light, and of the same brightness with our Celestial Water, it is a sign, that the Separation is not fully performed, the Spirit being still intermixed with the Waters.

LI. If in the space of nine or ten Weeks, or two Philosophical Months at longest, our Mercurial Water has not done separating it self from all its own Earth containing the Metallic Seed, it is an evident sign, that you have either erred in the working of it, or that its Digestion, having been too violent, has confounded and burnt up the principal Subject of the Creation.

LII. This Philosophic Earth, containing our principal Subject, after it has been separated from all the Waters, is very gently to be dried by some external Heat, to free it from its extraneous Humidity, that it may be in a proper Capacity to receive the Celestial Moisture of our Argentin Water, to which it unites its most noble Fruits, with which our Philosophical Microcosm is generated, nourished, and saturated.

LIII. If the Earth, after it has been reverberated, humected with our Celestial Moisture, does not presently enrich our Air with the divine expected Fruits, you must certainly believe, that in the drying of it the external Heat has been so violent, as to burn up the internal Head and Nature of the Earth, and consequently spoil your Undertaking as to the performance of the whole Mystery of the Creation, according to the noblest, richest, shortest, most natural, and secretest ways of the Philosophers.

LIV. In case the Earth should be totally destroyed by the violent external Heat, although it is most certain, you cannot carry on our noble Creation any farther with it; yet if you know how to amalgamate our Mercury simplex with your common Gold, which is dissolved, vivified, and renewed by it, you may be sure of effecting the Great Elixir, although neither so quick. So natural, nor so rich, as you might have done without it. And this is our third way.

LV. The Amalgamation of our Mercury simplex with common Gold consists only in the right Proportion, and in the indissoluble Union of both, which is done without any external Heat in a very short time, without which exact Proportion and right Union nothing of any Moment is to be expected from their Marriage.

LVI. Know then, that this right Proportion is ten parts of our Mercury simplex to one of your finest common Gold in filings, which is dissolved in it, like Ice in common Water, after an imperceptible manner,

and as soon as the Dissolution is over, the Coagulation and Putrefaction presently follow, which Effect, it you find not, 'tis a sign, that the Mercury exceeds its due Proportion. Now when your Gold has been thus well amalgamated, united, putrefied, and inseparably digested with our Mercury simplex, you will then have only our Philosophical Sulfur, in which time one might easily have performed the whole Work, working without common: Gold.

LVII. Although our Mercury simplex is exceedingly spiritual and volatile, yet since it is the right Agent, digesting the Seed or Essence of all Metals and Minerals it will, though undigested, naturally adhere to any of them although corporeal, that shall come near it, and will never leave it, unless it be forced away by the Test, though kept in a great Fusion for many hours.

LVIII. This Mercury simplex, which before its retrogradation was of a Feminine Nature, and before it left all its own Earth, was Hermaphroditic, being powerful in both Sexes, is now become of a Feminine Quality again, and although it has lost the Masculine visible Fire. yet it has conserved its own, which is invisible to us, and with which it performs visible Operations in digesting of imperfect Metals, after its Determination with any of them.

LIX. If this our Mercury (the Proportion rightly observed) should be amalgamated with any imperfect Metal, being first determined with a fixed one, it will regenerate and perfect the same, not losing the least Particle of its Virtue or Quantity: Which Metal after the digestion of a Philosophical Month will (as most Philosophers teach) be able to resist all manner of Tryals, and will be far better than any Natural one.

LX. The Determination of our Mercury simplex with any of the fixt Bodies is to be done by dissolving a small quantity of Filings of red or white according to the Color and Quality of the Metal, that you desire to meliorate, and if you do not err in the Separation and Union of the Subjects, you may assure your self of obtaining your desire after a Philosophical Digestion.

LXI. To examine aright, whether the Mercury simplex is rightly prepared, or come to its Perfection, one only Drop, put upon a red-hot Plate of Copper, must whiten it through and through, and must not part with it, although brought into a great Fusion: Which, if you find, it does not, it will be a plain Demonstration, that either your Mercury is not well prepared, or that it has not yet done separating itself from its own Earth.

LXII. If your Mercury simplex, put upon its own dried Earth, does not presently unite with the Essence of Metals, appearing deeper than any Blood, and shining brighter than any Fire, which is a mark of the Reception of its own internal Fire, and that the Eagle has suckt the Blood of our Red Lion, it is an evident sign, that you have erred in the Manipulation of the Earth.

LXIII. This Mercury, thus impregnated with its Essence, or Sulphur of Metals, is called the Mercury duplex of the Philosophers, which is of a far greater Quality, and Virtue than the simplex, with whose Imbibitions in the Salt of Nature, after its being saturated with the simplex, the whole Mystery of the Creation of the Philosophical Microcosm is maintained and perfected.

LXIV. To know, whether your Mercury duplex is Philosophically prepared, and sufficiently impregnated with its own internal Natural Fire, put one single Drop of it upon a red-hot Plate of fine Silver: and if the Silver is not by this Drop penetrated through and through with a deep-red Tincture, enduring the greatest fire of Fusion, it will signifie, that you either fail in the Preparation of it, or that you have not given it time

enough to receive a full Saturation out of its own Earth.

LXV. This deep-red Tincture, extracted out of our Philosophical Earth, is called our Sulphur, our undigested, essentificated Gold, our internal elementary Fire, and our Red-Lion: for without its Help and Concurrence our Philosophical World cannot be nourished, digested, or accomplished, being the right Ground, and true Essence of the whole work of our Creation.

LXVI. When the Earth has lost its Soul, the remainder of it is the true Magnet, attracting the Salt of Nature from the combustible Fire after a violent Calcination for several hours: which Salt, after its Purification and Clarification, is called the clarified Earth or Salt of the Philosophers, which, Uniting it self with our single and double Mercury, after their Digestion, is called by our Master Hermes the Universal Spirit earthified.

LXVII. The Extraction, Purification, and Clarification of our Earth or Salt of Nature is to be performed by our Mercury simplex: which being put upon the reverberated Earth, will presently draw to it self, and unite it self with it, yet separable by gentle Distillation, after which the clarified Salt of the Philosophers is at hand.

LXVIII. Although we use our Mercury simplex in the Extraction of its own Soul out of its Body, and for the Clarification of the latter; yet, since it is a philosophical and perpetual Menstruum, it loses nothing of its connatural Prerogatives, nor does in the least diminish in Quantity, being our true Alkahest, as Paracelsus is pleased to call it.

LXIX. Those three Principles, or Elements of our Chaos, perfectly separated from their Impurities, and brought to their highest Perfection, are rightly called the three Herculean Works: for after the Preparation of them all the Labor, Trouble, and Danger will be past.

LXX. Some foolish Operators pretend, that our Great Elixir is to be prepared in a very easie manner, and without any trouble at all, to whom we will with our Master Hermes, briefly answer, That such Impostors neither know our Matter, nor the right Preparation of it. Yet we do not deny, but any Healthy Person, of what Age soever he may be, may understand all our Herculean Labors, necessary to the Performance of it.

LXXI. These our Operations are therefore called Herculean in respect to the rest of the Work, which is exceeding easie, and without the least Trouble or Danger, being for that reason called Childrens Play, because a Child or a Woman, that has any Sense, may easily work it, and bring it to the highest Perfection, according to the Saying of all true Philosophers.

LXXII. Although all those above-mentioned Operations are, according to the common Opinion of the Philosophers, esteemed difficult, and dangerous; yet we can upon our Conscience assure you, that we have our self alone without the help of any Creature living prepared them all on a common Kitchin Fire, as is very well known to several Coadepts, our Friends, who could not but admire and approve of our Industry.

LXXIII. No true Adept or perfect Artist can deny, but that the whole Work of the Great Elixir may from the very beginning to the end be performed on one only Furnace, in one only sort of Vessel, and by one only Person alone, at a very small charge.

LXXIV. Some Impostors would perswade the Vulgar, that Gold, Silver, and many other Ingredients are

required to the making of the Grand Elixir according to our noblest ways: which the Doctrines of all the Philosophers, and our own infallible Rules clearly shew to be false: for 'tis most certain, that we neither use any of their Ingredients, nor yet any Silver or Gold, (unless, as we have mentioned, in our third way) till we come to the Fermentation of our Elixirs.

LXXV. We do with all true Philosophers assure you, that all things, necessary for our Philosophical Work, besides the Fewel, Vessels, and some new Instruments, belonging to the Furnace, are to be purchased for less than the Expence of one single Guinea, and that every where, and at all times of the year.

LXXVI. Since neither Gold nor Silver is to be used at all in the Formation and Cibation of our Philosophical Work, it follows, that the old and common saying of some Authors, viz. That without working with Gold 'tis an impossible thing to make Gold, proved to be only a false Notion of Men, who understand not our Art.

LXXVI. When our Herculean Works are brought to Perfection, which is, when our three Principles, or Elements are prepared, purified and perfected, unless the Philosophical and unseparable Union of them is exactly performed, the Great Mystery of our Creation is not to be expected.

LXXVIII Our Principles or Elements being brought to a perfect and unseparable Union and Digestion, it is called the Triple Mercury of the Philosophers, which being finished, the whole Creation and Formation of our work is crowned.

LXXIX All our Work of the Creation from its very Beginning to its perfect End may, on our certain knowledg, be perfected in less than nine Months by any skilful and careful Artist, that follows our Rules, unless some Accident should happen in the Preparation of our Herculean Works: which to prevent, we wrought them our self in an earthen Vessel, which we count far better and surer than any Glass, and which is most agreeable to the Practice of the most ancient Philosophers.

LXXX. Before you come to the Union of your Elements, your clarified Earth is before all things to be digested in a moderate and continual Heat of Ashes, to free it from any unnatural Moisture, that it might have attracted after its Purification, to be in a fit Capacity to receive your Mercury simplex, by which it is to be nourished in its Infancy.

LXXXI. If your clarified Earth, after it has been digested the space of a whole Month, does not appear exceeding dry, subtil, and frangible, it will signifie, that you have failed in the Purification or Clarification of it, or that the external Moisture, it had attracted, is not yet parted from it.

LXXXII. Take great Care, that you do not begin your Imbibitions of your Earth, before you find it to be very well purified, clarified, dried, and brought to be very subtil, and extremely frangible: for it would be a great Detriment as well to your Work, as to your Mercury; and, although it should not spoil your Work, yet it would be to you a great loss of Time.

LXXXIII. After our clarified Earth had been brought to a perfect Purity, Dryness, and Frangibility, it is to be imbibed with the eighth part of our Mercury simplex, or Virgins Milk, which will in a very short time be soaked into it, as into a Sponge, which shews the hungry State of our Infant, and then the Fire is to be continued, till the Infant is hungry again.

LXXXIV. If in the space of two or three days, or four, at the farthest, the Infant does not shew it self to be extreme hungry by becoming very dry and frangible again, it will become an evident sign, that you have overcome it by your excessive feeding of it.

LXXXV. Great care is to be taken also in the feeding of the noble Infant: for if you do not well observe all our infallible Rules, you will never be able to bring it to a perfect Maturity: for in the Notion and Proportion of our Imbibitions, and the Management of them, the prosperous and unfailable End of our Work is to be expected.

LXXXVI. 'Tis always to be observed, that the Fire be very moderate, as long as you are making your Imbibitions, for fear or forcing any part of your Mercury to leave the Earth: for as a moderate Heat makes the Union between the Soul and the Body, and perfects all the Work: so on the contrary a too Violent Heat disunites and destroys all.

LXXXVII. The Infant being dry, the Imbibition is to be repeated again, and this Method is to be used, until the Matter has received its weight of the Mercury: at which time if you do not find it to flow like Wax, and be whiter then any Snow, and very fixt, you must proceed with your Imbibitions, until you perceive the same.

LXXXVIII. The Imbibitions are not to be made any oftner, than once every three or four days, in which time you will find your Matter, having soaked up all your Mercury, to be in great want of Food, which must be supplied, until it be saturated: the Mark of which will be, when it flows like Wax again.

LXXXIX. Your Matter being brought to a perfect Fluxibility, uncomparable Whiteness, and unalterable Fixedness, know then, that you have perfected the white Elixir, which, being fermented with fine Silver in Filings, will be in a Capacity to transmute all inferior Metals into the finest Silver in the World.

XC. Before the white Elixir is fermented with common Silver, you may multiply it, as well in Virtue, as in Quantity, by the Continuation of Imbibitions with the Mercury simplex, by which it may by Degrees be brought ad Infinitum in its Virtue.

XCI. The white Elixir being brought to its Degree of Maturity, desiring to go on to its highest Degree of Perfection, instead of fermenting it with Silver, it must be cibated with its own Flesh and Blood, which is the double Mercury, by which it being nourished, multiplied in Quality and Quantity, and digested, the whole Work is accomplished.

XCII. As soon as the first Imbibition is made, you will see a great Alteration in your Vessel: for there will be nothing seen but a Cloud, filling the whole space of the Vessel, the fixt being in controversie with the Volatil, and the Volatil with the fixt. The Volatil is Conqueror at the beginning, but as last by its own internal Fire, conjoynd with the external, both are united, and fixed inseparably together.

XCIII. It is to be observed, that the Glass Vessel, which must be oval, with a Neck half a foot long, and very strong, be of a fit bigness, and of such Capacity, that your Matter, when it is put into the Vessel, may take up only the third part of it, leaving the other two vacant: for, if it should be too big, it would be a great hinderance in performing the Work, and if too little, it would break into a thousand pieces.

XCIV. After you have cipated the noble Elixir with your double Mercury, before it can come to its perfect Fixedness, it must of necessity wander through all the States and Colours of Nature, by which we are to judg its Being and Temperament.

XCV. The constant and essential Colors, that appear in the Digestion of the Matter, and before it comes to a Perfection, are three, viz. Black, which signifies the Putrefaction and Conjunction of the Elements; White, which demonstrates its Purification; and Red, which demonstrates its Maturation. The rest of the Colors, that appear and disappear in the Progress of the Work, are only accidental, and unconstant.

XCVI. By every Cibation of its own Flesh and Blood, Regeneration of its Colors, and Digestion, the Infant will grow stronger and stronger, that at last being fully saturated and digested, it is called the Great Elixir of the Philosophers, with which you will be able to perform, Wonders is all the Regions, as well Animal, as Mineral, and Vegetable.

XCVII. When your Elixir is brought to a Fluxibility, and a perfect Fixedness, if you desire to make a Medicine upon Metals, you must determinate or ferment it with common Gold in Filings, in which Determination it will vitrify, and then you will have an incomparable Medicine, capable to transmute all imperfect Metals into the purst Gold, according to the Doctrine of all the Philosophers, though our self never designed any thing, but an universal Remedy for the Cure of all curable Diseases, incident to Human Bodies, as is well known to our Friends, who have enjoyed the Benefit of these our Labors.

XCVIII. It is to be observed in the Fermentation, that the Elixir exceed not the Ferment in Quantity, otherwise the Sponsal Ligament of it cannot be actually performed, and when the Ferment is predominant over the Elixir, all will be presently turned into dust.

XCIX. The best Method of Fermentation is to take one part of the Elixir, and put it into the midst of ten parts of Gold in Filings, cast through Antimony, to free it from all its Impurities, and to keep it in a circulary Fire for the space of six Hours, so increasing the Fire by Degrees, that the last two hours it be in a good Fusion, and when cold, you will find all your Matter exceeding frangible, and of the Color of the Granate-Stone.

C. Common Mercury, amalgamated with Lead, is counted the most proper Subject for making Projection, which being in Fusion, your fermented Matter being divided into three parts, one part of it rolled, in Wax, is to be flung upon the Amalgam: then presently cover the Crucible, and continue the Fire, until you hear the Noise of the Separation and Union: then the second and third part, as before, and being kept for two hours in a continual Fire of Fusion, let it cool by it self.

CI. Whoever shall presume to prepare the Great Elixir according to our most Secret Ways without following and observing all these our infallible Rules, will certainly find himself mightily mistaken at last, having after a great deal of Troubles, Charges, and Pains, reaped nothing but Discontent; and on the contrary they, that shall walk in our true and infallible Paths, shall with very little Trouble and Expences attain to their desired End, which we cordially wish to all those, who are sincere well-wishers to the Hermetic Philosophy.

# Aula Lucis, or, The House of Light.

Thomas Vaughan

*Aula lucis, or, The House of Light: A discourse written in the year 1651...* London, Printed by William Leake, 1652. This transcription has been made from the A.E. Waite edition of the works of Thomas Vaughan, rather than from the original edition.

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## Aula Lucis Thomas Vaughan

To Seleucus Abantiades

What you are I need not tell you: what I am you know already. Our Acquaintance began with my childhood, and now you see what you have purchased. I can partly refer my inclinations to yourself, and those only which I derive from the contemplative order; for the rest are beside your influence. I present you with the fruits of them, that you may see my light has water to play withal. Hence it is that I move in the sphere of generation and fall short of that test of Heraclitus: "Dry light is best soul." I need not expound this to you, for you are in the centre and see it. Howsoever, you may excuse me if I prefer conceptions to fancies. I could never affect anything that was barren, for sterility and love are inconsistent. Give me a knowledge that is fertile in performances, for theories without their effects are but nothings in the dress of things. How true this is you can tell me. If I but recite what is your own you must not therefore undervalue it, being in some sense a sacrifice; for men have nothing to give but what they receive. Suffer me then at the present to stand your censer and exhale that incense which your own hands have put in. I dare not say this is revelation, not can I boast with the prodigious artist you read of that I have lived three years "in the realm of light." It is enough that I have light, as the King of Persia had his Bride of the Sun; and truly, I think it happiness to have seen that candle lodged which our fathers judged to be wandering light, a light seeking habitation. But I grow absurd. I speak as if I would instruct you. Now — methinks — you ask me: Who reads this? It is I, Sir, that read the tactics here to Hannibal and teach him to break rocks with *vinacre*. I am indeed somewhat pedantic in this but the liberty you are still pleased to allow me has carried me beyond my cue. It is trespass you know that's very ordinary with me and some junior colleagues. Not can I omit those verses which you have been sometimes pleased to apply to this forwardness of mine.

Such was the steed in Grecian poets famed,  
Proud Cyllarus, by Spartan Pollux tamed;  
Such courses bore to fight the god of Thrace  
And such Achilles, was thy warlike race.

It is my opinion, Sir, that truth cannot be urged with too much spirit, so that I have not sinned here as to the thing itself, for the danger's only in your person. I am afraid my boldness has been such I may be thought to fall short of that reverence which I owe you. This is indeed which I dare call a sin, and I am so far from it that it is my private

wonder how I came to think of it. Suffer me then to be impertinent for once and give me leave to repent of an humour which I am confident you place not among my faults but among your own indulgences.

Your humble servant  
S.N.  
From Heliopolis, 1651

### To the Present Readers

It will be questioned perhaps by the envious to what purpose these sheets are prostituted, and especially that drug wrapped in them — the Philosopher's Stone. To these it is answered by Solomon in *Ecclesiastes* III,5: "There is a time to cast away stones." And truly — I must confess — I cast away this Stone, for I misplace it. I contribute that to the fabric which the builders in all ages have refused. But less I seem to act *sine proposito*, I must tell you I do it not for this generation, for they are as far from fire as the author is from smoke. Understand me if you can, for I have told you an honest truth. I write books, as the old Roman planted trees, for the glory of God and the benefit of posterity. It is my design to make over my reputation to a better age, for in this I would not enjoy it, because I know not any from whom I would receive it. And here you see how ambitious I am grown; but if you judge the humour amiss tell me not of it, less I should laugh at you. I look indeed a step further than your lives, and if you think I may die before you I would have you know it is the way to go beyond you.

To be short — if you attempt this discourse, you do it without my advice, for it is not fitted to your fortunes. There is a white magic this book is enchanted withal: it is an adventure for *Knights of the Sun*, and the errants of this time may not finish it? I speak this to the university Quixotes, and to those only who are ill-disposed as well as undisciplined. There is among them a generation of wasps, things that will fight though never provoked. These buckle on their logic as proof, but it fares with them as with the famous Don: they mistake a basin for a helmet. For mine own part I am no reformer. I can well enough tolerate their positions, for they do not trouble mine. What I write is no rule for them, but is a legacy deferred to posterity; for the future times, wearied with the vanities of the present, will perhaps seek after the truth and gladly entertain it. Thus you will see what readers I have predestined for myself; but if any present Mastix fastens on this discourse I wish him not to traduce it, less I should whip him for it. This is advice, which if be well observed, it is possible I may communicate more of this nature. I may stand up like a Pharos in a dark night and hold out that lamp which Philalethes has overcast with that envious phrase of the Rabbis. "Ofttimes the silence of wisdom."

## AULA LUCIS

I have resolved with myself to discourse of Light, the powder of projection, and to deliver it over to the hands of posterity, a practice certainly very ancient and first used by those who were primordially wise. It was used then for charity, not for pomp, the designs of those authors having nothing in them of glory but much of benefit. It was not their intention to brag that they themselves did see but to lead those who in some sense were blind and did not see. To effect this they proceeded not as some modern



barbarians do — by clamorous, malicious disputes. A calm instruction was proposed and, that being once rejected, was never afterwards urged, so different and remote a path from the schoolroom did they walk in; and verily they might well do it, for their principles being once resisted they could not inflict a greater punishment on their adversaries than to conceal them. Had their doctrine been such as the universities profess now their silence indeed had been a virtue; but their positions were not mere noise and notion. They were most deep experimental secrets, and those of infinite use and benefit. Such a tradition then as theirs may wear the style of the noble Verulam and is most justly called a Tradition of the Lamp. But I observe that in their delivery of mysteries they have, as in all things else, imitated Nature, who dispenses not her light without her shadows. They have provided a veil for their art, not so much for obscurity as ornament: and yet I cannot deny that some of them have rather buried the truth than dressed it. For my own part, I shall observe a middle way, neither too obscure nor too open, but such as may serve posterity and add some splendor to the science itself.

And now, whosoever you are that in times to come shall cast your eyes on this book, if you are corrupted with the common philosophy, do not presently rage and take up the pen in defiance of what is here written. It may be you have studied these three questions *pro forma* and quick you are to dispute. But have you concocted the whole body of philosophy? Have you made Nature the only business of your life? And have you arrived at last to an infallible experimental knowledge? If none of these things, upon what foundation do you build? It is mere quackering to oppose the dead and such perhaps as your betters do not attempt in your own time of life. But as one said: that advantage breeds baseness. So some may insult because their adversary is out of the way, and tell me with that friendly stoic: "Dost you not hear this, Amphiatius, you who are hidden under the earth."

If any such tares spring above ground, when I am under it, I have already looked upon them as an idle, contemptible bundle. I have prepared them a convenient destiny and by my present scorn annihilated their future malice. It is a better and more serious generation I would service, a generation that seeks Nature in the simplicity thereof and follows her not only with the tongue but with the hand. If you are such then as this character speaks, let me advise you not to despair. Give me leave also to affirm to you, and that on my soul, that the consequences and treasures of this art are such and so great that your best and highest wishes fall short of them. Read then with diligence what I shall write, and to your diligence add patience, to your patience hope; for these are neither fables nor follies.

For thee old stores of fame and power I steal,  
And holy springs audaciously unseal.

I tell you a truth as ancient as the fundamentals of the world. Now, less my preface should exceed in relation to the discourse itself, which must be but short, I will quit this preliminary, that I may bring thee within doors; and here will I show you the throne of light and the crystalline court thereof.

Light originally had no other birth than manifestation, for it was not made but discovered. It is properly the life of everything, and it is that which acts in all particulars; but the communion thereof with First Matter was celebrated by a general contract before any particulars were made. The matter of itself was a passive thin substance but apt to retain light, as smoke is to retain flame. After impregnation it was condensed to a crystalline moisture, unctuous and fiery, of nature hermaphroditic, and this in a double sense, in relation to a double centre — celestial and terrestrial. From the terrestrial center proceeded the earthly Venus, which is fiery and masculine, and

the earthly Mercury, which is watery and feminine. These two are one against the other. From the celestial center proceeded two living images, namely, a white and a red light; and the white light settled in the water but the red went into the earth. Hence you may gather some infallible signs, whereby you may direct yourselves in the knowledge of the Matter and in the operation itself, when the Matter is known. For if you have the true sperm and know withal how to prepare it—which cannot be without our secret fire — you shall find that the matter no sooner feels the philosophical heat but the white light will lift himself above the water, and there will he swim in his glorious blue vestment like the heavens.

But that I may speak something more concerning the chaos itself, I must tell you it is not rainwater nor dew, but it is a subtle mineral moisture, a water so extremely thin and spiritual, with such a transcendent, incredible brightness, there is not in all Nature any liquor like unto itself. In plain terms, it is the middle substance of the wise men's Mercury, a water that is coagulable and which may be hardened by a proper heat into stones and metals. Hence it was that the philosophers called it their Stone, or if it be lawful for me to reveal that which the devil out of envy would not discover to Illardus, I say they called it a Stone, to the end that no man might know what it was they called so. For there is nothing in the world so remote from the complexion of a stone, for it is water and no stone. Now what water it is I have told you already, and for your better instruction I shall tell you more. It is a water made by Nature, not extracted by the hands of man. Nor is it mere water but a spermatic, viscous composition of water, earth, air and fire. All these four natures unite in one crystalline, coagulable mass, in the form or appearance of water; and therefore I told you it was a water made by Nature. But if you ask me how Nature may be said to make any such water, I shall instruct you by an example that's obvious. Earth and water are the only materials whereupon Nature works, for these two, being passive, are compassed about with the active superior bodies, namely, with the air, heaven, sun and stars. Thus do they stand in the very fire, at least under the beams and ejaculations thereof so that the earth is subject to a continual torrefaction and the water to a continual coction. Hence it comes to pass that we are perpetually overcast, with clouds, and this by a physical extraction or sublimation of water, which Nature herself distills and rains down upon the earth. Now this water, through of a different complexion from the philosopher's mineral water, yet has it many circumstances that well deserve our observation. I shall not insist long upon any: I will only give you one or two instances and then return to my subject. First of all then, you are to consider that Nature distills not beyond the body, as the chemist does in the recipient. She draws the water up from the earth, and to the same earth does she return it; and hence it is that she generates by circular and reasonable imbibitions. Secondly, you must observe that she prepares her moisture before she imbibes the body therewith, and that by a most admirable preparation. Her method in this point is very obvious and open to all the world, so that if men were not blind I would not need to speak of it. Her water — we see — she rarefies into clouds, and by this means does she rack and tenter-stretch the body, so that all the parts thereof are exposed to a searching, spiritual purgatory of wind and fire. For her wind passes quite through the clouds and cleanses them; and when they are well cleansed then comes Nature in with her fire and fixes it in *ente jure sapphirico*.

But this is not all. There are other circumstances, which Nature uses above ground in order to fecundate her vegetables. And now I would speak of her subterranean preparations, in order to mother her minerals: but that it is not lawful for me, as it was for the poet — "To discover things hidden in deep earth and fire." However, I shall not fail to tell you a considerable truth, whosoever you are that studies this difficult

science. The preparation of our animal and mineral sperm- -I speak of the true preparation — is a secret upon which God has laid His seal, and you will not find it in books, for it was never entirely written. Your best course is to consider the way of Nature, for there it may be found, but not without reiterated, deep and searching meditations. If this attempt fails, you must pray for it, not that I hold it an easy or a common thing to attain to revelations, for we have none in England; but God may discover it to you by some ordinary and natural means. In a word, if you can not attain to it in this life, yet shall you know it in your own body, when you are past knowing of it in this subject. But because I will not deprive you of help which I may lawfully communicate, I tell you that our preparation is a purgation. Yet do not we purge by common and ridiculous sublimate or the more foolish filtrations, but by a secret, tangible, natural fire. He that knows this fire, and how to wash with it, knows the key of our Art, even our hidden Saturn, and the stupendous, infernal lavatory of Nature. Much more could I say concerning this fire and the proprieties thereof, it being one of the highest mysteries of the creation, a subject without question wherein I might be voluminous, and all the way mysterious, for it relates to the greatest effects of magic, being the first male of the Mercury and almost his mother. Consider then the generation of our Mercury and how he is made, for here lies the ground of all our secrets. It is plain that outwardly we see nothing but what is gross — for example, earth, water, metals, stones and, among the better creatures, man himself. All these things have a lumpish, ineffectual exterior, but inwardly they are full of a subtle, vital luminosity, impregnated with fire. This vitality Nature makes use of in generations, wherefore we call it the sperm. For instance, we know the body of man is not his sperm, but the sperm is a subtle extraction taken out of his body. Even so in the great world, the body or fabric itself is not the seed. It is not earth, air, fire or water; for these four — if they were put together — would be still four bodies of different forms and complexions. The seed then, or first matter, is a certain vitality extracted from these four, for each of them contributes from its every center a thin, slimy substance; and of their several slimes Nature makes the sperm by an ineffable union and mixture. This mixture and composition of slimy principles is that mass which we call the first matter. It is the minera of man, whereof God made him: in a double image did He make him in the day that he became a living soul. Hence a famous artist, speaking of the creation of Adam and alluding to the first matter, delivers himself in these terms: "From the limosity of the elements did God create Adam, namely, from the limosity of earth, water, air and fire; and He gave unto him life from the Sun of the Holy Spirit, and from light, clarity and the light of the world." Have a care then that you mistake not any specified body for the sperm. Beware of quicksilver, antimony and all the metals — have nothing to do with ought that is extracted from metals. Beware of salts, vitriols and every minor mineral. Beware of animals and vegetables, and of everything that is particular, or takes place in the *classis* of any known species. The first matter is a miraculous substance, one of which you may affirm contraries without inconvenience. It is very weak and yet most strong. It is excessively soft and yet there is nothing so hard. It is one and all, spirit and body, fixed and volatile, male and female, visible and invisible, burns and burns not. It is water and wets not; it is earth that runs and air that stands still. In a word, it is Mercury, the laughter of fools and the wonder of the wise, nor has God made anything that is like him. He is born in the world, but was extant before the world. Hence that excellent riddle which he has somewhere proposed of himself: "I dwell" — saith he— "in the mountains and in the plains, a father before I was a son. I generated my mother, and my mother, carrying me in her womb, generated me, having no use for a nurse."

This is that substance which at present is the child of the sun and moon; but originally both his parents came out of his belly. He is placed between two fires, and therefore is ever restless. He grows out of the earth as all vegetables do, and in the darkest night that is receives a light from the stars, and retains it. He is attractive at the first because of his horrible emptiness, and what he draws down is a prisoner forever. He has in him a thick fire, by which he captivates the thin and he is both artist and matter to himself. In his first appearance he is neither earth nor water, neither solid nor fluid, but a substance without all form but what is universal. He is visible but of no certain color, for chameleon-like puts on all colors. Nothing in the world has the same figure as him. When he is purged from his accidents, he is a water colored with fire, deep to the sight and — as it were — swollen; and he has something in him that resembles a commotion. In a vaporous heat he opens his belly and discovers an azure heaven he hides a little sun, a most powerful red fire, sparkling like a carbuncle, which is the red gold of the wise men. These are the treasures of our sealed fountain, and though many desire them yet none enters here but he that knows the key, and withal how to use it. In the bottom of this well lies an old dragon, stretched long and fast asleep. Awake her if you can, and make her drink; for by this means she will recover her youth and be serviceable to you forever. In a word, separate the eagle from the green lion; then clip his wings, and you have performed a miracle. But these, you will say, are blind terms, and no man knows what to make of them. True indeed, but they are such as are received from the philosophers. Howsoever, that I may deal plainly with you, the eagle is the water, for it is volatile and flies up in clouds, as an eagle does; but I speak not of any common water whatsoever. The green lion is the body, or magical earth, with which you must clip the wings of the eagle; that is to say, you must fix her, so that she may fly no more. By this we understand the opening and shutting of the chaos, and that cannot be done without our proper key- -I mean our secret fire, wherein consists the whole mystery of the preparation. Our fire then is a natural fire; it is vaporous, subtle and piercing. It is that which works all in all, if we look on physical digestion; nor is there an thing in the world that answers to the stomach and performs the effects thereof but this one thing. It is a substance of propriety solar and therefore sulphurous. It is prepared, as the philosophers tell us, from the old dragon and in plain terms it is the fume of Mercury—not crude, but cocted. This fume utterly destroys the first form of gold, introducing a second and more noble one. By Mercury I understand not quicksilver but Saturn philosophical, which devours the Moon and keeps her always in his belly. By gold I mean our spermatic, green gold — not the adored lump, which is dead and ineffectual. It would be well for the students of this noble Art if they resolved on some general positions before they attempted the books of the philosophers. For example, let them take along with them these few truths, and they will serve them for so many rules whereby they may censure and examine their authors. First, that the first matter of the Stone is the very same with the first matter of all things; secondly, that in this matter all the essential principles or ingredients of the Elixir are already shut up by Nature, and that we must not presume to add anything to this matter but what we have formerly drawn out of it; for the Stone excludes all extractions but what is distilled immediately from its own crystalline, universal minera; thirdly and lastly, that the philosophers have their peculiar secret metals, quite different from the metals of the vulgar, for where they name Mercury they mind not quicksilver, where Saturn not lead, where Venus and Mars not copper and iron, and where Sol or Luna not gold or silver. This Stone verily is not made of common gold and silver, but it is made, as one delivers it, "of gold and silver that are reputed base, that stink and withal smell sweetly; of green, living gold and silver to be found

everywhere but known to very few." Away then with those mountebanks who tell you of antimony, salts, vitriols, marcasites, or any mineral whatsoever. Away also with such authors as prescribe or practice upon any of these bodies. You may be sure they were mere cheats and wrote only to gain a reputation of knowledge. There are indeed some uncharitable but knowing Christians who stick not to lead the blind out of his way. These are full of elaborate, studied deceits, and one of them who pretends to the Spirit of God has at the same mouth vented a slippery spirit, namely, that the Stone cannot be opened through all the grounds — as he calls them — under seven years. Truly I am of the opinion that he never knew the Stone in this natural world; but how well acquainted he was with the tinctures in the spiritual world I will not determine. I must confess many brave and sublime truths have fallen from his pen; but when he descends from his inspirations and stoops to a physical practice, he is quite beside the butt.

I have ever admired the royal Gerber, whose religion — if you question — I can produce it is these few words: "The sublime, blessed and glorious God of natures." This is the title and the style he always bestows upon God, and it is enough to prove him no atheist. He, I say, has so freely and in truth so plainly discussed this secret that had he not mixed his many impertinences with it he had directly prostituted the mysteries. What I speak is apparent to all knowing artists, and hence it is that most masters have so honored this Arabian that in their books he is commonly called *Magister Magistrorum*. We are indeed more beholden to this prince — who did not know Christ — than to many professed Christians, for they have not only concealed the truth but they have published falsities and mere inconsistencies therewith. They have studiously and of mere purpose deceived the world, without any respect of their credit or conscience. It is a great question who was most envious, the devil in his *Recipe* to our Oxford doctor of Arnoldus in his *Accipe* to the King of Aragon. I know well enough what that gentleman *de Villa Nova* prescribes, and I know withal his instructions are so difficult that Count Trevor, when he was adept *suo modo*, could not understand them, For he has written most egregious nonsense, and this by endeavoring to confute greater mysteries than he did apprehend. Now, if any man thinks me too bold for censuring so great an artist as Arnoldus was, I am not so empty but I can reason for myself. I charge him not with want of knowledge but what of charity — a point wherein even the possessors of the Philosopher's Stone are commonly poor. I speak this because I pity the distractions of our modern alchemists, though Philalethes laughs in his sleeve and, like a young colt, kicks at that name. For my own part I advise no man to attempt this Art without a master, for though you know the Matter yet are you far short of the Medicine. This is a truth you may be confident of, and if you will not believe my text, take it upon Raymund Lully's experience. He knew the Matter, it being the first thing his master taught him. Then he practiced upon it, in his own phrase, after many and multifarious roads, but all to no purpose. He had the Cabinet but not the Key. At last he found himself to be — what many doctors are — a confident quack, a broiler and nothing more — as it appears by his subsequent confession. "The Masters assure us in their goodness that the Great Work is one of solution and congelation, the same being performed by the circulatory way; but though ignorance hereupon many who were sound in scholarship have been deceived regarding the mastery. In their excess of confidence they assumed themselves to be proficient in the form and mode of circulation, and it is not our intent to conceal that we ourselves were of those who were stricken in this respect. With such presumption and temerity we took our understanding of this science for granted, yet we grasped it in no wise, till we came to be taught of the spirit by the mediation of

Master Arnold de Villa Nova, who effectually imparted it unto us out of his great bounty."

Thus he; and now I shall advise the chemist to set a watch at his lips because of some invisible gentlemen that overhear. I myself have known some men to affirm they had seen and done such things which God and Nature cannot do, according to the present laws of creation. But had my young friend Eugenius Philalethes been present he would have laughed without mercy. Take heed then what you say, less you make sport for the wise, for they are something like the immortals:

"Laughter unquenchable arose among the blessed gods."

Many men there are who think it ordinary to be instructed in these secrets, but in this they are confidently mistaken. He must be a known, true friend, a friend of years, not of days; not a complemental thing, whose action is all hypocrite; not a severe dissembler, who gives you fair words but — if once tried — his heart is so far from his promises that, like a fly in a box, is scarce a part of his body. Raymund Lully has in a certain place delivered himself handsomely in relation to the practice, and this for his friend's sake. But how rigid then was he *in scriptis*. His disciple — if he could understand him — was to be accountable to him in the use of the mystery; and therefore he tells him plainly that he did it "by way of load only, looking for restitution at the judgment day." We must not expect then to be instructed because we are acquainted, and verily acquaintance with such persons is a thing not common. In ordinary favors it is supposed that men should deserve them before they receive them; but in this thing — which is a benefit incomparable — it falls out otherwise. We look for present discoveries; we believe the philosophers will teach us and in plain terms tell us all their Art; but we know not wherefore they should be so kind to us. Such impudent hopes have no more reason in them than if I should spend a compliment on a rich gentleman and then expect he should make me his heir in lieu of my phrase, and so pass his estate upon me. This is very absurd, but nothing more common; though I know there is another sort of well-wishers, but they are most miserable, for they cast about to fool those men whom they know to be wiser than themselves. But in this point the philosophers need no instructions. They can act many parts, and he that plots to over-reach them takes a course to break before he sets up. It remains then that we bestow our attempts on their books, and here we must consider the two universal natures, light and matter.

Matter — as I have formerly intimated — is the house of light. Here he dwells and builds for himself, and, to speak truth, he takes up his lodging in sight of all the world? When he first enters it, it is glorious, transparent room, a crystal castle, and he lives like a familiar in diamonds. He has then the liberty to look out at the windows; his love is all in his sight: I mean that liquid Venus which lures him in; but this continues not very long? He is busy — as all lovers are—and labors for a closer union, insinuates and conveys himself into the very substance of his love, so that his heat and action stir up her moist essences, by whose means he becomes an absolute prisoner. For at last the earth grows over him out of the water, so that he is quite shut up in darkness; and this is the secret of the eternal God, which He has been pleased to reveal to some of His servants, though mortal man was never worthy of it? I wish it were lawful for me to enlarge myself in this point for religion's sake, but it is not safe for convenient that all ears should hear even the mysteries of religion. This leprous earth — for such it is, if it be not purged — is the toad that eats up the eagle, or spirit, of which there is frequent mention in the philosopher's books. In this earth also have many of the wise men seated that tincture which we commonly call darkness. Truly they may as well bestow it on the water or the air, for it appears not in any one

element but either in all four or else in two, and this last was that which deceived them. Now, the water has no blackness at all but a majestic, large clarity. The earth likewise, in her own nature, is a glorious crystallized body, bright as the heavens. The air also excels both these in complexion, for he has in him a most strange, inexpressible whiteness and serenity. As for the fire it is outwardly red and shining — like a jacinth — but inwardly in the spirit white as milk.

Now, if we put all these substances together, through purged and celified, yet when they stir and work for generation the black color overspreads them all — and such a black — so deep and horrid — that no common darkness can be compared to it. I desire to know then how this tincture arises, for the root of every other color is known. It is to be observed that in the separation of the elements this blackness appears nowhere but in that element which is under the fire; and this only while you are drawing out the fire — for the fire being separated the body is white. It is plain then that darkness belongs to the fire, for in truth fire is the manual of it; and this is one of the greatest mysteries, both in Divinity and philosophy. But those that would rightly understand it should first learn the difference between fire and light.

Trismegistus, in his vision of the creation, did first see a pleasing, gladsome light, but interminated. Afterwards appeared a horrible sad darkness, and this moved downwards, descending from the eye of the light, as if a cloud should come from the sun. This darkness — saith he — was condensed into a certain water, but not without a mournful, inexpressible voice or sound, as the vapors of the elements are resolved by thunder. After this — saith that great philosopher — the Holy Word came out of the light and did get upon the water, and out of the water He made all things. Let it be your study then — who would know all things — to seek out this secret water, which hath in itself all things. This is the physical and famous Pythagorean cube, which surprises all forms, and holds them prisoners. "If anywise," said my Capnion, "a form implanted in this ground remain thereon; if it enters therein and does abide in such solid receptacle, being laid up therein as in a material foundation; it is not received at random nor indifferently but permanently and specially, becoming inseparable and incommunicable, as something added to the soil, made subject to time and to place, and deprived — so to speak of its liberty in the bondage of matter."

The consequences of this prison, which sometimes are sad, and the steps that lead to it, are most elegantly expressed in the oracles. "A steep descent extends beneath the earth, leading seven ways by stages and beneath which is the throne of a horrible necessity."

In a word, all things in the world — as well events as substances — flow out of this well. Hence come our fortunes and our misfortunes, our riches and our poverty, and this according to the scales of the Supreme Agent, in his dispensations of light and darkness. We see there is a certain face of light in all those things which are very dear or very precious to us. For example, in beauty, gold, silver, pearls, and in everything that is pleasant or carries with it any opinion of happiness — in all such things I say there is inherent a certain secret, concomitant lustre, and while they last the possessors also are subject to a clearness and serenity of mind. On the contrary, in all adversity there is a certain corroding, heavy sadness, for the spirit grieves because he is eclipsed and overcast with darkness. We know well enough that poverty is but obscurity, and certainly in all disasters there is a kind of cloud or something that answers to it. In people that are very unfortunate this darkness has a character, and especially in the forehead there lies a notable judgment; but there are few who can read in such books. Of this Vergil — who was a great poet but a greater philosopher — was not ignorant,

for describing Marcellus in the Elysian fields he makes his sad countenance an argument of his short life.

Aeneas here beheld, of form divine:  
A godlike youth in glittering armor shine,  
With great Marcellus keeping equal pace:  
But gloomy were his eyes, dejected was his face.  
He saw, and wondering ask'd his airy guide  
What and of whence was he who pressed the hero's side;  
His son: or one of his illustrious name;  
How like the former and almost the same.  
Observe the crowd that compass him around:  
All gaze and all admire, and raise a shouting sound.  
But hovering mists around his brows are spread  
And night with sable shades involves his head.

But these are things that ought not to be publicly discussed, and therefore I shall omit them. He that desires to be happy let him look after light, for it is the cause of happiness, both temporal and eternal. In the house thereof it may be found, and the house is not far off nor hard to find, for the light walks in before us and is the guide to his own habitation. It is the light that forms the gold and the ruby, the adamant and the silver, and he is the artist that shapes all things. He that has him has the mint of Nature and a treasure altogether inexhaustible. He is blessed with the elect substance of heaven and earth, and in the opinion of the *Turba* "deserves to be called blessed and is raised above the circle of the earth." Nor indeed without reason, for Nature herself dictates to us and tells us that our happiness consists in light. Hence it is that we naturally love the light and rejoice in it, as a thing agreeable and beneficial to us. On the contrary, we fear the darkness and are surprised in it with a certain horror and a timorous expectation of some hurt that may befall us. It is light then that we must look after, but of itself it is so thin and spiritual we cannot lay hands upon it and make it our possession. We cannot confine it to any one place, that it may no more rise and set with the sun. We cannot shut it up in a cabinet, that we may use it when we please, and in the dark night see a glorious illustration. We must look then for the mansion of light — that oily, ethereal substance that retains it — for by this means we may circumscribe and confine it. We may impart and communicate it to what bodies we please, give the basest things a most precious lustre and a complexion as lasting as the sun. This is that mystery which the philosophers have delivered hereunto in most envious and obscure terms; and though I do not arrogate to myself a greater knowledge than some of them had, yet I do affirm— and that knowingly — that this secret was never communicated to the world in a discourse so plain and positive as this is. It is true this script is short, and the body of magic has no proportion to these few lines. To write of it at large and discover its three scenes — elemental, celestial and spiritual — was sometimes the design of one that was able to perform? But he — and it was every the fortune of truth to be so served — was not only opposed but abused by a barbarous, malicious ignorant one. I should think that gentleman did set up for Bartholomew Fair — he has such contrivances in his *Second Lash*. The tutor dedicates to his pupil, and the same pupil versifies in commendation of his tutor? Here was a claw; there was never any so reciprocal: surely Rosinante and Dapple might learn of these two. But this is stuff to stop our noses at: let us leave it for Cambridge, whence it first came.

The coagulation of our water and the solution of our earth are the two greatest and most difficult operations of the Art, for these two are contrary keys: the water opens



and the earth shuts. Be sure then to add nothing to the subject but what is of its own nature, for when it is prepared it is all-sufficient. He coagulates himself and dissolves himself, and passes all the color — and this by virtue of its own inward sulphur or fire, which wants nothing but excitation, or, to speak plainly, a simple, natural coction. Everybody knows how to boil water in fire; but if they knew how to boil fire in water their physic would reach beyond the kitchen. Study then and despair not; but study no curiosities. It is a plain, straight path that Nature walks in; and I call God to witness that I write not this to amaze men; but I write that which I know to be certainly true.

This is all I think fit to communicate at this time, neither had this fallen from me but that it was a command imposed by my superiors. They that desire experimental knowledge may study it as a sure guide; but he that rests at his lips and puts not his philosophy into his hands needs not these instructions. *Wit's Commonwealth* or a *Book of Apothegms* may serve his turn. I prescribe not here for any but such as look after these principles; and they must give me leave to inform them, if they be not perfect masters of the art. I am one that gives and takes, and this to avoid contentions. I can suffer the schoolman to follow his own placets, so long as he does not hinder me to follow mine. In a word, I can tolerate men's errors and pity them. I can propound the truth, and if it be not followed, it is satisfaction to me that what I did was well done.

### A Postscript to the Reader

This small discourse was no sooner finished — though by command — but the same authorities recalled their commission; and now being somewhat transformed I must — as some mysteriously have done — live a tree. Yet the wise know that groves have their wood nymphs, and I remember I have read of an image whose *Hic fodias* placed the substance in the shadow. To be plain, I am silenced, and though it be in my power to speak, yet I have laws as to this subject which I must not transgress. I have chosen therefore to oppose my present freedom to my future necessity, and to speak something at this time which I must never publicly speak hereafter. There is no defect in ought that I have written, if I but tell you one thing which the philosophers have omitted. It is that which some authors have called "the Vessel of Nature and the Green Vessel of Saturn"; and Miriam calls it the Vessel of Hermes. A menstrous substance it is; and — to speak the very truth — it is the matrix of Nature, wherein you must place the universal sperm as soon as it appears beyond its body. The heat of this matrix is sulphurous, and it is that which coagulates the sperm; but common fire — though it be most exactly regulated — will never do it; and in this opinion see that you be not deceived. This matrix is the life of the sperm, for it preserves and thickens it; but beyond the matrix it takes cold and dies, and nothing effectual can be generated thereof. In a word, without this matrix you will never coagulate the matter nor bring it to a mineral complexion. And herein also there is a certain measure to be observed, without which you will miscarry in the practice. Of this natural vessel speaks Miriam in the following words: "The key of the science is in all bodies, but owing to the shortness of life and the length of the work the Stoics concealed this one only thing. They discovered tinging elements, leaving instructions thereon, and these also the philosophers continue to teach, save only concerning the Vessel of Hermes, because the same is Divine, a thing hidden from the Gentiles by the wisdom of God; and those who are ignorant of it know not the regimen of truth for want of the Hermetic Vessel." In the proportion and regimen of this thing which they call their vessel, and

sometimes their fire, consists all the secret. And verily the performances thereof are so admirable and so speedy they are almost incredible. Had I known this at first it had not been with me as it has been; but every event has its time, and so had I. This one thing — to lay aside other reasons — does not only persuade but convince me that this Art was originally revealed to man. For this I am sure of — that man of himself could not possibly think of it; for it is invisible. It is removed from the eye, and this out of a certain reverence; and if by chance it comes into sight it withdraws again naturally. For it is the secret of Nature, even that which the philosophers call "the first copulation." This is enough to a wise artist; at least it is all I intend to publish. And now, reader, farewell.

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# **Book of the Chemical Art**

by

**Marsilius Ficinus**

*"An unknown concerning the Chymicall Art. But Lucerna Salis affirms him to be Marcilius Ficinus, an Italian of the Dukedome of Florence or Tuscany, in the year 1518."*

## **Chapter 1.**

### **Of the Generation of Metals in the Bowels of the Earth.**

The opinion and determination of all who philosophize rightly is the same: that all metals are generated by the vapour of sulphur, and of argent vive. Because when the fat of the earth being heated, finds the substance of water somewhat globulous, it as well by its natural virtue, as by the rays of the celestial bodies and the endeavor of heaven, as according to the purity or impurity of each, consolidated it in the veins of the earth into those most beautiful bodies, gold, silver, copper, tin, iron, and lead.

## **Chapter 2.**

### **Of Nature & Art**

But there are in the arch of this world, two efficient causes, Nature and art. Nature daily produces and generates new things. But art by conception, making an impression of the similitudes of those things upon herself, does in an admirable manner prosecute the footsteps and delineations of Nature. So that if the wit of man do not sometime assist in some things, it is evident that Nature herself had gone astray from her operation. Or art sometimes does by the help of Nature, correct, supply and in a manner (especially in this magnificent discourse of mineral things) seems to exceed Nature. Which has already been long since consecrated to perpetual memory by those ancient Philosophers.

There are two sorts of Philosophers. Some only searching into Nature by herself, have in the monuments of their writings delivered the virtue and power which sublunary things have, as well from the elemental qualities, as from heaven and the stars; as the physicians are. And some others who have described the natures of animals, trees, herbs, metals, and precious stones. But others truly are more glorious, penetrating most sagaciously and sharply not only into Nature, but finally into the arcanum itself of Nature, and into her more inward recesses, have by a truer title assumed to themselves the name of philosopher. But because Nature produces all metals out of two things sulphur and Mercury, and has left us the superior bodies generated out of them, with the inferior bodies, certain is it is that the industrious may make the same out of her three operations, and reduce the inferior bodies to the Nature and perfection of the superior bodies.

## **Chapter 3.**

**Refutes an opinion of some in this art, and the philosophical art is laid down in a very few words.**

And because by most of the studious in philosophy it is granted that metals themselves are generated of sulphur and Mercury, some have judged that sulphur and Mercury, since they are the root and matter of metals, ought to be taken and so long decocted, until they were conglutinated together into a metallic body. These truly had they descended deeper into nature's sanctuary, would never have come to such foolish opinions. For though sulphur and Mercury were as it were the root of metals before the first coagulation, yet now they are not, since they are brought to another nature: whence it remains that there cannot be made out of them any metallic body. Since also the chain is unknown, by which Venus and Mercury copulated together in due proportion. Wherefore they are not to be taken, but rather that which is out of them fully decocted in the womb of the earth, and that truly the most pure; whose like you will not find in a vegetable nature.

It is evident that all little trees, flowers and small herbs are produced from water and the union of a subtle earth. And if you endeavor to produce a tree or an herb, you must not take earth or water, but rather that which is from them, as a scion or a seed, which being committed to the bosom of the earth, the parent of all things, and cherished with a nutriment of their own nature, and called forth by the darting of the solar light, do in due time break out into the superficies of the earth, into the species of a tree or an herb. In like manner that divine art teaches how to take the seed out of the more perfect body; which being put into the philosophical earth prepared by art and continually decocted by a temperate heat into a white or red powder, is said to have converted the inferior bodies into the nature of the superior.

#### **Chapter 4.**

**Delivers why the Philosophers have sought for this Art, not moved them to it, and this Question is resolved: why the Spirit in Metals cannot Propagate its like, since the Spirit of everything is the Author of Generation.**

But we readily affirm that the inspiration of God was the chief cause why those ancient philosophers searched after this science. For the philosophers seeing that all vegetable and animal things, as also other things, do by a certain spirit of their own multiply themselves, and that a transmutation is in this inferior world made by the air, which seemed in a long time to corrupt all particular things, and that their nature changed itself by the motions of another thing: There arose among them this question: namely why the spirit in metals could not propagate its like, since out of one scion there grew many, and out of one little grain almost innumerable grains did multiply themselves. It was at length decreed by the divine oracle, that the spirit was withheld by a grosser matter, which spirit if it were separated by a certain sublimation at the fires and being separated were preserved in its own connatural seat, it might as a seminal virtue, without any untruth, generate its like. From hence the philosophers thought to bring the light and lustre of the most perfect body into the inferior bodies since they had found that they differed among themselves only according to the decoction, either greater or less, and the mercury was the first original of all metals, with which mercury extracting the metallic part of gold, they brought gold to the first nature. Which reduction indeed since it is easy and possible, it was by the philosophers concluded that a transmutation in metals is easy and possible. And when these primitive philosophers had reduced gold into the first matter, they made use of the celestial influence, that it might not be made a metal again such as it was before. Afterward they

purified its nature, separating the unclean from the clean. Which being done they called that thing, the transmuting stone of the philosophers. For the making whereof several operations have been invented by several philosophers, that that might be completed by art which was left by Nature; since Nature herself is always inclined toward her own perfection.

## **Chapter 5.**

### **Treats of What the Philosophers' Stone is, and Discourses first of its First Part.**

And because the philosophers had so obscurely set forth this science in strange involvings of words and shadows of figures, the stone of the philosophers was doubted by a very many men. Which it is of what things made? But if you will mind diligently, we divide the stone into two parts. The first part we say is terrestrial Sol, wherein both the ancient philosophers and the more modern do plainly agree with me in their testimonies in the Turba. Without terrestrial Sol the physical work is not perfected. Since they all assert that there is no true tincture without their *Æs* brass because in that there is the most pure sulphur of the wise, in which sage Nature contains her seed. And as the sun diffuses and darts down most lively and penetrating rays on this elementary world: So the stone of the philosophers being by a physical operation made out of gold, the son, as I may say, of the sun, disperses itself into other metals, and will forever equalize them to himself in virtue, color, and weight. And because all metals, we deservedly take gold before others. For since we would make gold and silver, it is necessary to take the same. Man is generated out of man, a tree from a tree, and herb produces an herb, and a lion a lion; since each thing according to the temper of its nature, which they call the completion, generates and produces its like. Yet the philosophers more truly do not make gold or silver, but Nature cleansed by the skill of the operator.

## **Chapter 6.**

### **Treats of the Second Part of the Stone, Where the Spirit is Compared to the most Glorious Virgin Saint Mary.**

We say the mercury vive is the second part of the stone. Which since it is living and crude, is said to dissolve the bodies themselves, because it naturally adheres to them in their profundity. This is the stone without which Nature operates nothing. Whence the philosophers advise us not to work but in Sol and mercury; which being joined make up the stone of the philosophers. Who therefore can deservedly praise the merits of mercury, since it is he alone who maketh gold thin and who has so great a power, that he can reduce Sol itself into the first nature? Which power nothing else in the world is discerned to have. It is thus said of the mercury which the wise men seek for, is in mercury. Mercury destroys all foliated Sol: it dissolves and softens it, and takes the soul out of the body. If it be sublimated, then there is made aqua vitae. If any one therefore ask you: What are the stones? You shall answer, that Sol and mercury are the physical stones. But these stones are dead on Earth and operate nothing, but what is by the industry of men supplied to them.

I will propose you a similitude of gold. The ethereal heaven was shut from all men, so that all men should descend to the infernal seats, and be there perpetually detained. But Jesus Christ opened the gate of the ethereal Olympus, and has now unlocked the kingdoms of Pluto, that the souls may be taken out; when by

the co-operation of the holy spirit in the virginal womb, the virgin Mary did by an ineffable mystery and most profound sacraments conceive what was the most excellent in the heavens and on the earth; and at length brought forth for us the saviour of the whole world, who out of his super abundant bounty shall save all who are able to sin, if the sinner turn himself to him. But she remained an untouched and undefiled virgin: whence mercury is not undeservedly compared to the most glorious saint the virgin Mary. For mercury is a virgin because it never propagated in the womb of the Earth and metallic body, and yet it generates the stone for us; by dissolving heaven, that is, gold, it opens it, and brings out the soul; which understand you to be the divinity, and carries it some little while in its womb, and at length in its own time transmits it into a cleansed body. From whence a child, that is, the stone, is born to us, by whose blood the inferior bodies being tinged are brought safe into the golden heaven, and mercury remains a virgin without a stain, such as is was ever before.

### **Chapter 7.**

**Determines why the Philosophers have hidden this Knowledge: where the Praise of the Art is set down, and He Inveighs against Zoilus the Carper as the Philosophers.**

But Hamul in Senior declares the chief cause why the philosophers have delivered this art down to posterity and the sons of wisdom, by uncertain similitudes and obscure allegories: that they might attribute it to the glorious God who might reveal it to whom he would, and prohibit it from whom he would. Rasis also in the book, 'The Light of Lights', reports: For if I should explain all things according to what they are, there would be no further occasion of prudence, but the fool would be made equal to the wise man. We read also in the end of the Turba: For unless the names were multiplied in this physical art, children would deride our knowledge. Wherefore we do not much value those who cavill at our divine art as adulterate; from which the most famous philosophers used to take all the knowledge of almost all things; as heretofore the statuaries did the thefts and the threads of our art, from the statue of Polycletus. It would also be most absurd to suspect that those ancient philosophers of venerable authority, especially in this discourse of natural things, have delivered down anything of falsehood to posterity, who employed their chiefest labour in inquiring after truth, although they ascended not to the sublimeness of the saving nature of faith, and the greatest height of the divine essence. Who therefore, but Zoilus, would not praise this science, and particularly favor it? From whence almost all the arts of these detractors are taken: from which so many colors very useful for the art of picture drawing derive their beginning, I say nothing of the art of money making: I pass by the learned distillation of the physicians, whereby they use to draw out the virtue, which they call a Quintessence. Which shall I say of those brazen vessels wherewith we make lightening and thunder among men? If they did but use them only against the sacrilegious enemies of the christian faith.

Besides the science of the stone is so sublime and magnificent, that therein almost all Nature and the whole universe of beings is beheld, as in a certain clear looking glass. For it is like a lesser world, where there are the four elements, and a fifth essence, which they call heaven in which another most noble essence has placed its seat, which some philosophers have used to compare (with reverence be it spoken) to the omnipotent God, and the most holy and undivided Trinity. Which is neither of the nature of the heaven, nor of the natures of the elements: and they have called it by a particular name, the soul, the middle nature. And as God the maker of the world: so this essence, which is called by the title of a God, is everywhere in the whole world, it is, in the physical glass. And as the omnipotent God is immense in the procreation of its like, even to the last end of the greater world. For then the generative nature shall be taken away from every

procreating thing. From which words one skillful in Nature may gather, that the stone can tinge many parts; whereby also many other difficulties may be removed. Then out upon Aristarchus who blushes not to profess himself an interpreter of the divine writings, and yet feareth not with his most impudent railing to attack this knowledge of a Nature created by God; than which, next after the sacred writings, God has conferred on this world nothing more magnificent and more sublime.

Tell me by the immortal God, what is more unjust than for men to hate what they are ignorant of? And then if the thing do deserve hatred, what is of all things more shallow? What more abject? Or what greater madness and potage is there, than to condemn that science in which you have concerned yourself just nothing at? Who hast never learned either Nature or the majesty of Nature, or the property or the occult operations of metals. The councellour also babbles and crokes, and the pettyfoggers of the law, the greatest haters of philosophy, who with the hammer of a venal tongue coin themselves money out of the tears of the miserable: who shipping over the most sacred of laws, have by the intricacies of their expositions persecuted all the world with their frauds. But why do I go after jeers and satyrs? Let these crabbed fellows and their followers remain perpetually in their opinion, who know nothing. Which is honest, which is pleasant, which is delightful, which lastly is anything elevated above a vulgar doctrine: and who have attained at nothing glorious and famous, but perhaps at some plebian business from the black sons of Cadamus. But to which purpose are these? I have made the choice of this stone of the philosophers familiar to me; and I very often call it the only Minerva, and the greatest pearl of all occult philosophy, or of magic, not indeed of the superstitious, but of the natural. Yet it seems in the opinion of the unlearned to degenerate far from a better study: which is decreed and ordained by the divine will.

## Chapter 8

**Treats of the first Essence of all things: and it is here discussed what Nature is, what the soul the middle nature, what the soul of the world, where that very great error is confuted of philosophers asserting the world to be an animal, and it is disputed that there is only a human soul; by a participation or likeness of which, there seems to be a brutal soul. And that the sun is the eye of the world and the heart of heaven.**

I have now a mind, candid reader, to procure you something concerning the secrets of Nature, both out of philosophical, and the theological magazine. Since I have perceived that many of the ancients as also of the more modern have taken great pains in searching after Nature, nobody but one beside himself will deny that those things will be of use to the whole academy and exercise of philosophy. But here the cradle of Nature is to be looked for a higher, do not therefore think it pious, if I make a digression a little further than perhaps this undertaking may require.

The most glorious God, the contriver, and the ineffable author of all things, before the beginning of the world, wanting nothing, but all-sufficient to himself, and forever remaining in the most profound retirement of his divinity, being out of his most abundant beauty willing, that the things from all eternity foreknown should proceed into existence, created in the beginning a certain essence of them, in rough draughts, as I may say, as yet unformed, which Moses, he whom I am to stile the fountain and chief president of the philosophy of the philosophers, does sometimes call a void and empty earth, sometimes an abyss and water, but Anaxagoras a confused chaos. Others have rightly termed it, the mother of the world, the foundation

and the face of Nature. Within whose womb when all things lay undistinguished and undigested, nor more conspicuous in their proper forms, the artificial creator, did by the intervening spirit of God exactly and regularly drawn and describe this visible world, according to copy and the similitude of the intelligible world. Hence he with shining fires most workman-like adorned the heavens hung up on high, and so ordered and digested the motion of them, and of the stars, that they should in a wonderful manner run about the arch of heaven, for the formation of the varieties of the seasons succeeding one another; and that by their motion and light they might warm, cherish and preserve in their beings the inferior things. Therefore he laid the inferior things beneath the superior, as an egg to be hatched under a hen, or as a woman to be made fruitful by a man. Into which he from the beginning inserted certain seminal reasons, that they might, taking their opportunities, multiply themselves, as I may say, with a perpetual fertility and offspring. But God wrought out his compacted being of the world by certain harmony and musical proportion alleyed to one another, that which are in the superior world are in the inferior also, but in a terrestrial manner: that which likeness are in the inferiors, may also be seen in the superious, in a celestial manner indeed, and according to the cause.

To which you may perhaps apply the opinion of Anaxagoras, holding that everything is in everything. Wherefore it is agreeable that God should rule and fill up all which he created. Nor do we therefore say that God does fill up all things, that they should contain him, but that they rather should be contained by him. Neither is it to be thought that God is in all things so that each thing according to the proportion of its bigness may contain him, that is the greater things the more, and the lesser the less. But God so filleth up all things that there is not anything where he is not. And we therefore understand within all things, but not included without all things, but not excluded: and therefore to be the interior, that by his uncircumscribed magnitude he may include all things. Therefore St. Dennis says: That all things may be affirmed of God, since he is the author and governor. On the contrary, that all things are more truly denied of him, since he is nothing of those things which he created. Which seems to me more acceptable and more certain, as well by the variable course of this world, as for the unsearchable abyss of his most exalted divinity. For God has placed the greatest distance between him and the created things. But God is truly immense and ineffable, not to be discovered, not to be understood, above all imagination, above all thought, above all understanding, above all essence, unnamable, to be by silence alone proclaimed in the heart: the most powerful, the most wise, the most clement: the father, the world, the holy spirit; and altitude incomprehensible, a trinity indivisible, an essence immutable. Whose image is all Nature, though the eye never be so intent. Who is the unity of all creatures, and main point, and the only one; who is stronger than all power, greater than all excellence, better than all praise. Whom the divine Plato made to inhabit in a fiery substance, meaning, that is, the ineffable Splendor of God in himself, and love around himself. Whom others have asserted to be an intellectual and fiery spirit; having no form but transforming itself into so ever it would and co-equalizing to all things universally. Who in a manifold way is as it were joined to his creatures. Again going forth from that his infinity eternity and omnipotence, he by a fervent love, sincere faith and solid hope may be imbosomed in the purified minds of men. Let whom be blessed for all thousands of thousands of ages.

We said a little before that God was unnameable, whom Martinus Capella says that Arithmetica saluted by a proper name, when going to salute Jove, she with her fingers folded down into them, made up seven hundred, ten and seven numbers. But what that most noble number means, and its division into its members, the Arithmetician knows; not he who inquires into the mercantile way of numbering but into proportions. In this number we discover all numbers, and every proportion both musical and geometrical. Add something of greater moment. That in these numbers the name of God is most exactly found. Whose most holy and forever adorable name is in this fullness of time set down in five letters. When in the time of Nature it was



written with three, and of the law with four. We say moreover that God has every name, because all things are in him, and he is in all things: as shall hereafter be disputed of, and yet has no name, because a fitting name cannot be given to the divine majesty. But how much mystery and strength number has in itself, I easily believe the Pythagoreans knew very well, who called one number Pallas, another Diana, another the father, another the mother, and finally one the male, and another the female: and those who had the greatest knowledge in the numeral science, applied the monas the united to God the creator: But the dias or duality to matter: to forms themselves the virgin trias or three: then to man and to his life hexas and heptas the six and seven. But the enneas or ten they not a miss did very handsomely apply to all creatures.

But to return to the purpose, hear Dionysius repeating: That God is in all things, or all things are in God, as numbers are in unity, as in the center of the circle are all the right lines: and as the soul is the strength of the members. Because as the unity is the common measure, fountain and original of all numbers, and containing in itself every number entirely cojoined, is the beginning of all multitude. But guiltless of all multitudes is always the same and immutable; so in like manner are created things toward the creator. And as an individual soul, is the ruler of its body, and the whole present to the whole body, and to every part of it: so God is everywhere in this world and fills and governs, and perpetually preserves it by the virtue which he daily infuses liberally into created things out of the eternal fountain of his spirit. From whence we rightly by a certain similitude of the soul, do call the God of Nature or the power of God, by which he maintains all things, a soul, a middle nature, or the soul of the world. Not that the world itself is an animal, which we may explode from the entrance into christian philosophy, partly in the christian metaphysick, and partly in this consideration of the stone.

But sublimeness of the Nature hereof requires to be composed in a loftier style; we have here chosen a lower sort of speech; and we place the soul of the world chiefly in the sun. For there is nothing in the soul of the firmament, beside a soul, which represents a greater similitude of God than light itself. Since everything does challenge to itself so much of God, as I may say, as they are capable of light. And since nothing is more conspicuous bright-eyed than the sun, many of the platonicks chiefly imitating Orpheus herein have termed the sun, the eye of the world. Because all things were seen and shown themselves in it as in a certain most bright mirror. Hence Heraclitus says, that all things would perish, should you take the sun out of the world. What is this small body of ours, if the soul be away? No vein having a pulse is to be felt there, there is in it no show of sense, no vital breath nor any respiration therein. Wherefore it also seemed good to some to call the sun the heart of heaven. Because as in the heart there is the only fountain of blood moistening and reddening the other members of the human body, and infusing a vital motion: So there seemeth to be in the sun the vegetation and preservation of all, as well inferior as well as superior things. Because he by this light inspires as it were, life and heat into inferior things. But light is a certain simple of single action converting all things unto itself by an enlivening warmth, passing through all beings, carrying their virtues and qualities through all and dispersing darkness and obscurity. Phoebus therefore resides in the middle with his refulgent locks, as king and emperor of the world, holding a scepter of the government: in whom that there is all the virtue of the celestials, nor only Iamblichus, but many others have confirmed. And also Proclus says: At the sun's aspect, that all the powers of all celestial things are gathered together and collected into one, which we believe are gathered together and collected into one, which we believe are at length through his fiery breathing have spread over this lower world. This also may be even a mighty argument to you: that the sun approaching toward us, the earth grows full of herbs and ripens, but when he departs it withers. But I now delight to make some comment on the infancy of Nature.

## Chapter 9. Of Nature.

We affirm Nature to be a certain power implanted in things producing like things out of like. For Nature generates, augments and nourishes all things. Wherefore it has in itself the names of all things. An animal is from Nature; a stone, wood, a tree, and the bodies which you see are from Nature and her maintaining. Nature is the blood of the elements, and the power of mixing which brings to pass the mixtures of the elements in everything in this sublunary world, and has imprinted on them a form agreeable to their species, by which that thing is distinguishable and separated from each other thing. Nor is Nature of any colour, yet a partaker and efficient of all colours: also of no weight, nor quality, but finally the fruitful parent of all qualities and things. What is therefore Nature? God is Nature, and Nature is God: understand it thus: out of God there arises something next to him.

Nature is therefore a certain invisible fire, by which Zoroaster taught that all things were begotten, to whom Heraclitus the Ephesian seems to give consent. Did not the spirit of the Lord, which is a fiery love, when it was carried on the waters, put into them a certain fiery vigor? Since nothing can be generated without heat. God inspired into created things, when it was said in the generation of the world; increase and be ye multiplied, a certain germination, that is, a greenness, by which all things might multiply themselves. Whence some more profoundly speculative, said that all things were green, is called to grow and increase, and that greenness they named Nature. But Aristotle says: That motion being unknown, Nature is unknown, since it is now volatile and in a continual motion of generation, augmentation and alteration, which at length in the latter end of the world, shall be stable and fixed. Because God will then take away from things that virtue and power of generating, and will place it in the most inward treasure of his omnipotence, where it was from eternity. I therefore had a mind to call this virtue of generation and of the preservation of things, the soul of the world. Not that the world is an animal, as the Platonick accounts and the testimonies of the Arabian, Egyptian, and Chaldean Astrologers seem to approve. For the Philosophers maintained the world to be an animal, and the heavens and the stars to be animals, and the souls of things to be intelligent, participating of the divine mind. Moreover that a God or certain soul presided over everything and that all things were full of Gods, was the opinion of Democritus and Orpheus and of many of the Pythagoreans: to whom they ordained divine honours. And to the same they dedicated prayers and sacrifices and revered them with diverse sorts of worship. Besides they reduced all such souls into one soul of the world. They likewise referred all their Gods unto one Jove. This Aristotle and the Aristotelian Theophrastus, this Avicenn, Algozeles [al-Ghazzal]; this the Stoics and all the Peripateticks do confess, and with their utmost power have endeavoured to prove. I do not doubt but that from hence sprung all the error of gentilism: from hence the fictions of the poets, the diabolical sacrifices and sacreligious victims. Hence the Egyptian land did in their chapels worship and adore some certain animals and other prodigious monsters. Who will not say therefore that the philosophy of the heathens is vain? Which was most miserably ruined by this common error, and by many others: where the philosophers seemed to me to be most like the beehives, or children busying themselves with bottomless vessels to drain a great well.

Yet we may think them worthy of forgiveness since there had not shined to them the true light, Jesus Christ the saviour. Therefore it behooves the Christian Philosopher whose authority is graver, and judgement more certain to bring within the verge of the Catholick Church, which things so ever seem to make for the obligation of the nature of the faith as being possessed by unjust heirs: after the manner of Virgil who said he gathered Gold out of the dunghill of Ennius. Also like little bees, while they suck out the sweetest among

the flowers of Hymettus and Hybla for the sake of making honey. Who is there who would not bewail with tears, the untimely death of Picus of Mirandolla, whom the fatal sisters have particularly envied to our Age. Who had he little longer enjoyed life; would have trimmed up with new beauty, the tattered and begging philosophy, blotting out all of its errors. Yet let everyone highly praise the lawful Philosophy, whose foundation is Nature, or the world, and which prescribes manners and virtue to man. Which does correct for you the first youthful years and rudiments of your life. Which challenges to itself the interpretation of Nature, and the search of things the most abstruse from our eyes. Most worthily true to which the scanning of divine and human things should be referred. We thereby as much as we can by the divine favour and by natural light inquiry into the recesses of the world, into the earth and the tracts of the seas, and the high heavens. This describeth heaven and the immeasurable multitude of stars, as also the journey of the golden haired sun, and the laborious eclipses of the moon. This, with a geometrical staff, describes the ways of the stars.

*This teaches the Aeolian bellows and whispers of the winds,  
Which Hippotades does with his scepter rule.  
Why the mass of the earth does stagger, what makes  
The rainbow's arch, and hoary snows and frigid frosts.  
What breeds the dew, the lightning, what the hollow  
Fleeces of the clouds, the swellings of the Earth,  
And the three forked thunderbolt.*

What gathers showers, what the glazen hail; What are the seeds of gold, what of Iron; whence cruel thunder, whence the fountains of continual waters take their beginning, and such like other things. Let tender youths in their minority learn that philosophy; and everywhere avoid the doting fables of those philosophers who hold the world to be animal, and that it consists of innumerable animals, and those divine. What is more vain, what is more idle? For what else is it to say, the sun is animated, or the celestial bodies are animated, and participating of the divine mind, than to fall into an evil heresy, and the abominable falsehood of idolatry? Neither is it to be granted (witness St. Augustine) that those sidereal globes doe live by certain minds of their own, and those intellectual and blessed. I doe certainly know that only a human soul is divine light, created according to the image of the word, the cause of causes, and the first pattern; markest with the substance of the seal of God: and whose impression is the eternal word. By a participation of which we believe the brutal soul to subsist, taken out of the bosom of Nature, seeming to have a slender similitude and small footstep of a rational Soul, as the echo is the image and resemblance of a living voice. But let others look after the vegetable soul.

The theological doctors admit intelligences movers of the orbs; not that they inform the orbs themselves, or (according to the opinion of St. Jerome) make them intellectual and sensible, but to assist them in moving. Though also those orbs might (the divine Will so commanding) be voluble of their own accord. Yet the omnipotent God out of his ineffable bounty, would have second causes to preside over this worldly fabric, that whosoever does move themselves, does also give to others the power of moving. Whence also he also deputed angels for the custody of human souls, though he also primarily guarded himself. Yet it is not to be thought that such like Intelligences are necessarily applied to turn the spheres, as if they could not be turned about by their own rotation; when some busy men do in like manner frame that heavenly machine of copper or brass, fixing the earth in the very middle. Then they afterwards with certain little wheels affix the other elements, also the orbs of the stars and heavens, whereby they endeavor exactly to express the motion of the planets and the face of heaven. There are other curious men who endeavor to frame clocks and also certain

mills which should turn perpetually. If man can imitate the divine method, who would not believe that those sidereal globes by their own power may be wheeled about?

But what shall I say of the vain astrology, which our Picus of Mirandolla, famed in all sorts of learning, has sometime since by forcible reasons overthrown? Tell me, why astrologer, why refer you all things to heaven? Why do you romance about the natures of the stars and the signs, and of the motions of the planets? Who can by no means guess at the force and property of even the least terrestrial thing? Why should you fear the constellations and the stars, or rather lie? Who cannot by dimensions comprehend any little earthen body. What is more ridiculous, what more absurd, that have not in the ninth or tenth heaven to catch at such figurations and images of lines, or at the figures of the eighth heaven from the wandering application of the stars? What power do you think such imagined images have? What do the triplicities, what do the aspects of those stars and the rest of such like books void of the truth and virtue pretend to? Although such motions and the natures of the stars, and various applications of things to one another should seem to have some signification, yet I am persuaded man cannot well know them unless it were shown to them by some miracle from heaven. Hence St. Jerome thus derides astrologers and nativity calculators. These are they who lift up themselves against God's knowledge and all which is acted in the world, promising themselves a fictitious science, they refer to rising and setting of stars. These are they who are vulgarly called mathematicians, and think human affairs to be governed by the course and ways of the stars: and when they promise safety to others, know not their own punishments. I, while I was yet in the city Agrippa played thus upon the Astrologer. In my opinion it commonly happens to those Astrologers, as it did to Thales Milesius heretofore, who when he went out of his house to gaze at the stars, is said to have fallen into a ditch underneath him. Who when he ridiculed an old woman, being laughed at by her, he returned home with shame. Wherefore, O Christian philosopher, send away into perpetual banishment beyond the Caspian mountains, such like foolish chattering of Astrology, and its daughters Geomancy, Hydromancy, Pyromancy, Necromancy, Soothsaying, and many other such dotages with what other vulgarly resembles them and do not attribute to his creatures the glory of the omnipotent Lord God. Now let us see what Nature the philosophers inquired after.

## Chapter 10.

**What the Philosophers, and what sort of Nature they would have: where the spirit is said to be the ethereal chariot of the soul.**

The stone which the philosophers do seek is an invisible and impalpable spirit; it is a tincture and a tinging spirit: which indeed another visible and palpable spirit has hidden in its innermost bowels. Even so the Philosophers have left us the same spirit undiscovered, under the veil of Ænigmas that the stone is a fifth separated from four. It is the bond of the elements, the medium and the chain, which has made the elements of God agree, and which in the womb of the earth conglutinated Sulphur and Mercury into a metallic body. And because such a bond, as is in the earth, since it is invisible cannot be had, the philosophers sought after it in the more perfect body. The Philosophers do therefore inquire after the generative Nature, which may be able to generate metals, that they cleanse it, and make it a hundred thousand times more potent in tincture than it was at first in Nature. And they accustomed themselves to call it a living fire, or the living fire of Nature, or by a secret word, The Soul of the Middle Nature. And as physicians distinguish man into body, spirit, and soul, in like manner the philosophers have divided the stone into those parts. Sometimes the spirit is the life of the soul, the soul is the life of the spirit. Again those two are the life of the body. The spirit is

also the tie of the soul and the body, and as it were the ethereal chariot or vehicle of the soul, which spreads abroad the virtue of the soul through the whole body. You may also understand the four elements, when the philosophers affirm that the stone consists of body, spirit, and soul. For the water is spirit; also Air: the middle Fire, as I may say, is spirit. The earth we call not spirit but body, because it is the retainer, the matter and the seat of the other elements.

## **Chapter 11.**

### **Teaches that Solution is Necessary, by which the generative spirit is brought out of the body.**

But such a tie cannot be easily had, by reason of the most strong compactedness of gold itself, except by solution, which is the foundation and beginning of this noble science, in which the arcanum of all Nature does consist. It is the treasure of this affair. 'Tis is which lifts up the poor man from the dunghill and equals him to kings and princes. Whence the philosophers demand why the bodies, that is, gold and silver are dissolved. They answer: That the pure may be separated from the impure. For the body is for this reason dissolved, that the earth itself may be cleansed in the profundity. Which Nature could not, because she operates simply [or singly]. And in that cleansing the impediments of the tincture is away, so that it may innumerably propagate its like. But if so be that this propagation of its like be made by the spirit, since every spirit is the author of generation, and it is hindered by grosser matter, we say that solution is necessary, by which gold may be made living, and as I may say, spiritual, and be reduced into the first Nature, that is into the spirit of the water, and the vapour of the earth, that there may at length be had such a sulphur and a mercury with us, out of which metals are generated, in the womb of the earth. But solution is perfected when you shall have separated the soul and the spirit of gold. But because with philosophers gold is the most temperate body, having equal parts of hot, cold, moist and dry. Therefore it may with the more difficulty be corrupted and dissolved by reason of the equal agreement and proportion of the elements. Therefore there must a disagreement be made among the elements by contrary elements: and this discord makes a solution and mortification of the body: which being done there is made a cleansing mundification of Nature, which nevertheless cannot be done without a physical separation of the elements. But the elements of the body must be so separated, that the generative nature may remain in its flower and bud. That if anyone should burn that flower, and separate the elements from one another, the generative sperm would be lost; nor would any creature be able to join them anymore, so as they should generate. This is the truest consideration of the philosophers. If any out of his own fancy consider otherwise, he is indeed a natural fool, and makes syllogisms against Nature.

## **Chapter 12.**

### **Disputes of Hidden Things in the Art, and about threefold separation.**

But ye sons of wisdom, there are three solutions in the physical work. The first is of the crude body: the second is of the physical earth: the third we place in the Augmentation. There are also in the solution these three hidden things: the weight, the measure of time and fire. Wherefore if you know the weight of mercury and gold, and the measure of time, how long solution is in the making, and in a temperate fire, you have solution: which ought to be made in the secret Furnace, and a little larger glasses. Wherefore diverse fires

are to be procured, and so different parts to be put in glasses; that you may at last endowed with divine favour, find it out. You must also distinguish in this admirable work the days, months and years of the philosophers. The philosophers affirm, that if you, you may make the trial in three natural days. That if you are of a sprightlier wit, say they, you may distinguish it in twenty four hours. They in philosophy have appointed two nights and three days. Beseech the greatest and highest God that you may be worthy to the last red day. The philosophers also lay down three keys, solution, conjunction, and fixation. Or if you profoundly understand them, three separations. First there is made the separation of the soul from the body by the spirit. Secondly the grimes themselves, which have shown themselves in the solution, are separated from the soul and spirit. Lastly the spirit shall be separated from the soul and this happens in the fixation of Nature: so that hereafter and here I shall have told you so great secrets, that it cannot be believed. I do faithfully affirm two keys in the whole circle of philosophy. The first indeed which opens the body may be distributed into several keys. For what thing soever shall dissolve gold and reduce it into a spirit is called a key, though only one among others be the most powerful and natural key, as I wrote in chapter 8. And such a thing is called the stone. The second key which shuts up and does retain and coagulate the tinging spirit, we term the earth alone, which all philosophers have called the principle Stone. But of the crow's head we freely profess, that all the philosophers from the beginning of the world have had so little, that it can hardly be believed. Yet the miserable Philosophasters have thought that blackness which appeared in the superficies, out of the superfluity of the mercury and the body to be the crow's head.

### Chapter 13.

**Treats of the Praxis of the Stone, of its first solution, and separation: where the arcanum of Nature, otherwise most abstruse, is laid open to a son of wisdom, in which Lucifer falls out of heaven.**

'Tis now time, O son of wisdom, to turn my pen to the practical part, where I would first warn everyone given to philosophy, that all kinds of salts, allums, and of many other and of foreign things are in vain, and bring with them nothing moment or efficacy. Likewise that all common solutions and vulgar sublimations are adulterate works and belong nothing to the true and natural science of the philosophers. Wherefore I judge those mountebanks are to be avoided who with their dealbations and rubifications have cheated almost all the world, in whom there is no vein of philosophy, which is warm, and who are rather to be esteemed false philosophers, since nothing is dearer to philosophers than the truth: nothing more foul than falsehood and deceit. Whereby it comes to pass that there are fewer philosophers, than you have perhaps believed. Now let us descend to the praxis, which we will divide into two works. In the first mention shall be made of the first solution, and of separation and distillation. In the second we will treat of conjunction and fixation, where consideration will be had of the most secret augmentation, which you will find in no book in the world. But here I have a mind to bring in the degrees of all the work wholly. For first we compound, the compound we putrefy, the putrefied we dissolve, the dissolved we divide, the divided we cleanse, the cleansed we unite, and so the work is accomplished. But to speak of these, each particularly, shall be our labour. But the philosophers are of opinion that in the praxis of the stone less than a twelfth part of mercury ought to be taken. But there is also among them a trial of the dissolved body, if it be squeezed through a leather.

Some also of the more modern have thought, that solution may be made in a shorter time if a long pounding or grinding of the gold by itself were first made by a certain mill or in a mortar. First therefore let the copper be purified with common salt prepared or with any other fitting thing, that its most subtle substance

may be had. Let some parts of this purified water be mixed very well with one part of the most fine Gold, reduce into leaves or thin spangles, and let them be put in a long glass with a hollow belly, stopped with little pieces of cloth, and with the sign of the cross, and let the glass be covered with ashes, up to the superficies of the water, and let a very small heat be given, that the matter may not seem to ascend, but remain live with the gold, and let that equally balance heat be kept so long a while, until in the water of mercury there out upon it a certain vaporous and subtle earth, which in a wonderful colour is wont to be known when it is to be extracted. But the sulfur itself shines like a rainbow through the waters, yet not with all colors, like the rainbow in this greater world. The arch is itself of the rainbow stands half in the pure liquid and fluent water, and half upon the earth. Hence the whole property of and its natural similitude is shown by the iris, the rainbow: nor is the rainbow seen in heaven, but when the sun shines, which also uses to be followed by rain. But mists or thick clouds coming on, the sun itself, and also the arch of the rainbow is hidden. It pleased the natural philosophers to thus explain the rainbow: when the sun colours a moist and hollow cloud, and is thick like a looking-glass, and intersects the middle of its orb: which comes nearer to our divine and admirable science. Yet it is not to be thought that the Sulphur itself grows black when you extract it, as some have thought. The copper being at length extracted, you shall distill the water, in which there is the soul of gold or the metallic mercury of gold, with a slow heat, so that three core minutes may be counted between drop and drop. And that distilled water is called, our living water, which enlivens all bodies, and is composed of two natures: understand spirit, soul, and ferment, because the spirit is the seat of the soul, and its retaining bond. And this water is called by many names, the most sharp vinegar, lunc, the woman's sperm, or the feminine menstruum, heaven, mercury, the hair of the red man, that is, the spirit of Sol, that is of gold: But the Sulfur is called the body, the male Sol, the male sperm, earth and mercury. But these distillations are necessary, by which mercury is purified from all terrestrial feculence, and Lucifer, that is, the uncleanness and the accursed earth falls down out of the golden heaven, and here a separation is made of the grime from the soul, as I disputed in chapter 12. Here a lofty similitude: heaven, that is, gold was pure in the original but when it was dissolved it showed corruption. Therefore the first evil was in heaven, while as yet there was corruption and Lucifer, after whose fall heaven was so cleansed that no angel can now fall down out of the golden heaven. But if so be that Lucifer had had within himself, a soul of a middle nature, or a God, he could by no means have been thrust down to the infernals.

#### Chapter 14.

**Disputes about the Second Part of the Praxis, where there is a more secret dispute about the fire and the colours: and these questions are resolved: Whether heaven ought to descend to the earth: Or the earth ascend into heaven: Or whether both ought to remain beneath heaven? Where the spirit is compared to an angel, who seems to descend with a human soul into a body.**

There now remains the second part of the physical praxis, the far harder indeed, and far more sublime. In which we read that all the nerves of wit, and at length all the races of the mind of many philosophers have languished. For you would with more difficulty make a man revive, than put him to death. Here the work of God is required. It is indeed the greatest mystery to create souls, and frame an inanimate body into a living statue. Do you not think it is the business of a sprightly Wit to reduce the soul to the spirit, then the spirit to the soul, then again those two to the body? In this body of ours, it is requisite to know, how much the spirit is, how much the soul, and how much the body. Furthermore how much of the soul the middle nature, is in the spirit, and how much in the body, that by this you may join as it were two natures of the same kind, and

akin to one another in due proportion. We ought therefore to join two waters, the Sulphur of Gold, and the soul and body of its Mercury, Sol and Lune, the male and female, two sperms, heaven and earth, and two, as I may say, Argent vives, and out of which alone the philosophers say their stone is made; which pitiful fellows mistake for crude mercury. But that mercury is all metals, male and female, and an hermaphrodite monster in the very marriage of the soul and the body, which I call solution; and the putrefaction of the philosophers. The earth of gold is dissolved by its own spirit, which you shall discover in these proportions. The body must be dissolved in the subtlest middle air: The body is also dissolved by its own heat and humidity; where the soul, the middle nature holds the principality in the colour of blackness all in the glass: which blackness of Nature the ancient Philosophers called the crows head, or the black sun.

From whence a certain person advanced this proposition. I saw three circles encompassing one another, three suns in the firmament having three faces, that is, a black, a white, and a red sun. That blackness was also called by the name of all black things; after which all the colours of the world, which can be conceived by wit, use to appear, which at length are brought to a true whiteness, as to a center and principle point. In white there are all colours, and from that the rest seem, as I may say, to be coloured. White and black by Nature herself are colours, and indeed the extremes, out of the manifold mixture and proportion of which with one another we believe the middle colours, as they are called, to arise. We hold also that from the confounding black and white together there is prepared a certain redness. But that whiteness we call the white stone, the white sun, the full moon, and calcined Lune, white silver, the white earth, fruitful, cleansed and calcined, the white Calx, and the Salt of the metals, and the calcined body, and we call it by many other names. It is moreover called the living earth, and the living and white Sulphur, when the soul has been reduced into the body, and the Impediment removed. Here we resolve this question: Whether the earth ought to be airy or fiery? We say both at once. If so be it were only fiery, it would be burned into the ashes of the dead. But if only airy, being made volatile it would vanish away in tinging metals.

But what shall I say of the fire whereby the dissolution of the Earth is made? Behold the heat in the bowels of the earth, which Nature alone supplies: where you seem as it were to perceive none; which being then excited by the sun's heat, does in the metal-breeding mountains by ascending and descending for many cubits coagulate everywhere the thicker water, and together with the fatness of the earth associates them into one body. But since Nature does scarcely sometimes in five hundred years effect her operation, and so long an enjoyment of life is not granted us, nor we permitted to live beyond the elephant, or to the year of Plato, as they call it; the philosopher allows a greater degree to the fire, that he may in a shorter time emulate Nature as his guide. Wherefore you with good reason will say that he excels in a particular happiness of disposition, who can show you the fire agreeable to, or of, Nature.

The philosophers call their natural fire a bath, or their sun, or horse dung; which some make with wood, or any other matter; but we with coals, especially in a furnace fitted for this purpose. The stone is also to be made in a threefold earthen vessel, that there may a slower fire be had, very much like, I say, to the heat of a hen, while she sits on her eggs. And with that heat the dragon, that is the earth of Gold, mortifies himself, when he gives elements and spirits out of himself. On the contrary he revives himself, when he hath received the spirits again unto himself. Wherefore he is compared to Jesus Christ, who voluntarily offered himself to death for us, and afterward by his own power, by the glory of his resurrection, restored himself to life never anymore to die. We also say in this place that the dragon spews out of himself all obscurity and venom, and that he afterward imbibes it and is whitened. And because we have said above that heaven ought to be joined with earth, there arises this question: whether heaven ought to descend to the earth, or the earth ought to ascend up to heaven? It is most certain that the earth cannot ascend, unless heaven first



descends, but the earth is said to be sublimed up to heaven, when being dissolved in its own spirit, it is at length made one thing with it. I will satisfy you with this similitude: the son of God descending into the virgin, and there flesh, a formed man is born, who when he had for our salvation shown us the way of truth, having suffered and died for us, after the resurrection returneth into the heavens. Where earth, that is, humanity, was exalted above all the circles of the world, and placed in the intellectual heaven of the most holy trinity. In the like manner when I die, my soul assisted by the grace and merits of Christ returns unto the vital Fountain, from whence it hath descended. The body returns unto the earth, which being at length purified in the last judgement of the world, the soul coming down from heaven, leads away with itself to glory. But because it is requisite that the soul should ascend to heaven, another doubt offers itself: that is whether the spirit ought to pass with the soul to heaven, or whether both ought to remain beneath heaven? We have said that the spirit is in this world the bond of which it retains the soul; but when the stone shall have arrived at the first whiteness, there will be another world far more excellent than the former, where the spirit shall remain in the middle, the soul in heaven, and the body in the bottom. Understand the earth to be the heaven of the soul, contrarywise the soul to be the heaven of the body. And because the spirit has enfeebled the body in solution, they both do penance, and the soul is purged by the spirit, and likewise is the body. Only the soul cleansed from feces ascendeth up into the heaven, and the spirit goes away with its grimes. If so be that that spirit should stay with the soul and the body, there would be a perpetual corruption there, nor would there be made a right agreement and equality of the elements. This spirit you may fitly liken in some things to an Angel who uses to descend with a human soul (when it is infused into the middle point of the heart, and from thence into all parts of the little body.)

We make also the body, soul and spirit speak by the way of dialog, the spirit saying to the soul: I will lead thee to eternal death, to hell and to the darksome house. To whom the soul: Thou spirit o my life; why do you not bring me back again into the bosom from whence by flattery you took me out? I thought myself bound to you by kindred: I truly am your friend, and will bring you to eternal glory: But the body thinks that by reviving it, he makes it glorious. To whom the spirit: I will truly do it, but miserable I, I am forced to be gone when I shall have placed you above all precious stones, and made you blessed. Wherefore I beseech you when you shall have arrived at the throne of the kingdom, to be sometimes mindful of me. To whom the body at length gave innumerable thanks, that he had given it a most excellent being, by which he beheld God as in a looking-glass, and promised to remember him; and congratulates on the chiefest parts or share in the throne of the kingdom.

### Chapter 15.

**Explains this Proposition: In the shade of the sun is the heat of the moon; and in the heat of the moon is the cold of the sun. Likewise how it is known in the moon, the sun ought to shine. What the shade of the sun and the moon is, and that it is necessary that the sun and the moon and likewise heaven and earth be joined, and makes mention of the citrine Aurora.**

We said in the foregoing chapter, that Sol and Lune ought to be joined. We believe you know what Sol is, lastly what Phoebe herself. Cynthia, that is, Luna opens Phoebus, Sol. Phoebus shuts and coagulates his sister, that is Luna. In the very marriage of Sol and Lune understand this proportion. In the shade of Sol, is the heat of the moon. And in the heat of the moon is the cold of Sol. For when the humidity of Luna has received heat and light from Sol, Sol is said to enter into Luna, at whose entrance Luna revives, increases and begins to grow warm, but Sol to grow cold and moist; because he hath received water to himself and

hath lost heat and dryness, whereby losing his share of light, he becomes dark. But when Luna shall go into Sol, Sol himself begins to revive, and Luna bereft of brightness grows thin and is obscured. From whence I assert that the shade of Sol is the coldness and moisture of Luna, but that the shade is the day of Luna. Take the shade therefore from Sol, and his whole light is everywhere dispersed. Yet think not that Luna can take light from the sun in one little space of an hour, but the body is dissolved by little and little. In the beginning when Phoebe is joined to Sol, she is set on fire by him, who being enkindled is seen to shine by degrees before midnight; but when she has filled up her whole orb, she uses to enlighten all the night. Who decreasing again and growing dim for want of light, the heat of Phoebus begins to be vigorous. Where you will plainly know in Luna when Sol ought to shine, if carrying with you the meaning of my writings, you run it over inwardly in your mind; though it may also be understood by other industry. When Luna, that is, the white stone shall begin to grow citrine and red, it is a token of Sol shining. The beginning of redness is Aurora. Who would not call Aurora citrine? Tithonia, that is, Aurora seems to be bound to this common office to redden the air, and with the first light to show the rapid journey of Phaeton, that is, of Sol. Where at length yellow Eous pours out the quick sighted light from the eastern climate, which seems to be the soul. But that, as it is argued above, it is necessary that Sol go into Luna, then Luna into Sol, we discover two intermediate impediments in heaven, Venus and Mercury, which being taken away there will be a wonderful copulation of them, which being done, Luna will no more lose her light, but shine with lustre of her own. And Sol, in a like manner: and the last day of the former world will come, after which there follows another world, and another life, where there will be either a perpetual day with those above, or a perpetual shade with those below: And fire will descend from heaven and shall again ascend up to the golden heaven, that is, shall tinge the imperfect.

### Chapter 16.

**Of the Augmentation it self of the Stone, both of the ancients and the modern Philosophers: and it is concluded that there is but one day and one night. Again seven days from the seven lords of the world.**

It now pleases me, O son of wisdom, to bring that physical pinnacle into the happy work. Then move the oars, spread the sails abroad, give a swift and prosperous wind, the safe haven is to be looked for. After our stone is made white, we call it our begotten son: though now a child it is a perfect man, consisting of a body and soul; yet it is not able to get another progeny, unless it be first bred up with a nourishment of its own nature, until it arrives at an age mature for generation. We have received from these ancient philosophers, who operated in Nature only, that their living water was divided into two parts. Who when they had with one part of the water attained to the fixed whiteness, they rubefied it with the other part of the water which was reserved, or perhaps with fire alone. Others in the red stone, because it hath ascended to the highest degree, and cannot be increased by itself, have begun again those works, which they accomplished before, dissolving that redness with the other part of the water, which they had reserved, they again reduced it into the first essence, as I may say. And they worked almost in all things as from the beginning, but truly with a greater industry both of the fire and of the labours: and I believe this repetition to be the truer and the greater augmentation.

Wherefore also the first philosophers used a longer time in finishing the stone. Which their successors and posterity used to end in the course of a year, so that they augmented the white stone (by which they would tinge into silver) with a lunar sperm throughout the whole, or by adding to it other spirits, namely white

ones drawn out of tin, and lead by sublimation. Moreover they rubified the white stone with the solar sperm, or other reddish spirits out of iron and copper. And this you may judge was done not amiss, since those inferior bodies have much tincture in them. If so be you should take what is the more perfect out of those bodies and should add it to the more perfect body, what doubt is there that the whole would be made perfect? And such like inferior bodies are called spirits when we say: Dissolve the body, that is the stone already made, and join the spirits. They are also called children when we say: children play with the stone, when they make it greater in weight and virtue. Whence also we in other works know the urine of children of four years old to be the water of the four inferior bodies; which since it is called the aqua fortis of the Philosophers, is said to dissolve gold: out of which things we do not deny but that a certain stone is made.

The mineral stone we distinguish in three ways. The stone of the Philosophers is made out of gold alone and Nature alone; and that is the more sublime; which is by the philosophers reported to cure all sicknesses. The second is the simple stone, when the root only, and the sulfur of gold or silver is in the end augmented by the spirits of the inferior bodies. Where these weights set down in the lesser Turba are discussed: One to three, or two to seven, wanting only a golden or a silver sulphur.

The three red spirits are reduced to the golden, the three white ones to the Silver sulphur. Now there are two sulphurs and seven spirits out of which the number nine proceeds and is made up: Concerning which most men have even unto this day, made foolish comments. We say that the sulphurs of all the metals with their spirits make up the third stone. It is by the most prudent in philosophy thus determined that the stone can tinge innumerable parts. That every spirit is multipliable, but no body. And since our stone is made extremely volatile, and as I may say, spiritual and all fiery, and nourished in the fire by a long decoction, and very often repeated by very many solutions and coagulations, why may you not believe that that stone can tinge innumerable parts? If you with judgement do inwardly apprehend the way of Nature and her admirable properties. The more often you shall have dissolved it into the white Sol, and again coagulated, the more it will tinge. Also the more wives a man shall have taken, the greater issue he will have.

And a certain philosopher says this: If you shall have given it tincture, it will tinge as you would have it. Which may also be seen in corn and seed, since out of one little grain many are produced, out of which often repeated, there uses to arise at length a rich crop. Nor will this be a lesser argument, if to the sun and moon first conjoined you add their children; that is, the inferior planets, and the planets are the lords of the world, who govern all this mighty mass. What should hinder it, but that the stone composed of all ye metallic things may by tinging the whole world. The same is also manifest concerning the stone out of Gold only, because Sol is the Lord of the other planets, and the rest of the planets take from him a golden lustre. From whence it may be concluded that there is but one day and one night in the whole age of the world. Again seven days from the seven planets, and those days one day; because the sun is one: the brightness of the sun, is day, which shining on you, all trouble and calamity does fly away from you.

## **Chapter 17.**

### **Explains Certain Obscure Proportions laid down in the books of this science.**

The Samian Pythagoras when he received scholars into his college to be instructed, is said in the first place to have given them this command; not to publish to the vulgar any of those things which were treated of in their schools. Wherefore he made his hearers be silent for the space of five years, that it might not be lawful

for them either to ask their master, or discourse of those things among themselves. Which custom the Pythagoreans following, at length their memory failing, they begun to put into writing those things which they had learned of their master, as well concerning the principles of things, as concerning divine things: so that the secret marrow of those things should be hid in the sacred obligations of numbers. Which that Plato also did (who by doubtful similitudes and mathematical figures hid his precepts is shown by his epistle which he writ to Dionysus concerning the nature of the first being. We must write, says he, by ambiguities and Ænigmas, that if the book happen to be cast away by sea or by land, he who should read might not understand it. This I also judge gave occasion to the poets to make their fables, whereby, least things sublime should pass away to the unworthy mob, they laid up the sweetest food of philosophy under the essential bark of little fables. We read that the Egyptians to preserve their determinations, in their holy places, hid them in letters difficult to be known, that is in certain figures of animals, as being the print or sign of Nature. If I well remember there was the effigy of a vulture. A dragon drawn into a circle, and biting his own tail, made out the image of the running year. Do not some more curious people endeavor to ascribe everything to it's proper character, whereby there might be a more hidden remark of that thing. Thereby it comes to pass that those ancient philosophers were of opinion to deliver this divine art under more obscure words. The cause you'll find in chapter 7.

Wherefore I thought it requisite and worth the while, if I should explain to you, as to a son of philosophy, some obscure propositions, by which you may easily canvas others which occur. The philosophers say that their stone is found everywhere, in the mountains and in caves. From that proposition evilly understood, I am persuaded that all the errors were derived down to posterity, who works in blood, eggs, hair, and other vain and foreign things. Do you understand it thus. As the celestial sun itself, by its rays is everywhere in this greater world: so this terrestrial Sol, that is gold, is everywhere in the whole glass, that is, in the lesser world: in the mountains, that is, in the head of the glass and in heaven: and in the caverns, that is the bottom of the glass and in the earth. They say the stone is bred in two mountains: in heaven the mountain and in the earth, another mountain, understand it in the glass. Furthermore they affirm their stone to be in all things: that is, in all metals, which are their things. The stone also is in everything, that is, Nature is in everything. And because Nature has in itself all names, and Nature is all the world, therefore the stone has many names and is said to be in everything: although one is nearer than another: since the philosophers demand the generative nature alone of metals. Whence they say that the rich; that is, the perfect bodies, that is the gold and silver have that nature, as well as the poor, that is, the imperfect metals. Yet the nature of gold or of silver is the more perfect, and the more permanent in the fire, than the rest of the metals. The Philosophers also seek a fixed and a permanent thing, which may govern all the world, namely, Sol and Lune. From whence they anciently call the Sun the lord of the world: in whom there is life to heal all things, who by his motion makes day and night, and illuminates the whole world with his brightness. Wherefore Sol says, I am the stone; or in me is the stone. The philosophers also say: That the work of the stone is the work of a woman, and the play of children. The woman is sometimes the earth, sometimes the Mercury, which seems to perfect the whole work. The children play with the stone, that is, the three elements with the earth, or the inferior bodies play with the golden stone, when they augment it in the end. Likewise, children play with the stone and cast it away, that is, ignorant and unskillful folks cast away the earth itself in the bottom, when they have made sublimation. Some Philosophers have compared the work of the stone to the creation of the world. Likewise to the generation of man, and to his naturalness.

But the more modern philosophers have hidden this knowledge not only in new words, but also in painted images. I have seen painted by a most goodly pencil, A naked virgin, of a tender age, with hair like ivory, black eyes, white and red cheeks, whose breasts were milky, very smooth and round. And that virgin was

in all the beauty of he body so excellent and so handsomely adorned with all the endowments of Nature, that she might be thought most worthy of a royal bed, and with whom also all Philosophers, both the ancient and the modern might be deeply in love. Such as the poets use to describe Venus, or Juno, or any other beautiful maid or damsel. But that nymph had in her hands hung down, two mighty burning torches, and under her right foot there was a golden stone out of whose bosom a certain golden fountain ran forth into many little veins. Under her left foot there was a silver stone, vomiting out of itself a silver flame. On the right hand Titan himself was painted, with his rays sparkling all round about. On the left were described the Horns of Phoebe: there flew about certain birds partly upward into the air, partly downward to the earth. At the Virgin's back you see there has grown up a tree replenished with diverse apples and flowers, which you would take to be the Tree of Life planted in the Garden of Paradise, if you did taste its flavor and liveliness. Hermes is described in his philosophical mitre, evidently the chief of all the philosophers, sitting in a chair, holding two tables on his knees; in one whereof there were delineated both the globe of the Sun and the horned Moon; under whom there were two birds drawn into a circle mutually swallowing one another; whereof one, the uppermost was painted with wings, the other without. In the other table there were painted three changeable-coloured circles, in the middle of which was the image of the Moon, to whom two suns, one of them darted out one ray, the other two: and nine eagles flew about Hermes' Chair, having in their feet, bended bows, from which feathered arrows were shot down unto the Earth. Has not one Ulmannus a Friar Minorite of the order of St. Francis with a most admirable dexterity woven out our science in his own country's language and mother tongue? And by Christ's passion proved it most true? Where there is seen that double shaped Image, partly male, partly female, that hermaphroditical monster, carrying in its hand a scepter of imperial majesty: and many other things of that kind are seen in the books of the philosophers.

### **Chapter 18.**

**Shows that the Stone can Cure all Sickneses: since all Nature is in the sun, and the sun in Nature, and especially in the stone.**

But that the stone can cure all sickness, of these all the books of the philosophers are full. Yet I will according to my best ability study to demonstrate it. All Nature is in the Sun, and the Sun in Nature. Therefore we may catch his spirit in all things, but especially in gold. And when Nature is sick, that stone cures Nature. In propagating gold Heaven has taken the greatest pains; likewise the Sun itself, and Jupiter. The Sun has put all his endowments into it, by reason of its fiery virtue and brightness. But Jupiter whom the physicians call the patron of life, has infused into it temperance and an equality of the elements. By these gifts Gold is made so incorruptible, that no fire can by destroying act upon its substance and virtue. To these are added the solution of Gold, the purification of its Nature, and a long nourishment in fire, by which it has obtained a wonderful and almost divine operation. If so be you should take in victuals or in drink the weight of a grain of mustard seed, it by its celestial vigor would preserve in an equality the oil and fire of life, and would temper and tie together the elements of your body in peace. Which being tempered, the soul would abide with the elements and man would remain always sound, until that end which the omnipotent God has ordained by reason of the disobedience of our first parent. There was in Christ's body so great an affinity, and so great a binding together of the elements, because he was liable to sin, as also by reason of the wonderful union of the divine essence, that he had never died naturally, had he not for the sake of redeeming, man willingly desired death. Render him perpetual thanks for creating you, for redeeming you from the infernal regions with his precious blood, and for bestowing on you so great a gift as this. Whereby you may lead a long life and have health in happiness, for which chiefly our stone is to be sought after. I say nothing of the plenty of riches, with which a man by this art most fully and copiously abounds. If having the

Aurum potable or the golden liquor, you shall dissolve that stone in aqua vitae drawn out of malmsey wine, or some other falernum, that is, rich wine.

### Chapter 19.

**Repeats the Philosophical Praxis, where the divine skill of the stone is often times all of it set down in short sentences.**

Mix the masculine prince with Mercury in a twelfth proportion in respect of the prince. Put it to a slow fire and continue it, until the mercury dissolving the bodies there appear aloft. A Venus swimming, which extracts until nothing of the body remains in the bottom, and you have the first part of the physical work. The second part of the work is sulphur, put that in a glass without water, and by distilling the water of the body, in which there is the soul of Lune. Join this water with the sulphur, and permit a many times, one to arise sometimes with the other, sometimes to be depressed: until Venus shall have conceived her water, which is done in a most white color, and you have the elixir to the white. The third part of the work is: You shall make citrine with a strong fire, the most white, earth which you have obtained: afterward you shall rubify it by the force of fire, and it is the elixir to the red.

Of another way of working: Still I have a mind to contain in short, and with admirable art that divine knowledge. Dissolve the body, take the Sulphur, cleanse it, sublime the spirit, join the spirit with the sulphur, and you will have the physical art. In every perfect alchemical work, though never so small, it is necessary to have the spirit and sulphur of Gold. The spirit tinges with a golden colour. The sulphur gives the weight of Gold, and coagulates. If it wanted either, the work would be nothing. Then say and speak the greatest truth, that all the secret of Nature lies hid in the Venus of the physical Gold. Wherefore it is wont to be called the coagulation; when it is said: take that coagulum from the body, and you have a magistry, than which there is not a greater in Nature. Likewise cleanse the coagulum, and destroy the impediment, and you will tinge. But because a dirty cloth, not compared to sulphur, cannot be washed without water. To wash is to dissolve, to dissolve is to purify, the water is mercury, it is the key. It alone does open the body, and whitens the sulphur, which being whitened, it recedes with uncleanliness. I would say you were admirably learned if you should be able to remove it, the uncleanliness, it is the impediment and eternal death. Wherefore it shall not go to heaven, as above in chapter 14 I have plainly demonstrated. And I say unto you by God the creator of heaven, it is one of the greatest secrets. Furthermore, the very knowledge of the stone is no other thing than the purification of the earth, or of Nature. The earth cannot be cleared from feces and purged, unless through the middle or center it shall have received the water unto itself. And this comprehends the whole art in short, if you have understood Nature. You may of yourself by divine grace discover many things like unto these. Praise God for all ages of ages.

The end of my Consideration.

*Quere if hereby he affirms himself  
to be an Adept. But there may  
be many reasons unknown to us:  
I question not but the Inquisition was  
the reason of his suppressing his name.*

## **Chapter 20.**

### **Lays down the Questions put by Illardus the Necromancer to the devil, concerning the stone of the Philosophers.**

A certain Necromancer, Illardus by name in the province of Catilania put these questions to the devil.

#### **Whether the stone of the Philosophers can be made, to convert the imperfect metals into Gold and Silver, fire being the judge?**

All metals are essentially in Gold, with their earths in a manifold color. Out of its earth with its own essence the stone is made, which by its Nature takes all uncleanness away, and being projected on the imperfect metals, fixes them forever.

#### **What and what kind of a essence is that?**

It is a soul, a middle nature, which permits one form to be converted into another.

#### **In what manner does the soul, the middle nature, act?**

Neither angels, nor men in any wise inwardly behold or comprehend it by their acutest understandings. Because this is proper to God who reserved this to his own majesty.

#### **Can man make the stone?**

Whatever God has created, having a property, it is possible for man to act upon it, but it is very hard to make the stone, yet it may be made.

#### **The soul, the middle nature has it a body?**

The colour of Gold is the body of the soul, the middle nature.

#### **By what way can the colour be separated from Gold?**

The soul, the middle nature, with its heat and moisture does divide and cojoin both together.

#### **The colour of Gold, is it white, or black or of what sort?**

It is white to man's sight, but in spirit it is blue.

#### **In what manner, and out of what is color made?**

Nature makes it out of a pure earth and pure water.

#### **Is there a colour in all metals?**

Not only in metals, but also in all the elements there is a hidden Color.

#### **Of what virtue, or power is the stone?**

The stone can purify all the imperfect metallic bodies from all leprosy, so that they shall be perpetual even to the last judgement. It cures human bodies of all sickness, until a natural death.

#### **Of what sort, and what thing is the soul of a human body?**

It is the living fire of a heavenly life, and hath in itself, the soul, the middle nature. By the soul, the middle nature, God is called the creator of all things which are in the world.

**Had Virgil the stone?**

Not only did he have it, but many Philosophers had it, and have written in diverse ways about it under obscure names and many operations.

**How and why is it called the stone?**

I tell you that the stone is its name, and there is no permission given me to let you know more.

**In what time can the stone be brought to an end?**

Twelve months are necessary from the first day of the beginning. In thirty days and earth is generated out of lead, or the nature of the earth makes lead grow. In one hundred days argent vive grows in water. In sixty days complete there grew an air out of tin complete. In the other days of the year, fire grows from gold. In the moment of the year ending, the soul, the middle nature, descends from heaven into this earth, and mortifies the superior and inferior powers. The image of a manifold victory to consume the war in the heart of the belly of them, even to the perpetual judgement of fire. I will tell you no more.

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# **Compound of Compounds**

by  
**Albertus Magnus**

## **Preface**

I will not hide a science which was revealed to me by the grace of God; I will not jealously guard it for myself alone, for fear of drawing His curse. A science kept secret, a hidden treasure, what is its use? The science I have learned without invention, I transmit to you without regret. Envy disrupts everything, an envious man cannot be just before God. All science, all knowledge comes from God; it is a simple way of speaking to indicate that it comes from the Holy Spirit. No one can say: Our Lord Jesus Christ without also understanding: Son of God the Father, through the operation of the Holy Spirit. In the same way, this science of truth cannot be separated from Him who communicated it to me.

I have not been sent to all, but only to those who admire the Lord in his works and whom God judges worthy. Only whosoever has ears to hear His divine communication receives the secrets which have been transmitted to me by the grace of God, and these He never reveals to those who are unworthy.

Nature must serve as the foundation and the mode of science: the Art also works according to Nature as far as it can. It is necessary then, that the Artist observe Nature and operate as she operates.

## **Chapter I**

### **Of the Formation of the Metals Generally from the Sulphur and the Mercury**

It is observed that the essence of metals, insofar as we know, is to be produced in a general manner from Sulphur and Mercury. The differences alone of cooking and digestion results in a diversification of the metallic nature. I personally observed that in a single vessel, in the same vein, so to speak, nature had produced many metals, along with some silver disseminated here and there. We have clearly demonstrated in our treatise on minerals that the generation of metals is circular, that is, one passes easily from one to another following a circle, the cousin metals having similar properties; it is because of this that silver changes more readily into gold than any other metal.

Indeed, there is not much in changing the color and weight of silver, this is easy, because a compact substance increases its weight quite readily. And since it contains a yellowish-white Sulphur, its color will also be easy to transform.

It is the same with other metals. The Sulphur is, so to speak, their father and the Mercury, their mother.

Again, it is most true, if one says of it that in the union the Sulphur represents the sperm of the father and that the Mercury acts as a coagulated Menstruum in order to form the embryonic substance. The sulfur alone cannot produce, just as the father alone cannot produce.

In the same way that the male begets his proper substance, in mixture with the menstrual blood, likewise, the Sulphur produces with the mercury, but alone it produces nothing. By this comparison we make note that the Alchemist will have to raise at the outset, the specificity of the metal which has given him the Nature, then that he proceeds as nature proceeded, with the mercury and the Sulphur prepared and purified always following the example of Nature.

### **The Sulphur Contains Three Humid Principles ~**

The first of these principles is especially elevated and volatile, one finds it in the exterior parts of the Sulphur, for the same reason, that of the great volatility of its elements, which ignite easily and consume the bodies with which they come into contact.

The second principle is phlegmatic, otherwise called aqueous; it is found in close association with the former. The third is radical, fixed, adherent to the internal parts. That one alone is general, and one cannot separate it from the others without destroying the whole edifice. The first principle does not resist the fire; being combustible, it consumes itself in the fire and calcines the substance of the metal with which one heats it. Therefore, it is not only useless, but detrimental besides, to the goal which we set ourselves. The second principle does not make the bodies moist, it does not produce, it cannot serve us at all. The third is radical, it penetrates all the particles of the matter which are necessary to its essential properties.

It is necessary to rid the Sulphur of the first two principles in order that the subtilty of the third force serve us in making a perfect compound.

The fire is nothing other than the vapor of the Sulphur; the vapor of the Sulphur, well purified and sublimed white and rendered very compact. Also the Alchemists are accustomed to skillfully raising the two superfluous principles in the Sulphur by way of acid baths, such as vinegar of lemons, sour milk, the milk of goats, the urine of infants, etc. They purify it by lixiviation, digestion and sublimation. It is necessary, finally, to rectify it by reduction in a manner so as not to have more than one pure substance containing the active, perfectible brother-force of the metal. Behold! We are in possession of one part of our work.

### **Of the Nature of the Mercury ~**

The Mercury contains two superfluous substances, the earth and the water. The earthy substance has something of the Sulphur. The fire reddens it. The aqueous substance has superfluous humidity. One easily rids the mercury of its watery and earthy impurities by sublimation and very acid baths. Nature separates it into the dry state of the Sulphur and robs it of its earth by the heat of the Sun and the Stars.

It obtains thus a pure Mercury, completely free of its earthy substance, containing no more foreign particles. It unites it then with a pure Sulphur and produces in the end the pure and perfect metals in the heart of the earth. If the two principles are impure, the metals are imperfect. This is why one finds different metals in the mines, which possess of the purification and of the digestion according to their rudiments. This is dependent on the cooking.

### **Of the Arsenick ~**

The Arsenick is of the same nature as the Sulphur; both tint to red and to white. But there is more humidity in the Arsenick, and it sublimes less rapidly over the fire than the Sulphur.

One knows how well Sulphur sublimes quickly and how it consumes all the bodies, except God. The Arsenick can unite its dry principle with that of the Sulphur, they temper each other, and once united, one separates them only with difficulty, their tincture is toned down by this union.

"The Arsenick", says Geber, "contains much of the Mercury; it can also be prepared like it". Know that the Spirit hidden in the Sulphur, the Arsenick and the animal oil, is named by the philosophers The White Elixir. It is unique, miscible with the volatile substance, from this one we extract the red Elixir; it unites with the melted metals, thus as we have experimented with it, it purifies them. Not only because of the aforementioned properties, but also because there is one common proportion between its elements.

The metals differ between themselves according to the purity or impurity of the first matter, so to speak, of the Sulphur and of the Mercury, and also according to the degree of the fire which produced them.

According to philosophy, the Elixir also is called Medicine, because one assimilates the body of metals in the body of animals. Also we say that there is a hidden Spirit in the Sulphur, the Arsenick and the oil extract of the animal substances. It is that spirit for which we search, with whose aid we will tint all the imperfect bodies to perfection. This Spirit is called Water and mercury by the Philosophers. "The mercury", says Geber, "is a medicine composed of the dry and the humid, the humid and the dry". You understand the succession of operations: extract the earth from the fire, the air from the earth, the water from the air, since the water can resist the fire. It is necessary to mark well these teachings, they are Universal Secrets.

None of the principles which enter into the Work have strength by themselves; for they are linked in the metals, they cannot be perfected, they are not very fixed. Each lacks two substances, one miscible with the metals in fusion, the other fixed which enables it to coagulate and fix. Also Rhases said: "There are four substances which change in season: each one of these is composed of the four elements and takes the name of the dominant element. Their marvelous essence was fixed in one body, and, with this last, one can nourish the other bodies. This essence is composed of water and of air, combined in such a way that the heat liquefies them. Here it is: a marvelous secret. The minerals employed in Alchemy must, in order to serve us, have an action upon the melted bodies. The stones we use are four in number, two tint to white, the two others to red. Also: the white, the red, the Sulphur, the Arsenick and Saturn have only that one same body! But in this single body, what obscurities! And at first it is without action upon the perfect metals".

"In the imperfect bodies, there is an acid water, bitter, harsh, necessary to our Art. As it dissolves and mortifies the bodies, it then revives them and recomposes them. Rhases says in his third letter: Those who search our Enteleche, ask from whence the bitter aqueous fundamental comes. We answer them: from the impurity of the metals. Because the water contained in Gold is sweet, it does not dissolve, on the contrary, it coagulates and fortifies, because it contains neither acidity nor impurity like the imperfect bodies". This is why Geber said: "One calcines and dissolves the gold and silver in vain, because our vinegar takes from the four imperfect bodies; this is the mortifying and dissolving spirit which mixes the tinctures of all the bodies that we employ in the Work. We need nothing but this water, of little importance to us are the other Spirits".

Geber is right; we have not to make a tincture for the fire to adulterate. Actually, on the contrary, it is

necessary that the fire give it excellence and strength in order that it can ally itself with the melted metals. It is necessary that it strengthen, that it fix, that despite the fusion, it rests intimately united with the metal.

I will add that from the four imperfect bodies, one can extract all. As for the manner of preparing the Sulphur, the Arsenick, and the Mercury most highly acclaimed, one can bring it forth here.

Indeed, when in this preparation we heat the spirit of the Sulphur and of the Arsenick, with the acid waters or the oil, for in extracting this volatile essence, the oil or unctuousness, we raise them above that which is superfluous to them; it leaves the volatile force and the oil, these things alone are those which are useful to us; but they are mixed in the acid water which served us in purifying, there is no means of separating these, but at least we are rid of the useless. It is necessary therefore, to find another means to extract from these bodies in order to obtain the water, the oil, and the very subtle spirit of the Sulphur which is the true very active Tincture for which we search. We will work so with the bodies in separating by decomposition or yet by distillation of their natural component parts, and we will arrive thus at the simple parts. Some, ignoring the composition of the Magistery want to work on the Mercury alone, asserting it has one body, one soul, one spirit, and that it is the first matter of gold and silver. It is necessary to respond to them on the truth which several philosophers affirm, that the Work is made up of three things: The Spirit, the Body, and the Soul, extracted from one only. But for the other part, one cannot find in something that which is not there. Now, the Mercury does not have the red tincture, therefore, it alone cannot suffice to form the body of the Sun; it will be impossible for us with only the Mercury to direct the Work to a good end. The Moon alone cannot suffice, meanwhile this body is, so to speak, the foundation of the Work.

In whatever manner that one works and transforms the Mercury, never will it be able to establish a body. They say also: "One finds in the Mercury a red Sulphur, therefore it contains the red tincture". Error! The Sulphur is the father of the metals, one never finds it in the Mercury which is female!

A passive matter cannot fertilize itself. The Mercury contains indeed a Sulphur, but, as we have already said, it is an earthy Sulphur. We remark finally, that the Sulphur cannot support the fusion; therefore, the Elixir cannot be extracted from one thing only.

## **Chapter II**

### **Of the Putrefaction**

Fire produces death and life. A light fire dries the body. Here is the reason: Fire, coming into contact with a body, sets into motion the element similar to itself which exists in this body.

This element is the Natural heat. The former one excites the fiery part of the body in the first place; there is a conjunction and the radical humidity of the body rises to the surface while the fire works on the exterior. Those diverse portions of the body are gone which the radical humidity united, the dead body is dissolved, is resolved, all its parts separated one from the other. The fire works here like a cutting instrument. That which it dries and contracts of itself, it can do only so long as there is a certain predisposition in the body, especially if the body is compact like one element. The last one needs a fixed agglutinate, which will have separated from the body before corruption. All this can be done by the Sun, because it is in one nature hot and humid, through affinity with the other bodies.

### **Chapter III**

#### **Of the Regimen of the Stone**

There are four stages of the Stone: (1) to decompose; (2) to wash; (3) to contract; (4) to fix. In the first stage, one separates the natures because without division, without purification, there cannot be a conjunction. During the second stage, the separate elements are washed, purified, and restored to the simple state. In the third, one changes our Sulphur to the mineral of the Sun, of the moon and of the other metals. In the fourth, all the bodies formerly extracted from our Stone are united, recomposed and fixed so as to rest conjointly henceforth.

There are some who count five stages in the Magistry: (1) to resolve the substance to the first matter; (2) to introduce our earth, the black magnesium, so to speak, as being related to the nature of the Sulphur and the mercury; (3) also to render the Sulphur as close as possible to the mineral matter of the Sun and of the moon; (4) to compose of the several things a white Elixir; (5) to cook perfectly the white Elixir to give it the color of cinnabar, starting there in order to make the red Elixir.

Finally, there are some who count four stages in the work, others three, others only two. These last count thus: (1) setting up the work and purification of the elements; and (2) conjunction.

Mark well that which follows: The substance of the Stone of the Philosophers is common: one finds it everywhere, it is a viscous water like the Mercury that one extracts from the earth. Our viscous water is found everywhere, even in the Latrines, certain philosophers have said. And, several imbeciles take their words literally, searching for it in the excrements!

Nature operates on this matter in raising something from it, its earthy principle, and in uniting something with it, the Sulphur of the Philosophers, which is not the vulgar sulphur, but a transparent Sulphur of red tint. For to speak the truth, it is the Spirit of Roman Vitriol. Prepare it thus: take of Saltpeter and of Roman Vitriol, two pounds of each; pulverize finely. Hence, Aristotle is right when he says that one cannot in any way change the form of the metals, if one does not first reduce them to their first matter. This is easy as one will shortly see. Philosophy says that one cannot go from one extreme to the other without an intermediary. At one extremity of our Philosophical Stone, are two luminaries, gold and silver; at the other extremity, the perfect elixir or tincture, and in the middle, the Philosophical Water of Life, naturally purified, cooked and digested.

All these things are near to perfection and preferable to the more primitive bodies of nature. Likewise, by means of average heat, the ice dissolves into water, for we have formerly had water. Thus, the metals are resolved to their first matter which is our Water of Life. The preparation is indicated in the chapters that follow. By itself alone, it can reduce all the metallic bodies to their first matter.

### **Chapter IV**

#### **Of the Sublimation of the Mercury**

In the name of God, procure yourself a pound of pure mercury issuing from the mine. Of the other portion, take of Roman Vitriol and of common calcined salt, pulverize and mix well. Put these two latest matters into a large glazed earthenware flask and set over a mild fire until the matter begins to melt and flow. Then take your mineral mercury, put it in a flask with a long neck and drop-by-drop, pour it over the vitriol and salt in fusion. Stir with a wooden spatula until the mercury is completely consumed and it leaves no trace. When it has completely disappeared, dry the matter over a gentle fire during the night. The next morning, you will take the well-dried matter and pulverize it finely on a stone. Place the pulverized matter in a sublimating flask called an Aludel, to sublime according to the Art. Place on it the head of the vessel, and close the joints with a philosophical luting, so that the mercury cannot escape. Place the Aludel in a furnace and seal it in so it cannot tilt over but stands straight. Then make a little fire for about four hours to drive away the humidity of the mercury and of the vitriol. After the evaporation of the humidity, increase the fire so that the pure white matter of the mercury separates itself from the impurities; do this for four hours; you will see if it suffices by introducing a wooden rod to the sublimating flask by way of the principle opening, you will lower it just to the matter and determine whether or not the white matter of the mercury is uppermost in the mixture. If it is, raise the baton, close the aperture of the head with a luting so that the mercury cannot escape, and increase the fire in such a way that the white matter of the mercury rises above the faeces in the Aludel. Do this for four hours. Finally, heat with wood in a manner to obtain a blaze: it is necessary that the bottom of the flask and the residue becomes red. Continue thusly until there remains a little of the white substance of the Mercury adherent to the faeces. The force and the violence of the fire will be spent during the separation.

Stop the fire, allow the furnace and the matter to cool overnight. The next morning, return the flask to the furnace, lift the luting with caution in order not to sully the mercury, open the apparatus. If you find a white matter, sublimed, pure, compact, heavy, then you have succeeded. But if the sublimate was spongy, light, porous, collect it and recommence the sublimation on the residue adding now pulverized common salt. Operate in the same flask over the furnace, in the same manner, with the same very high degree of fire. Then open the flask, see if the sublimate is white, compact, dense. Then collect it and put it carefully aside so that it may serve you when you have need to finish the Work. But if again it has not occurred as it should, you will have to sublime it a third time until you obtain it pure, compact, white and heavy.

Notice that by this operation you have raised two impurities from the Mercury. At first you removed from it all its superfluous humidity; in the second, you have rid it of its impure earthy parts which remained in the faeces. Thus, you have now sublimed it to a clear semi-fixed substance.

Put this aside as one has recommended to you.

## **Chapter V**

### **Of the Preparation of the Waters from Which You Will Derive the Water of Life**

Take two pounds of Roman Vitriol, two pounds of Saltpeter, one pound calcined Alum. Crush well, mix perfectly, put it in a glass Alembic. Distill the water according to ordinary procedures, closing the joints well, lest the spirits escape. Begin with a gentle fire, the heat more forcibly; afterwards heat with wood until the apparatus becomes white, so that all the spirits distill. Then, stop the fire. Let the furnace cool. Put this carefully aside, for this is the Solvent of the Moon. Conserve it for the Work; it dissolves the silver and

separates it from the gold. It calcines the Mercury and the crocus of Mars; it gives to the skin of a man, a brown coloration which is hard to get rid of. This is the prime water of the philosophers, it is perfect to the first degree. You will prepare three pounds of the water.

### **Second Water Prepared by Way of Sal Ammoniac ~**

In the name of God, get one pound of the first water and therein dissolve four parts of pure and uncolored Sal Ammoniac. The dissolution done, the water will change color. It has acquired other properties. The prime water was greenish, it dissolved the Moon, it was without action on the Sun; but as soon as one adds to it from the sal ammoniac, it takes on a yellow color. It dissolves gold, mercury and sulphur sublimate, and gives a strong yellow coloration to the skin of a man. Conserve this water preciously, because it will serve us in the work.

### **Third Water Prepared by Means of Mercury Sublimate ~**

Take of the third mercuric water, perfected to the third degree, pellucid; put it to putrefy in the belly of a horse, in a flask with a long neck, clean, well-sealed, for 14 days. Leave it to ferment, the impurities drop to the bottom and the water passes from yellow to red. At this time, you will retrieve the flask and you will put it over the cinders of a very mild fire. Adapt to it the head of the alembic with a recipient. Begin the distillation slowly. That which passes, bit by bit, is our Water of Life. A very clear, pure, heavy, virginal milk, a very sour Vinegar. Continue the fire gently until all the water of life has distilled gradually over. Then, stop the fire, let the furnace cool and conserve with care your distilled water. This is it: Our Water of Life, Vinegar of the Philosophers, Virgin's Milk which reduces the bodies to their first matter, It was given an infinity of names.

Here are the properties of this water: a little bit deposited on a thin plate of hot copper, penetrates it immediately and leaves there a white stain. Thrown over the coals, it emits a smoke. In air it congeals and resembles ice. When one distills this water, all the drops don't pass following the same path, rather, some pass here, others there. It does not work on the metals like strong corrosive water, which dissolves them, but it reduces to Mercury all the bodies that it bathes, just as you will see much later.

After the putrefaction, the distillation, the clarification, it is pure and very perfect. Free from every volatile, superfluous and corrosive principle. It is not a water which consumes, it does not dissolve the bodies but reduces them to Mercury. It owes this property to the original Mercury dissolves and putrefied to the third stage of perfection. It neither contains any faeces nor earthy impurities. The last distillation separated them, the black impurities are resting at the bottom of the alembic. The color of this water is reddish-clue, clear; put it aside. This, it reduces all the calcined and putrefied bodies to their prime matter.

When you want to reduce the calcined bodies with this water, prepare the bodies thusly:

Take some of the body that you will want, Sun or Moon, and file it very fine. Pulverize this well using a stone prepared with common salt. Separate the salt by dissolving it in hot water. The pulverized lime will resettle at the bottom of the liquid. Decant. Dry the lime, soak it three times in oil of Tartar, allowing the lime to absorb all the oil each time. Finally, put the lime in a little flask; pour it over the oil of Tartar, so that the liquid has a depth of two fingers, then close the flask. Put it to putrefy in the belly of a horse for 8 days. Then take the flask, decant the oil and dry the lime. This done, put the lime into an equal amount of our

Water of Life. Close the flask and let it digest over a very mild fire until all the lime be converted into Mercury. Decant, then, the water with caution. Recover the corporeal Mercury; put it in a glass vessel, putrefy it with water and common salt. Dry according to the laws, put it in a fine linen and squeeze out in drops. If it passes in its entirety, it is good. If some portion of the amalgamate body remains, indicating that the dissolution has not been complete, put the residue with a new quantity of the consecrated water. Know that the distillation of the water must be done in a water-bath; for the air and the fire, one will distill over hot cinders. The water must be derived from the humid substance and not otherwise; the air and the fire must be an extract of the dry substance and none other.

## **Chapter VI**

### **Properties of This Mercury**

It is less mobile, it flows less quickly than the other Mercury; it leaves traces of its fixed body in the fire: one drop placed on a thin plate heated to red leaves a residue.

#### **Multiplication of the Philosophical Mercury ~**

When you have your philosophical Mercury, take two portions of it and one portion of the filings mentioned much earlier. Make an amalgamate of these by cooking them together in a flask that has been well sealed and placed over cinders of a temperate fire. The entire will resolve into mercury. You will therefore want to increase this to infinity, because the amount of the volatile always exceeds the amount of the fixed. It increases indefinitely giving to it its proper nature and there is always enough.

Now you know how to prepare the Water of Life, you understand some of the stages and the properties, you understand the putrefaction of the metallic bodies, their reduction to the prime matter, the multiplication of the matter to infinity. I clearly explained to you all that which the Philosophers hid with care.

It is not the vulgar Mercury, it is the first matter of the Philosophers. It is aqueous cold, a humid element; it is a permanent water, it is the spirit of the body, an oily vapor, consecrated Water, strong water, Water of the Sages, Vinegar of the Philosophers, mineral water, Rose of the Celestial Grace; it has many other names besides these and indeed, many they be that are different! However, they all designate one and the same thing which is the Mercury of the Philosophers. It is the focus of Alchemy; alone it can serve to make the tincture, the white and the red, etc.

Take then, in the name of Jesus Christ, our venerable Water of the Philosophers, original Hyle of the Sages; it is the stone that one revealed for you in this treatise. It is the first matter of the perfect body, as you have determined. Put your matter in a furnace, into a clean vessel, clear transparent and round, whose opening you will hermetically seal, so that nothing can escape. Your matter is to be placed on a level bed or surface, slightly hot. You will leave it there for one Philosophical month. Maintain the heat evenly, so that the perspiration of the matter will sublime, until it sweats no longer, that nothing rises or descends, That it begins to putrefy, to suffocate, to coagulate and to fix by maintaining the constancy of the fire. It will not raise more of the exalted, smoky substance, and our Mercury will remain on the bottom, dry, robbed of its humidity, putrefied, coagulated, changed to a black earth, that one calls Head of the Raven, a dry and earthy element.



When you have done this, you will have accomplished the genuine sublimation of the Philosophers, during this you will have examined all the aforementioned stages, to wit: sublimation of the Mercury, distillation, coagulation, fixation, in one only vessel and with one only furnace as was stated.

Indeed when our stone is in its vessel, and it is increase, one says that there is sublimation or ascension. When afterwards it again settles to the bottom, one says that there is distillation or precipitation. Next, when after the distillation and sublimation, our stone begins to putrefy and to coagulate, it is the putrefaction and the coagulation; finally when it calcines and fixes through the loss of its radical, aqueous humidity. It is the calcinations and fixation; all this is done through the single act of heating, in a single furnace, in a single vessel, as was said.

This sublimation constitutes a genuine separation of the elements, according to the Philosophers: "The Work of Our Stone consists only of the Separation and Conjunction of the elements; because in our sublimation, the aqueous, cold and humid element changes to a dry, earthy and hot element". It follows that the separation of the elements of our stone is not vulgar, but philosophical: our single, very perfect sublimation indeed suffices to separate the elements. In our stone there is the form of only two elements, the water and the earth, which potentially contain the other two. The Earth potentially (or virtually) contains the Fire, because of its dryness; the Water potentially contains the Air because of its humidity. It is thus quite evident that although our stone has only the form of two elements, it potentially contains all four.

Also a Philosopher said of it: "There is not a separation of the four elements in our stone like the imbeciles think. Our nature contains a very hidden secret; thus one sees the power and the strength, the earth and the water. It contains two other elements, the air and the fire. However, these are neither visible nor tangible, one cannot represent them, one ignores their influence, they disclose nothing which does not manifest in the two other elements, earth and water, when the fire changes the colors during the digestion".

Behold that by the grace of God, you have the second component of the Philosophical stone; which is the Black Earth, the Head of a Crow, mother, heart, origin of the other colors. From this earth, as the one body, all the rest take their birth. This dry earthy element received in the books of the Philosophers, Nummus, black sulfur, male, husband, etc. Despite this endless variety of names, it is the single and the same thing always, derived from a single matter. Because the Philosophical sublimation resulted in a deprivation of humidity, the volatile became fixed, the soft became hard and the aqueous became earthy, according to Geber.

This is the metamorphosis of the nature, the changing of the water to fire, according to The Turba. It is also the changing of the cold and humid constitutions to bilious, dry constitutions, according to the doctors. Aristotle says that the spirit took a body, and Alphidius says that the liquid became viscous. The hidden became manifest, says Rudianus in the Book of the Three Words. One now understands the Philosophers when they say: "Our great Work is not other than a permutation of nature, an evolution of the elements". It is quite evident that by this deprivation of humidity, we render the stone dry, the volatile becomes fixed, the spirit becomes corporeal, the liquid becomes solid, the fire changes to water, the air to earth. We have thus changed the true natures following a certain order; we have permuted their natures. That God be eternally blessed! Amen.

Let us now pass, with the permission of God, to the second operation which is the whitening of our pure

earth. Take then, two parts of the fixed earth or Head of a Raven: digest it subtly with precaution in an excessively clean mortar. Add to it one part of the Philosophical water that you know of (That which you have put aside). Unite these by imbibing the dry earth little by little into the water until its thirst is quenched. Digest and mix well enough that the union of the body, of the soul and of the water be perfect and intimate. This done, you will put all of it in a hermetically sealed flask so that nothing will escape. Place the flask over a little warm bed, always hot and kept level, so that in sweating, its entrails are rid of the liquid which it drank. You will leave it there eight days until the earth whitens somewhat.

You will then take the Stone, you will pulverize it, soak it again in the virginal milk, stirring, until its thirst is quenched. Put it again in the flask over its warm little bed so that it dries like that above. You will repeat this operation four times following the same order: The soaking of the earth by water until perfect union: The soaking of the earth by water until perfect union, dessication and calcinations. You will then have sufficiently purified the Head of the Raven, the black and foetid earth, you have brought it to whiteness by the strength of the fire, of the heat, and the whitened water. Gather your white earth and put it carefully aside. This is very precious because it is the foliated white earth, white Sulphur, white Magnesia, etc. Morien speaks of it when he says: "Put this earth with its water to putrefy so that it purifies, and with the aid of God you will finish the Magistry". Hermes says the same as Azoth, wash the Laton and raise it from all its impurities.

In this latest operation, we produced a genuine conjunction of the elements, because the water united with the earth, the air with the fire. It is this union of the man with the woman, of the male with the female, of the gold with the silver, of the dry and the impure celestial water.

There was also a resurrection of dead bodies. This is why the Philosophers said: "Those who do not know how to kill and how to revive, abandon the Art". And elsewhere: "Those who know how to kill and how to revive, will profit from our science. This one will be the Prince of the Art who will do these two things". Another Philosopher said: "Our dry Earth does not bear any fruit if it is not profoundly soaked in its Rain Water. Our dry Earth has a great thirst, when it begins to drink, it drinks down to the dregs". Another said: "Our Earth drinks the fertile water that it awaited, it quenches its thirst, then it produces hundreds of fruits". One finds many similar passages in the books of the Philosophers, but they are in the form of parables, so that the evil cannot understand them. By the Grace of God, you now possess our white foliated Earth, all ready to undergo the fermentation, which will give it breath. Also the Philosophers said: "Whiten the black Earth before uniting it with the ferment". Another said: "Sow your gold in the white foliated Earth, and it will give you fruit an hundredfold". Glory to God. Amen.

We pass to the third operation which is the fermentation of the white Earth. It is necessary to animate and revive the dead body, in order to multiply its strength to infinity, and to cause it to pass to the state of the perfect white elixir which changes the Mercury to the genuine and perfect Moon. Note that the ferment cannot penetrate the dead body, that by the intermediary of the water the marriage is made and the bond set between the white earth and the ferment. This is why in all fermentation, it is necessary to note the weight of each thing. If then you want to set the white Earth aside to ferment in order to change it to the white Elixir containing an excess of the tincture, it is necessary to take three parts of the white Earth or dead foliated Body, two parts of the Water of Life, that you put in reserve and one-half of the ferment.

Prepare the ferment in such a way that it is reduced to a white lime, bound and fixed, if you want to make the white elixir. If you want to make the red Elixir, condense the lime of the very yellow gold, prepared

according to the art. There are no other ferments like these here. The ferment of silver is silver, the ferment of gold is gold, therefore don't look elsewhere! The reason for this is that the two bodies are luminous, they contain the brilliant lights which communicate to the other bodies true redness and whiteness. They are of one nature, similar to that of sulphur, the purest of the matter of this type of stone. Extract then, each kind from its own kind, each family from its own family. The work of the white has as a goal, to whiten; the work of the red, to redden. Above all, do not mix the two Works, otherwise nothing will work well.

All the Philosophers say that our stone is composed of three things: The Body, the Spirit and the Soul. Now the white Earth is the Body, the ferment is the Soul, which gives it its life, the intermediary water is the Spirit. Reunite these three things in one by marriage, digesting them well over an appropriate stone, so as to unite them in their smallest particles, to form from it a confused chaos. When you have made a single body of all, put it carefully in a special flask which you will place over its hot bed, so that the mixture coagulates, fixes and becomes white. You will take the blessed white stone, you will pulverize it finely over a very clean stone, soak it with a third of its weight of water to slake its thirst. Then return it to the clear and clean flask placed over its soft and hot bed so that it commences to sweat and to yield its water, and finally you will leave its entrails to dry. Repeat often until you have prepared by this procedure our very excellent fixed white Stone, which penetrates the tiniest part of the bodies very rapidly, flowing like the fixed water when one puts it over the fire, changing the imperfect bodies to genuine silver, quite comparable to natural silver. Note that if you often repeat all the operations in the same order: to dissolve, to coagulate, to pulverize, to digest, your medicine will be so much the better, its excellence increasing more and more. Furthermore, you will work your Stone in order to increase the virtue, and more, you will have the yield when you make the projection upon imperfect bodies in a way so that after one operation, one part of the Elixir transmutes one hundred parts of whatever body to the Moon, after two operations one thousand, after three, ten thousand, after four, one hundred thousand, and so on, ad infinitum. Also the adepts praise all the great maxims of the Philosophers about the perseverance to repeat this operation. If one imbibition was sufficient, they would not have had so much to say upon the subject. Grace be given unto God. Amen.

If you desire to change the glorious stone, this white King which transmutes and tints the Mercury and all the imperfect bodies into the true Moon, if you desire, I say, to change it to the red stone which tints and transmutes the Mercury, the Moon and the other metals to the true Sun, operate thusly: Take the White Stone and divide it into two parts; you will raise one part to the state of the white Elixir, as has been said much earlier (of the kind of which you will have an indefinite amount). Put the other part in a new bed of the Philosophers, clean, tidy, transparent, spherical and place it in the furnace for digestion. Increase the fire until by its force and strength the matter is changed to a very red stone, that the Philosophers call Blood, purple, red coral or red sulphur. When you see this color so that there is as bright as that of the dry calcined crocus, then take the King joyously, put it aside very carefully. If you want to change it to the red Elixir, a tincture of great strength, transmuting and tingeing the Mercury, the Moon and all other imperfect metal bodies, to the very genuine Sun, bring the ferment three parts with one and a half parts of very pure gold, to the state of perfection and very yellow, and two parts of solidified water. Make of it a perfect mixture according to the rules of Art, until into longer is possible to distinguish the components. Put it again in a flask over a matured fire in order to perfect it. As soon as the true Stone appears blood red, you will gradually add the sold Water.

Slowly increase the fire of digestion. By repeating this operation, you will increase its perfection. It is necessary to add, each time, the solid Water (that you preserved), which draws to its nature; it multiplies its strength to infinity, without changing anything of its essence. One part of the perfect Elixir of the first

degree, projected over one hundred parts of the Mercury (washed with some vinegar and some salt as you should know), placed in a crucible over a small fire, until smoke appears, immediately transmutes them to the genuine Sun, better than the natural. The same in replacing Mercury by the Moon.

For each degree of perfection, from most of the Elixir, it is the same thing as that for the white Elixir, until it tints it finally to the Sun of the infinite quantities of the Mercury and the Moon. You now possess a precious secret, an infinite treasure. This is why the Philosophers say: "Our stone has three colors; it is black at the outset, white in the middle, the end". A Philosopher said: "The heat works first on the humidity to produce the blackness, its action on the dry produces the white and on the white produces the red. Thus the whiteness is nothing other than the complete absence of blackness. The white skillfully condensed by the force of the fire produces the red". --- "All you seekers who work the Art", said another sage, "When you see the white appear in the vessel, know that the red is hidden in the white. It is necessary that you extract it from it and for this to heat forcefully until the appearance of the red".

*Finis.*

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## **Fama Fraternitatis**

### **To the Wise and Understanding Reader.**

Wisdom (saith Solomon) is to a man an infinite Treasure, for she is the Breath of the Power of God, and a pure Influence that floweth from the Glory of the Almighty; she is the Brightness of Eternal Light, and an undefiled Mirror of the Majesty of God, and an Image of his Goodness; she teacheth us Soberness and Prudence, Righteousness and Strength; she understands the Subtilty of words, and Solution of dark sentences; she foreknoweth Signs and Wonders, and what shall happen in time to come; with this Treasure was our first Father Adam fully endued: Hence it doth appear, that after God had brought before him all the Creatures of the Field, and the Fowls under Heaven, he gave to every one of them their proper names, according to their nature.

Although now through the sorrowful fall into sin this excellent Jewel Wisdom hath been lost, and meer Darkness and Ignorance is come into the World, yet notwithstanding hath the Lord God sometimes hitherto bestowed, and made manifest the same, to some of his Friends: For the wise King Solomon doth testifie of himself, that he upon earnest prayer and desire did get and obtain such Wisdom of God, that thereby he knew how the World was created, thereby he understood the Nature of the Elements, also the time, beginning, middle and end, the increase and decrease, the change of times through the whole Year, the Revolution of the Year, and Ordinance of the Stars; he understood also the properties of tame and wilde Beasts, the cause of the raining of the Winds, and minds and intents of men, all sorts and natures of Plants, vertues of Roots, and others, was not unknown to him. Now I do not think that there can be found any one who would not wish and desire with all his heart to be a Partaker of this noble Treasure; but seeing the same Felicity can happen to none, except God himself give Wisdom, and send his holy Spirit from above, we have therefore set forth in print this little Treatise, to wit, Famam & Confessionem, of the Laudable Fraternity of the Rosie Cross, to be read by every one, because in them is clearly shewn and discovered, what concerning it the World hath to expect.

Although these things may seem somewhat strange, and many may esteem it to be but a Philosophical shew, and no true History, which is published and spoken of the Fraternity of the Rosie Cross; it shall here sufficiently appear by our Confession, that there is more in recessu then may be imagined; and it shall be easily understood, and observed by every one (if he be not altogether voyd of understanding) what now adays, and at these times, is meant thereby.

Those who are true Disciples of Wisdom, and true Followers of the Spherical Art, will consider better of these things, and have them in greater estimation, as also judg far otherwise of them, as hath been done by some principal Persons, but especially of Adam Haselmeyer, Notarius Publicus to the Arch Duke Maximilian, who likewise hath made an Extract ex scriptis Theologicis Theophrasti, and written a Treatise under the Title of Jesuiter, wherein he willeth, that every Christian should be a true Jesuit, that is, to walk, live, be, and remain in Jesus: He was but ill rewarded of the Jesuits, because in his answer written upon the Famam, he did name those of the Fraternity of the Rosie Cross, The highly illuminated men, and undeceiving Jesuits; for they not able to brook this, layd hands on him, and put him into the Galleis, for which they likewise have to expect their reward.

Blessed Aurora will now henceforth begin to appear, who (after the passing away of the dark Night of

Saturn) with her Brightness altogether extinguisheth the shining of the Moon, or the small Sparks of Heavenly Wisdom, which yet remaineth with men, and is a Forerunner of pleasant Phebus, who with his clear and fiery glistening Beams brings forth that blessed Day, long wished for, of many true-hearted; by which Day-light then shall truly be known, and shall be seen all heavenly Treasures of godly Wisdom, as also the Secrets of all hidden and invisible things in the World, according to the Doctrine of our Forefathers, and ancient Wisemen.

This will be the right kingly Ruby, and most excellent shining Carbuncle, of the which it is said, That he doth shine and give light in darkness, and to be a perfect Medicine of all imperfect Bodies, and to change them into the best Gold, and to cure all Diseases of Men, easing them of all pains and miseries.

Be therefore, gentle Reader, admonished, that with me you do earnestly pray to God, that it please him to open the hearts and ears of all ill hearing people, and to grant unto them his blessing, that they may be able to know him in his Omnipotency, with admiring contemplation of Nature, to his honour and praise, and to the love, help, comfort and strengthening of our Neighbors, and to the restoring of all the diseased.

### **Fama Fraternitatis**

#### **Or, A Discovery of the Fraternity of the most laudable Order of the Rosy Cross.**

Seeing the only Wise and Merciful God in these latter days hath poured out so richly his mercy and goodness to Mankind, wherby we do attain more and more to the perfect knowledg of his Son Jesus Christ and Nature, that justly we may boast of the happy time, wherein there is not only discovered unto us the half part of the World, which was heretofore unknown & hidden, but he hath also made manifest unto us many wonderful, and never-heretofore see, Works and Creatures of Nature, and moreover hath raised men, indued with great Wisdom, which might partly renew and reduce all Arts (in this our Age spotted and imperfect) to perfection; so that finally Man might thereby understand his own Nobleness and Worth, and why he is called Microcosmus, and how far his knowledg extendeth in Nature.

Although the rude World herewith will be but little pleased, but rather smile and scoff thereat; also the Pride and Covetousness of the Learned is so great, it will not suffer them to agree together; but were they united, they might out of all those things which in this our Age God doth so richly bestow upon us, collect *Librum Naturae*, or a perfect Method of all Arts: but such is their opposition, that they still keep, and are loth to leave the old course, esteeming Porphyry, Aristotle, and Galen, yea and that which hath but a meer shew of learning, more then the clear and manifested Light and Truth; who if they were now living, with much joy would leave their erroneous Doctrines. But here is too great weaknesses for such a great Work: And although in Theologie, Physic, and the Mathematic, the Truth doth oppose it self; nevertheless the old Enemy by his subtilty and craft doth shew himself in hindering every good purpose by his Instruments and contentious wavering people. To such an intent of a general Reformation, the most godly and highly illuminated Father, our Brother, C.R. a German, the chief and original of our Fraternity, hath much and long time laboured, who by reason of his poverty (although descended of Noble Parents) in the fifth year of his age was placed in a Cloyster, where he had learned indifferently the Greek and Latin Tongues, who (upon his earnest desire and request) being yet in his growing years, was associated to a Brother, P.A.L. who had determined to go to the Holy Land.

Although this Brother dyed in Ciprus, and so never came to Jerusalem, yet our Brother C.R. did not return, but shipped himself over, and went to Damasco, minding from thence to go to Jerusalem; but by reason of the feebleness of his body he remained still there, and by his skill in Physick he obtained much favour with the Turks: In the mean time he became by chance acquainted with the Wise men of Damasco in Arabia, and beheld what great Wonders they wrought, and how Nature was discovered unto them; hereby was that high and noble Spirit of Brother C.R. so stired up, that Jerusalem was not so much now in his mind as Damasco; also he could not bridle his desires any longer, but made a bargain with the Arabians, that they should carry him for a certain sum of money to Damasco; he was but of the age of sixteen years when he came thither, yet of a strong Dutch constitution; there the Wise received him (as he himself witnesseth) not as a stranger, but as one whom they had long expected, they called him by his name, and shewed him other secrets out of his Cloyster, whereat he could not but mightily wonder: He learned there better the Arabian Tongue; so that the year following he translated the Book M. into good Latin, which he afterwards brought with him. This is the place where he did learn his Physick, and his Mathematicks, whereof the World hath just cause to rejoyce, if there were more Love, and less Envy. After three years he returned again with good consent, shipped himself over Sinus Arabicus into Egypt, where he remained not long, but only took better notice there of the Plants and Creatures; he sailed over the whole Mediterranean Sea for to come unto Fez, where the Arabians had directed him. And it is a great shame unto us, that wise men, so far remote th'one from th'other, should not only be of one opinion, hating all contentious Writings, but also be so willing and ready under the seal of secrecy to impart their secrets to others.

Every year the Arabians and Affricans do send one to another, inquiring one of another out of their Arts, if happily they had found out some better things, or if Experience had weakened their Reasons. Yearly there came something to light, whereby the Mathematica, Physic and Magic (for in those are they of Fez most skilful) were amended; as there is now adays in Germany no want of learned Men, Magicians, Cabalists, Physicians, and Philosophers, were there but more love and kindness among them, or that the most part of them would not keep their secrets close only to themselves. At Fez he did get acquaintance with those which are commonly called the Elementary Inhabitants, who revealed unto him many of their secrets: As we Germans likewise might gather together many things, if there were the like unity, and desire of searching out of secrets amongst us.

Of these of Fez he often did confess, that their Magia was not altogether pure, and also that their Cabala was defiled with their Religion; but notwithstanding he knew how to make good use of the same, and found still more better grounds of his Faith, altogether agreeable with the Harmony of the whole World, and wonderfully impressed in all Periods of times, and thence proceedeth that fair Concord, that as in every several kernel is contained a whole good tree or fruit, so likewise is included in the little body of Man the whole great World, whose Religion, policy, health, members, nature, language, words and works, are agreeing, sympathizing, and in equal tune and melody with God, Heaven and Earth; and that which is disagreeing with them, is error, falsehood and of the Devil, who alone is the first, middle, and last cause of strife, blindness, and darkness in the World: Also, might one examine all and several persons upon the Earth, he should find that which is good and right, is always agreeing with it self; but all the rest is spotted with a thousand erroneous conceits.

After two years Brother R.C. departed the City Fez, and sailed with many costly things into Spain, hoping well, he himself had so well and so profitably spent his time in his travel, that the learned in Europe would highly rejoyce with him, and begin to rule, and order all their Studies, according to those sound and sure Foundations. He therefore conferred with the Learned in Spain, shewing unto them the Errors of our Arts,

and how they might be corrected, and from whence they should gather the true Inditia of the Times to come, and wherein they ought to agree with those things that are past; also how the faults of the Church and the whole *Philosophia Moralis* was to be amended: He shewed them new Growths, new Fruits, and Beasts, which did concord with old Philosophy, and prescribed them new *Axiomata*, whereby all things might fully be restored: But it was to them a laughing matter; and being a new thing unto them, they feared that their great Name should be lessened, if they should now again begin to learn and acknowledg their many years Errors, to which they were accustomed, and wherewith they had gained them enough: Who so loveth unquietness, let him be reformed.

The same Song was also sang to him by other Nations, the which moved him the more (because it happened to him contrary to his expectation,) being then ready bountifully to impart all his Arts and Secrets to the Learned, if they would have but undertaken to write the true and infallible *Axiomata*, out of all Faculties, Sciences and Arts, and whole Nature, as that which he knew would direct them, like a Globe, or Circle, to the onely middle Point, and Centrum, and (as it is usual among the Arabians) it should onely serve to the wise and learned for a Rule, that also there might be a Society in Europe, which might have Gold, Silver, and precious Stones, sufficient for to bestow them on Kings, for their necessary uses, and lawful purposes: with which such as be Governors might be brought up, for to learn all that which God hath suffered Man to know, and thereby to be enabled in all times of need to give their counsel unto those that seek it, like the Heathen Oracles: Verily we must confess that the world in those days was already big with those great Commotions, laboring to be delivered of them; and did bring forth painful, worthy men, who brake with all force through Darkness and Barbarism, and left us who succeeded to follow them: and assuredly they have been the uppermost point in *Trygono igneo*, whose flame now should be more and more brighter, and shall undoubtedly give to the World the last Light.

Such a one likewise hath Theophrastus been in Vocation and Callings, although he was none of our Fraternity, yet nevertheless hath he diligently read over the Book M: whereby his sharp ingenium was exalted; but this man was also hindered in his course by the multitude of the learned and wise-seeming men, that he was never able peaceably to confer with others of his Knowledg and Understanding he had of Nature. And therefore in his writing he rather mocked these busie bodies, and doth not shew them altogether what he was: yet nevertheless there is found with him well grounded the aforementioned Harmonia, which without doubt he had imparted to the Learned, if he had not found them rather worthy of subtil vexation, then to be instructed in greater Arts and Sciences; he then with a free and careless life lost his time, and left unto the World their foolish pleasures.

But that we do not forget our loving Father, Brother C.R. he after many painful Travels, and his fruitless true Instructions, returned again into Germany, the which he (by reason of the alterations which were shortly to come, and of the strange and dangerous contentions) heartily loved: There, although he could have bragged with his Art, but specially of the transmutations of Metals; yet did he esteem more Heaven, and the Citizens thereof, Man, then all vain glory and pomp.

Nevertheless he builded a fitting and neat inhabitation, in the which he ruminated his Voyage, and Philosophy, and reduced them together in a true Memorial. In this house he spent a great time in the Mathematicks, and made many fine Instruments, *ex omnibus hujus artis partibus*, whereof there is but little remaining to us, as hereafter you shall understand. After five years came again into his mind the wished for Reformation; and in regard he doubted of the ayd and help of others, although he himself was painful, lusty, and unwearisom, he undertook, with some few adjoynd with him, to attempt the same: wherefore he



desired to that end, to have out of his first Cloyster (to the which he bare a great affection) three of his Brethren, Brother G.V. Brother J.A. and Brother J.O. who besides that, they had some more knowledg in the Arts, then at that time many others had, he did binde those three unto himself, to be faithful, diligent, and secret; as also to commit carefully to writing, all that which he should direct and instruct them in, to the end that those which were to come, and through especial Revelation should be received into this Fraternity, might not be deceived of the least sillable and word.

After this manner began the Fraternity of the Rosie Cross; first, by four persons onely, and by them was made the Magical Language and writing, with a large Dictionary, which we yet dayly use to Gods praise and glory, and do finde great wisdom therein; they made also the first part of the Book M: but in respect that the labor was too heavy, and the unspeakable concourse of the sick hindred them, and also whilst his new building (called Sancti spiritus) was now finished, they concluded to draw and receive yet others more into their Fraternity; to this end was chosen brother R.C. his deceased fathers brothers son, brother B. a skilful Painter, G. and P.D. their Secretary, all Germaines except J.A. so in all they were eight in number, all batchelors and of vowed virginity, by those was collected a book or volumn of all that which man can desire, wish, or hope for.

Although we do now freely confess, that the World is much amended within an hundred years, yet we are assured, that our Axiomata shall unmovably remain unto the Worlds End, and also the world in her highest and last Age shall not attain to see any thing else; for our Rota takes her beginning from that day when God spake Fiat, and shall end when he shall speak Pereat; yet Gods Clock striketh every minute, where ours scarce striketh perfect hours. We also stedfastly beleeeve, that if our Brethren and Fathers had lived in this our present and clear light, they would more roughly have handled the Pope, Mahomet, Scribes, Artists, and Sophisters, and had shewed themselves more helpful, not simply with sighs, and wishing of their end and consummation.

When now these eight Brethren had disposed and ordered all things in such manner, as there was not now need of any great labour, and also that every one was sufficiently instructed, and able perfectly to discourse of secret and manifest Philosophy, they would not remain any longer together, but as in the beginning they had agreed, they separated themselves into several Countries, because that not only their Axiomata might in secret be more profoundly examined by the learned, but that they themselves, if in some Country or other they observed anything, or perceived some Error, they might inform one another of it.

Their agreement was this: First, That none of them should profess any other thing, then to cure the sick, and that gratis. 2. None of the Posterity should be constrained to wear one certain kind of habit, but therein to follow the custom of the Country. 3. That every year upon the day C. they should meet together at the house S. Spiritus, or to write the cause of his absence. 4. Every Brother should look out for a worthy person, who after his disease might succeed him. 5. The word C.R. should be their Seal, Mark, and Character. 6. The Fraternity should remain secret one hundred years. These six Articles they bound themselves one to another to keep; and five of the Brethren departed, only the Brethren B. and D. remained with the Father Fra: R.C. a whole year; when these likewise departed, then remained by him his Cousen and Brother J.O. so that he hath all the days of his life with him two of his Brethren. And although that as yet the Church was not cleansed, nevertheless we know that they did think of her, and with what longing desire they looked for: Every year they assembled together with joy, and made a full resolution of that which they had done; there must certainly have been great pleasure, to hear truly and without invention related and rehearsed all the Wonders which God hath poured out here and there through the World. Every

one may hold it out for certain, that such persons as were sent, and joined together by God, and the Heavens, and chosen out of the wisest of men, as have lived in many Ages, did live together above all others in highest Unity, greatest Secrecy, and most kindness one towards another.

After such a most laudable sort they did spend their lives; and although they were free from all diseases and pain, yet notwithstanding they could not live and pass their time appointed of God. The first of this Fraternity which dyed, and that in England, was J.O. as Brother C. long before had foretold him; he was very expert, and well learned in Cabala, as his Book called H. witnesseth: In England he is much spoken of, and chiefly because he cured a young Earl of Norfolk of the Leprosie. They had concluded, that as much as possibly could be their burial place should be kept secret, as at this day it is not known unto us what is become of some of them, yet every ones place was supplied with a fit successor; but this we wil confesse publickly by these presents to the honour of God, That what secret soever we have learned out of the book M. (although before our eyes we behold the image and pattern of all the world) yet are there not shewn unto us our misfortunes, nor hour of death, the which only is known to God himself, who thereby would have us keep in a continual readiness; but hereof more in our Confession, where we do set down 37 Reasons wherefore we now do make known our Fraternity, and proffer such high Mysteries freely, and without constraint and reward: also we do promise more gold then both the Indies bring to the King of Spain; for Europe is with child and will bring forth a strong child, who shall stand in need of a great godfathers gift.

After the death of I.O. Brother R.C. rested not, but as soon as he could, called the rest together, (and as we suppose) then his grave was made; although hitherto we (who were the latest) did not know when our loving father R.C. died, and had no more but the bare names of the beginners, and all their successors to us; yet there came into our memory, a secret, which through dark and hidden words, and speeches of the 100 years, brother A. the successor of D. (who was of the last and second row and succession), and had lived amongst many of us,) did impart unto us of the third row and succession; otherwise we must confess, that after the death of the said A. none of us had in any manner known anything of Brother R.C. and of his first fellow-brethren, then that which was extant of them in our Philosophical Bibliotheca, amongst which our Axiomata was held for the chiefest Rota Mundi, for the most artificial, and Protheus the most profitable. Likewise we do not certainly know if these of the second row have been of the like wisdom as the first, and if they were admitted to all things. It shall be declared hereafter to the gentle Reader, not onely what we have heard of the burial of R.C. but also made manifest publickly by the foresight, sufferance and commandment of God, whom we most faithfully obey, that if we shall be answered discreetly and Christian-like, we will not be afraid to set forth publickly in Print, our names, and sirnames, our meetings, or any thing else that may be required at our hands.

Now the true and fundamental relation of the finding out of the high illuminated man of God, Fra: C.R.C. is this; After that A. in Gallia Narbonensi was deceased, then succeeded in his place, our loving Brother N.N. this man after he had repaired unto us to take the solemn oath of fidelity and scerecy, he informed us bona fide, That A. had comforted him in telling him, that this Fraternity should ere long not remain so hidden, but should be to all the whole German Nation helpful, needful, and commendable; of the which he was not in any wise in his estate ashamed of. The year following after he had performed his School right, and was minded now to travel, being for that purpose sufficiently provided with Fortunatus purse, he thought (he being a good Architect) to alter something of his building, and to make it more fit: in such renewing he lighted upon the memorial Table which was cast of brasse, and containeth all the names of the brethren, with some few other things; this he would transfer in another more fitting vault: for where or when Fra:

R.C. died, or in what country he was buried, was by our predecessors concealed and unknown unto us. In this Table stuck a great naile somewhat strong, so that when he was with force drawn out, he took with him an indifferent big stone out of the thin wall, or plaistering of the hidden door, and so unlooked for uncovered the door; wherefore we did with joy and longing throw down the rest of the wall, and cleared the door, upon which that was written in great letters, Post 120 annos patebo, with the year of the Lord under it: therefore we gave God thanks and let it rest that same night, because first we would overlook our Rotam; but we refer our selves again to the confession, for what we here publish is done for the help of those that are worthy, but to the unworthy (God willing) it will be small profit: For like as our door was after so many years wonderfully discovered, also there shall be opened a door to Europe (when the wall is removed) which already doth begin to appear, and with great desire is expected of many.

In the morning following we opened the door, and there appeared to our sight a Vault of seven sides and corners, every side five foor broad, and the height of eight foot; Although the Sun never shined in this Vault, nevertheless it was enlightened with another sun, which had learned this from the Sun, and was scituated in the upper part in the Center of the sieling; in the midst, in stead of a Tomb-stone, was a round Altar covered over with a plate of brass, and thereon this engraven:

A.C. R.C. Hoc universi compendium unius mihi sepulchrum feci.

Round about the first Circle or Brim stood,

Jesus mihi omnia.

In the middle were four figures, inclosed in circles, whose circumscription was,

1. Nequaquam vacuum.
2. Legis Jugum.
3. Libertas Evangelij.
4. Dei gloria intacta.

This is all clear and bright, as also the seventh side and the two Heptagoni: so we kneeled altogether down, and gave thanks to the sole wise, sole mighty, and sole eternal God, who hath taught us more then all mens wit could have found out, praised be his holy name. This Vault we parted in three parts, the upper part or sieling, the wall or side, the gound or floor.

Of the upper part you shall understand no more of it at this time, but that it was divided according to the seven sides in the triangle, which was in the bright center; but what therein is contained, you shall God willing (that are desirous of our society) behold the same with your own eys; but every side or wall is parted into ten squares, every one with their several figures and sentences, as they are truly shewed, and set forth Concentratum here in our book.

The bottom again is parted in the triangle, but because therein is discribed the power and rule of the inferior Governors, we leave to manifest the same, for fear of the abuse by the evil and ungodly world. But those that are provided and stored with the heavenly Antidote, they do without fear or hurt, tread on, and bruise the head of the old and evil serpent, which this our age is well fitted for: every side or wall had a door for a chest, wherein there lay diverse things, especially all our books, which otherwise we had, besides the

Vocabular of Theoph: Par. Ho. and these which daily unfalsifieth we do participate. Herein also we found his Itinerarium, and vitam, whence this relation for the most part is taken. In another chest were looking-glasses of divers virtues, as also in other places were little bells, burning lamps, & chiefly wonderful artificial Songs; generally al done to that end, that if it should happen after many hundred years, the Order or Fraternity should come to nothing, they might by this onely Vault be restored again.

Now as yet we had not seen the dead body of our careful and wise father, we therefore removed the Altar aside, there we lifted up a strong plate of brass, and found a fair and worthy body, whole and unconsumed, as the same is here lively counterfeited, with all the Ornaments and Attires; in his hand he held a parchment book, called I. the which next to the Bible, is our greatest treasure, which ought to be delivered to the censure of the world. At the end of this book standeth this following Elogium.

Granum pectori Jesu insitum.

C. Ros. C. ex nobili atque splendida Germaniae R.C. familia oriundus, vir sui seculi divinis revelationibus subtilissimis imaginationibus, indefessis laboribus ad coelestia, atque humana mysteria ; arcanave admissus postquam suam (quam Arabico, & Africano itineribus Collegerat) plusquam regiam, atque imperatoriam Gazam suo seculo nondum convenientem, posteritati eruendam custo divisset et jam suarum Artium, ut et nominis, fides acconjunctissimos herides instituisset, mundum minutum omnibus motibus magno illi respondentem fabricasset hocque tandem preteritarum, praesentium, et futurarum, rerum compendio extracto, centenario major non morbo (quem ipse nunquam corpore expertus erat, nunquam alios infestare sinebat) ullo pellente sed spiritu Dei evocante, illuminatam animam (inter Fratrum amplexus et ultima oscula) fidelissimo creatori Deo reddidisset, Pater dilectissimus, Fra: suavissimus, praeceptor fidelissimus amicus integerimus, a suis ad 120 annos hic absconditus est.

Underneath they had subscribed themselves,

1. Fra: I.A. Fr.C.H. electione Fraternitatis caput.
2. Fr: G.V. M.P.C.
3. Fra: R.C. Iunior haeres S. spiritus.
4. Fra: B.M. P.A. Pictor et Architectus.
5. Fr: G.G. M.P.I. Cabalista.

Secundi Circuli.

1. Fra: P.A. Successor, Fr: I.O. Mathematicus.
2. Fra: A. Successor, Fra. P.D.
3. Fra: R. Successor patris C.R.C. cum Christo triumphant.

At the end was written :-

Ex Deo Nascimur, in Jesu morimur, per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus.

At that time was already dead Brother I.O. and Fra: D. but their burial place where is it to be found? we doubt not but our Fra: Senior hath the same, and some especial thing layd in Earth, and perhaps likewise hidden: we also hope that this our Example will stir up others more diligently to enquire after their names

(whom we have therefore published) and to search for the place of their burial; for the most part of them, by reason of their practice and physick, are yet known, and praised among very old folks; so might perhaps our Gaza be enlarged, or at least be better cleared.

Concerning Minitum Mundum, we found it kept in another little Altar, truly more finer than can be imagined by any understanding man; but we will leave him undescribed, untill we shall truly be answered upon this our true hearted Famam; and so we have covered it again with the plates, and set the altar thereon, shut the door, and made it sure, with all our seals; besides by instruction and command of our Rota, there are come to sight some books, among which is contained M. (which were made in stead of household care by the praise-worthy M.P.) Finally we departed the one from the other, and left the natural heirs in possession of our Jewels. And so we do expect the answer and judgment of the learned, or unlearned.

Howbeit we know after a time there will now be a general reformation, both of divine and humane things, according to our desire, and the expectation of others: for it's fitting, that before the rising of the Sun, there should appear and break forth Aurora, or some clearness, or divine light in the sky; and so in the mean time some few, which shall give their names, may joyn together, thereby to increase the number and respect of our Fraternity, and make a happy and wished for beginning of our Philosophical Canons, prescribed to us by our brother R.C. and be partakers with us of our treasures (which never can fail or be wasted) in all humility, and love to be eased of this worlds labor, and not walk so blindly in the knowledge of the wonderful works of God.

But that also every Christian may know of what Religion and belief we are, we confess to have the knowledge of Jesus Christ (as the same now in these last days, and chiefly in Germany, most clear and pure is professed, and is now adays cleansed and voyd of all swerving people, Hereticks, and false Prophets,) in certain and noted Countries maintained, defended and propagated: Also we use two Sacraments, as they are instituted with all Forms and Ceremonies of the first renewed Church. In Politia we acknowledge the Roman Empire and Quartam Monarchiam for our Christian head; albeit we know what alterations be at hand, and would fain impart the same with all our hearts, to other godly learned men; notwithstanding our hand-writing which is in our hands, no man (except God alone) can make it common, nor any unworthy person is able to bereave us of it. But we shall help with secret aid this so good a cause, as God shall permit or hinder us: For our God is not blinde, as the Heathens Fortuna, but is the Churches Ornament, and the honor of the Temple. Our Philosophy also is not a new Invention, but as Adam after his fall hath received it, and as Moses and Solomon used it: also she ought not much to be doubted of, or contradicted by other opinions, or meanings; but seeing the truth is peaceable, brief, and always like herself in all things, and especially accorded by with Jesus in omni parte and all members. And as he is the true Image of the Father, so is she his Image; It shall not be said, this is true according to Philosophy, but true according to Theologie; And wherein Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras and others did hit the mark, and wherein Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Solomon did excel; but especially wherewith that wonderful book the Bible agreeth. All that same concurrerth together, and make a Sphere or Globe, whose total parts are equidistant from the Center, as hereof more at large and more plain shall be spoken of in Christianly Conference.

But now concerning (and chiefly in this our age) the ungodly and accursed Gold-making, which hath gotten so much the upper hand, whereby under colour of it, many runagates and roguish people do use great villanies, and cozen and abuse the credit, which is given them: yea now adays men of discretion do hold the transmutation of Mettals to be the highest point, and fastigium in Philosophy, this is all their intent, and desire, and that God would be most esteemed by them, and honored, which could make great store of Gold,

and in abundance, the which with unpremeditate prayers, they hope to attain of the alknowing God, and searcher of all hearts: we therefore do by these presents publickly testifie, That the true Philosophers are far of another minde, esteeming little the making of Gold, which is but a parergon; for besides that they have a thousand better things.

And we say with our loving Father R.C.C. Phy: aureum nisi quantum aurum, for unto them the whole nature is detected: he doth not rejoyce, that he can make Gold, and that, as saith Christ, the devils are obedient unto him; but is glad that he seeth the Heavens open, and the Angels of God ascending and descending, and his name written in the book of life. Also we do testifie that under the name of Chymia many books and pictures are set forth in Contumeliam gloriae Dei, as we wil name them in their due season, and wil give to the pure-hearted a Catalogue, or Register of them: And we pray all learned men to take heed of these kinde of Books; for the enemy never resteth, but soweth his weeds, til a stronger one doth root it out. So according to the wil and meaning of Fra: C.R.C. we his brethren request again all the learned in Europe, who shal read (sent forth in five languages) this our Famam and Confessionem, that it would please them with good deliberation to ponder this our offer, and to examine most nearly and most sharply their Arts, and behold the present time with all diligence, and to declare their minde, either Cumcommunicate consilio, or singulatim by Print.

And although at this time we make no mention either of our names, or meetings, yet nevertheless every ones opinion shal assuredly come to our hands, in what language so ever it be; nor any body shal fail, who so gives but his name to speak with some of us, either by word of mouth, or else if there be some lett in writing. And this we say for a truth, That whosoever shall earnestly, and from his heart, bear affection unto us, it shal be beneficial to him in goods, body and soul; but he that is false-hearted, or onely greedy of riches, the same first of all shal not be able in any manner of wise to hurt us, but bring him to utter ruine and destruction. Also our building (although one hundred thousand people had very near seen and beheld the same) shall for ever remain untouched, undestroyed, and hidden to the wicked world, sub umbra alarum tuarum Jehova.

<http://bookofaquarius.forgottenbooks.org>

金丹四百字

*Chin-tan Ssu-pai-tzu*

***Four Hundred Words on the Golden Elixir***

By Chang Po-tuan 張伯端

and

金丹四百字解

*Chin-tan Ssu-pai-tzu Chieh*

***Explanations of the  
Four Hundred Words on the Golden Elixir***

By Liu I-ming 劉一明

Translated by Thomas Cleary

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## Bibliographic Information

*Jindan sibaizi* 金丹四百字: Four Hundred Characters on the Golden Elixir: DZ 1081. Also appearing in *Xiuzhen shishu* 修真十書 (Ten Texts on Cultivating Perfection): DZ 263, j. 4.

Attributed to Zhang Boduan 張伯端 (d. 1082), commonly recognized as a central, early patriarch of the so-called Southern Lineage (Nanzong 南宗) of internal alchemy (*neidan* 內丹) and famous for his *Wuzhen pian* 悟真篇 (Chapters on Awakening to Perfection). Its earliest commentary dates from 1240. As the title indicates, this is a concise symbolic work on alchemical practice.

*Jindan sibaizi jie* 金丹四百字解: Explanations of the *Jindan sibaizi*: ZW 266: Appearing in the *Daoshu shier zhong* 道書十二種 (Twelve Daoist Texts).

A commentary on the *Jindan sibaizi* 金丹四百字 (Four Hundred Characters on the Golden Elixir) by Liu Yiming 劉一明 (Wuyuanzi 悟元子 [Master Awakening to the Origin]; 1734-1821), eleventh generation Longmen 龍門 (Dragon Gate) patriarch. Explains the meaning of the symbolic language and abstruse terminology of internal alchemy in terms of 18th-century Longmen views.

(Komjathy, 2004)

### Four Hundred Words on the Golden Elixir

This alchemical treatise ascribed to Zhang Boduan consists of twenty pentasyllabic poems. A lengthy undated preface states that it was intended for Ma Ziran 馬自然, a contemporary of Zhang Boduan and a putative disciple of Liu Haichan. The first allusion to the text is in a letter of thanks addressed by Bai Yuchan to Zhang Boduan in 1216. Bai claims to have come across the writings and commentaries by Ma Ziran on Mount Wuyi (Wuyi shan, Fujian), where he first read a work entitled "Sibai yan" 四百言 (Four Hundred Words; *Xiuzhen shishu*, 6.4b). While the commentator Huang Ziru 黃自如 (fl. 1241) seems to have no doubts about the authorship of the *Jindan sibaizi*, Yu Yan believed it to be a forgery written by Bai Yuchan himself.

The poem describes the inner alchemical process in a way similar to the *Wuzhen pian*, but borrows technical language from the Zhong-Lü texts. It was first included in Bai Yuchan's lost collection entitled *Qunxian zhuyi ji* 群仙珠玉集 (Anthology of Pearls and Jade of the Gathered Immortals; van der Loon 1984, 149). Since then, several editions with commentaries have appeared.

(Baldrian-Hussein, 2008: 558-9)

## Author's Introduction

One of the most important figures in the emergence of the Complete Reality movement was the eleventh-century adept Chang Po-tuan, who became known as the founder of the southern sect of the Complete Reality school. Chang is particularly known for his classic *Understanding Reality*, which has been a standard text of spiritual alchemy ever since, ranked on a par with the ancient *Triplex Unity*.

Another of Chang's important writings, translated here as *The Inner Teachings of Taoism*, presents a summary of Taoist practice in the alchemical format. It is a simplified, condensed version of the teachings of *Understanding Reality*, giving the main outlines of the alchemical work in twenty short verses. This text is presented here with a modern explanation written by the great Taoist commentator Liu I-ming in 1808. *The Inner Teachings of Taoism* became a very popular text, perhaps because of its brevity and accessibility. It was originally untitled, but later became known as Four Hundred Words on the Gold Elixir.

Following his verse-by-verse elucidation of Chang Po-tuan's text, Liu I-ming gives a summary in classic fashion with twenty verses of his own composition. Because of the general nature of Chang's text, Liu then adds notes on essentials of Taoist study and secrets of alchemy, to clarify practical procedure in an orderly fashion.

Liu I-ming was one of the foremost interpreters of Taoist classics in his time, and from a modern point of view his commentaries are unsurpassed in clarity. Deeply versed in both noumenal Confucianism and Ch'an Buddhism, he was dedicated to restoring the original principles and practices of Complete Reality Taoism.

(Cleary, 1986: xiv, xv, xvi)



金丹四百字  
Four Hundred Words on the Gold Elixir

- 1  
眞土擒眞鉛 True earth arrests true lead;  
眞鉛制眞汞 True lead controls true mercury.  
鉛汞歸眞土 Lead and mercury return to true earth;  
身心寂不動 Body and mind are tranquil and still.
- 2  
虛無發下雪 Nothingness produces white snow;  
寂靜發黃芽 Quiescence produces yellow sprouts.  
玉爐火温温 The fire warm in the jade furnace,  
鼎上飛紫霞 Over the crucible flies violet mist.
- 3  
華池蓮花開 Lotuses bloom in the flower pond;  
神水金波靜 Golden waves are quiet on the spiritual water.  
夜深月正明 Deep in the night, the moon just bright,  
天地一輪鏡 Heaven and earth are in one round mirror.
- 4  
朱砂煉陽氣 Red sand refines to positive energy;  
水銀烹金精 Liquid silver cooks into metal vitality.  
金精與陽氣 Metal vitality and positive energy,  
朱砂而水銀 Red sand and liquid silver.
- 5  
日魂玉兔脂 The solar yang soul, the fat of the jade rabbit;  
月魄金烏髓 The lunar yin soul, the marrow of the gold raven:  
撥來歸鼎中 Put them in the crucible and transmute them  
化作一泓水 Into a flood of water.
- 6  
藥物生玄竅 The medicines are produced in the occult opening;  
火候發陽爐 The firing process arises in the yang furnace.  
龍虎交會時 When the dragon and tiger have mated,  
寶鼎產玄珠 The gold crucible produces a mystic pearl.
- 7  
此竅非凡物 This opening is not an ordinary aperture:  
乾坤共合成 Made by heaven and earth together,  
名爲神氣穴 It is called the lair of spirit and energy;  
內有坎離精 Within it are the vitalities of water and fire.
- 8  
木汞一點紅 Wood mercury, one dash of red;  
金鉛三斤黑 Metal lead, three pounds of black.  
鉛汞結丹砂 Mercury and lead combine into granules  
耿耿紫金色 That shine violet-gold.
- 9  
家園景物麗 The home garden's scenery is beautiful;  
風雨正春時 The weather is that of spring.  
犁鋤不廢力 Without working with plow and hoe,  
大地皆黃金 The whole earth is golden.

10

真鉛生於坎  
其用在離宮  
以黑而變紅  
一鼎雲氣濃

True lead arises in water;  
Its function is in the palace of fire:  
Turning black to red,  
Fog is thick in the crucible.

11

真汞產於離  
其用卻在坎  
姪女過南園  
手持玉橄欖

True mercury comes from fire;  
Its function is in water.  
The maiden goes to the south garden;  
Her hand grips the jade balustrade.

12

震兌非東西  
坎離不南北  
斗柄運周天  
要人會攢簇

Thunder and lake are not east and west;  
Water and fire are not north and south.  
The handle of the dipper circles the heavens,  
Requiring people to understand how to aggregate.

13

火候不須時  
冬至豈在子  
及其沐浴法  
卯酉時虛比

The firing process does not call for set times;  
The winter solstice is not in december.  
As for the rules for bathing, spring and autumn  
Are also metaphors without reality.

14

烏肝與兔髓  
擒來歸一處  
一粒復一粒  
從微而至著

The raven's liver and the rabbit's marrow-  
Grab them and put them back in one place.  
Grain after grain,  
From vagueness to clarity.

15

混沌包虛空  
虛空括三界  
及尋其根源  
一粒如黍大

The undifferentiated contains space;  
Space contains the world:  
When you look for the root source,  
It is the size of a grain.

16

天地交真液  
日月含真精  
會得坎離基  
三界歸一身

Heaven and earth share the liquid of reality;  
Sun and moon contain the vitality of reality.  
When you understand the foundation of water and fire,  
The world is in your body.

17

龍從東海來  
虎向西山起  
兩獸戰一場  
化作天地髓

The dragon comes from the eastern sea;  
The tiger comes from the western mountains.  
The two beasts have a battle  
And turn into the marrow of heaven and earth.

18

金花開汞葉  
玉蒂長鉛枝  
坎離不曾閑  
乾坤今幾時

Gold flowers bloom with mercury petals;  
Jade stems grow on lead twigs.  
Water and fire have never been separate;  
How long do heaven and earth endure?

19

沐浴防危險  
抽添自謹持  
都來三萬刻  
差失恐豪釐

Bathe and ward off danger,  
Extract and add, taking care.  
In all, there are thirty thousand intervals;  
Beware of even the slightest slip.

20

夫婦交會時  
洞房雲雨作  
一載生箇兒  
箇箇會騎鶴

When husband and wife mate,  
Clouds and rain form in the secret room.  
In a year they give birth to a child,  
And each rides on a crane.

金丹四百字解  
Explanations of the Four Hundred Words on the Gold Elixir

註疏四百字真義歌  
Explanatory Verses

- 1  
真意發真知  
靈知亦自應  
三家合一家  
倏爾身心定  
True intent arouses real knowledge;  
Conscious knowledge also spontaneously responds.  
The three join as one,  
And at once body and mind are settled.
- 2  
虛室卻生光  
靜中又復陽  
采來勤鍛鍊  
化就紫金霜  
The empty room produces light;  
In quietude yang is restored:  
Gather it and diligently refine it,  
Transforming it into violet-gold frost.
- 3  
靈竅慧光生  
性現塵情滅  
朗朗夜明珠  
無處不皎潔  
In the spiritual opening the light of wisdom arises;  
Essence appears, and feelings about objects vanish.  
Clear and bright the jewel that glows in the dark;  
Everywhere is bright and clean.
- 4  
燥性化真性  
人心變道心  
若非神火鍛  
礦裡怎分金  
Volatility transmutes into true essence;  
The human mind changes into the mind of Tao.  
Without refinement by the spiritual fire,  
How can gold be separated from the ore?
- 5  
真知與靈知  
兩者班同氣  
經火烹鍊成  
渾淪沒點弊  
Real knowledge and conscious knowledge;  
These two are originally the same energy.  
Subjected to refinement by fire,  
They merge without a trace of defect.
- 6  
元竅真靈露  
趁時下手栽  
性情相眷戀  
長出大丹材  
In the occult opening real consciousness appears;  
Take the opportunity to get to work to nurture it.  
When essence and sense cleave to one another,  
They always produce the material for the elixir.
- 7  
有個虛靈竅  
號爲玄此門  
中藏神與氣  
原是魂魄根  
There is an opening of open awareness  
Which is called the opening of the mysterious female;  
Therein are stored spirit and energy,  
Originally the root of the celestial and earthly souls.
- 8  
靈知火裡精  
真知水中寶  
水火陰氣消  
光鮮著實好  
Conscious knowledge is the vitality within fire;  
Real knowledge is the jewel within water.  
When negativity within water and fire vanishes,  
The light is brilliant, truly sound.

9

靈藥自家有  
何須在外尋  
護持常照應  
左右儘珠林

The spiritual remedy is inherent in oneself;  
What is the need to seek it outside?  
Preserve the responsiveness of constant shining,  
And everywhere you go becomes a forest of jewels.

10

真知總是真  
卻要靈知配  
鍊去後天陰  
兩家成一塊

Real knowledge is all real,  
But it needs to be espoused by conscious knowledge.  
Refining away the yin of acquired conditioning,  
The two become one whole.

11

靈知好外遊  
須借真知制  
以婦去從夫  
坎離即既濟

Conscious knowledge likes to wander outside  
And needs to be governed by real knowledge;  
When the "wife" follows the "husband,"  
Water and fire balance each other.

12

震兌和坎離  
精神情性象  
若知攢簇方  
獨步崑崙上

Thunder, lake, water, and fire  
Are symbols of vitality, spirit, sense, and essence;  
If you know how to aggregate them,  
You walk alone atop the mountains of the immortals.

13

火候不拘時  
何勞嘯子午  
沐浴洗塵心  
卯酉豈能主

The firing process is not related to hour or season;  
Why bother to seek midnight and noon, winter and summer?  
Bathing is washing the dusty mind;  
How can spring and autumn govern it?

14

金情與木性  
不得有偏差  
兩者如同氣  
靈根自發花

"Metal" sense and "wood" essence  
Should not be unbalanced or disparate.  
The two are as the same energy;  
The spiritual root blooms of itself.

15

大則包虛空  
小還如黍米  
若問這根源  
一真而已矣

So great as to enfold space,  
Yet small as a grain of rice;  
If you ask about this root source,  
It is the one reality atone.

16

天地日月精  
吾身本自有  
真靈若不迷  
造化常在手

The vitalities of heaven and earth, sun and moon,  
Are fundamentally inherent in our bodies.  
If reality and consciousness do not stray from each other,  
Creation is always in the palm of your hand.

17

性起情來制  
情生性去牽  
相爭相關罷  
仍舊是先天

When essence arises, sense comes to stabilize it;  
When sense arises, essence goes to lead it.  
When their conflict and struggle are ended,  
Then, as of yore, they are unconditioned.

18

木性金情交  
真知靈知閣  
武鍊與文烹  
現出玲瓏塔

Essence and sense merge;  
Real and conscious knowledge join.  
With fierce refinement and gentle cooking,  
A crystal-clear temple is produced.

19

持心名沐浴  
溫養有抽添  
刻刻防危險  
功深自入玄

Controlling the mind is called bathing;  
Incubation involves extraction and addition.  
At every moment, forestall danger;  
As accomplishment deepens, you naturally enter the mystery.

20

會的陰陽理  
聖胎不難結  
生子又生孫  
長生永不滅

When you understand the principle of yin and yang,  
The spiritual embryo is not hard to form;  
Producing a child, also producing grandchildren,  
Eternal life never ends.

學人二十四要  
Twenty-Four Essentials for Students

- 1  
看破世事                      See through things of the world.  
世事若還看不破            If you cannot see through the things of the world,  
身沈苦海怎能出            You will sink into an ocean of suffering. How can you get out?
- 2  
斬斷牽纏                      Cut off entanglements.  
牽纏設若不能斷            If you cannot cut off entanglements,  
六道輪迴在眼前            The vicious cycles of compulsive habit stand before you.
- 3  
窮究理義                      Thoroughly investigate principle and meaning.  
不知辨別身心理            If you do not know how to discern the principles of body and mind,  
邪正難分誤路程            You cannot distinguish aberration and sanity, and miss the road.
- 4  
疇師訪友                      Find a teacher and associates.  
虚心即便能實腹            When you empty the mind, you can fill the belly;  
自滿到老無一長            If you are self-satisfied, you will grow old without development.
- 5  
立志長久                      Make determination endure.  
要成經久不易事            If you want to accomplish something that endures unchanging,  
必須經久不已功            It requires work that endures unceasing.
- 6  
除去嗔恨                      Get rid of anger and hatred.  
嗔恨若還不掃淨            If you do not sweep yourself clean of anger and hatred,  
滿腔濁氣掩真宗            You will be full of turbulence, which will obscure the truth.
- 7  
舍的色身                      Relinquish attachment to the physical body.  
看得色身如假物            See the physical body as something temporary and artificial,  
自然有路覓真身            And naturally there will be a way to seek the real body.
- 8  
不怕勞苦                      Do not be afraid of hard work.  
心強必上高山頂            With strength of mind, one will be able to climb to the summit;  
怕苦終久不入真            If you are afraid of hardship, you will never enter the real.
- 9  
忍辱受垢                      Tolerate ignominy and endure dishonor.  
忍辱卑而不可踰            Tolerate ignominy, and though lowly you cannot be surpassed;  
受垢柔而即能強            Endure dishonor, and through yielding you can be strong.
- 10  
饒人讓人                      Forgive people and defer to others.  
屈己尊人爲要著            It is essential to humble oneself and honor others;  
平心下氣是良方            Equanimous deference is a good method.
- 11  
輕財重命                      Take possessions lightly; take life seriously.  
試問堆金等岱嶽            Ask yourself-even if you pile up mountains of gold,  
無常買的不來無            Can you buy off impermanence?

- 12  
物我同觀  
物我同源無貴賤  
若分彼此起塵氛  
View others and self as the same.  
Others and self have the same source, without high or low;  
If you discriminate between "them" and "us," you raise dust.
- 13  
酒色不迷  
戒酒自然性不亂  
絕色必定命堅牢  
Do not be deluded by alcohol or sex.  
If you do not drink, your nature will not be deranged;  
If you are chaste, your life force will be stable.
- 14  
飢寒順受  
衣食隨緣修妄想  
若怕飢寒志不堅  
Accept hunger and cold as they come.  
Dressing and eating according to circumstances, stop idle imagination;  
If you are afraid of hunger and cold, your will won't be firm.
- 15  
生死任命  
死生二事儘由天  
訪道一心常在我  
Leave life and death to destiny.  
Two things, death and life, depend entirely on nature;  
The one will to seek the Way is always up to oneself.
- 16  
廣行方便  
到處積功兼累行  
見危盡力以扶人  
Do whatever you can to be helpful.  
Wherever you are, continue to perform worthy deeds;  
Seeing danger, exert your utmost power to help people.
- 17  
不愛熱鬧  
紛華境裡易迷真  
聲色場中能亂性  
Do not take a liking to excitement.  
It is easy to lose the real in the midst of excitement and glamour;  
In the realms of the senses you can derange your essential nature.
- 18  
不傲不盈  
高傲即便起人惡  
盈滿必非載道材  
Do not be proud or complacent.  
Arrogance arouses the hatred of others;  
If you are self-satisfied, you cannot bear the Tao.
- 19  
不貪美味  
君子謀道不謀食  
小人養口不養心  
Do not crave fine food.  
Superior people plan for the Way, not for food;  
Inferior people nurture the palate, not the mind.
- 20  
不言是非  
各人自掃門前雪  
莫管他人屋上霜  
Do not talk about right and wrong.  
Everyone should sweep the snow from his own door  
And not be concerned about the frost on another's roof.
- 21  
聰明不用  
有才不使常如拙  
有智深藏卻似愚  
Do not use intellectual brilliance.  
If you have talent, do not employ it; always be as if inept;  
If you have knowledge, hide it, appearing to be ignorant.
- 22  
睡少功多  
朝乾夕惕功無歇  
廢寢忘食志要堅  
Sleep less and work more.  
Working by day, cautious by night, effort never ceasing,  
Giving up sleep, forgetting to eat, the will must be firm.



23

不愛好物

珠玉金銀身外物

精神性命本來珍

Do not take a liking to fine things.

Pearls and jade, gold and silver, are things outside the body;

Vitality and spirit, essence and life, are the fundamental treasures.

24

始終如一

用功不力難深造

抱道而亡方見真

Be consistent from beginning to end.

If you work without strength, it is hard to reach deep attainment;

Only when you die embracing the Tao do you see reality.

丹法二十四訣  
Twenty-Four Secrets of Alchemy

1

修補丹房 Repair the alchemical workshop.  
培養後天 Nourish the temporal;  
堅強色身 Strengthen the physical body.  
培養後天第一端 To nourish the temporal is the point of departure;  
精神氣旺耐飢寒 When vitality, energy, and spirit are vigorous, one can bear hunger and cold.  
色身修得堅強瞭 Having cultivated the physical body until it is firm and strong,  
避雨遮風好鍊丹 Giving shelter from the rain and wind, it is good for refining the elixir.

2

鍊己築基 Refine the self and set up the foundation.  
懲忿窒欲 Overcome anger and lust;  
克己復禮 Conquer the self and return to normalcy.  
鍊己持心是築基 Refining the self and mastering the mind are building the foundation;  
塵情妄念儘拋離 Mundane feelings and idle thoughts are all to be thrown away.  
果然鍊到己無處 When you have refined your self to where it does not exist,  
不動不搖物怎迷 You are imperturbable and unshakable, and cannot be deluded by things.

3

立鼎安爐 Set up the crucible and furnace.  
剛以固其志 Stabilize the will with firmness;  
柔以用其功 Do the work with flexibility.  
志念堅牢爲立鼎 Making the will firm and strong is setting up the crucible;  
工夫漸進是安爐 Gradually progressing In the work is setting up the furnace.  
剛柔兩用無偏勝 Firmness and flexibility are both used, without imbalance;  
準備隨時運火符 Having prepared, work the fire and the convergence according to the time.

4

採取藥物 Cull the medicines.  
假中疇真 Seek the real in the artificial;  
砂裡淘金 Pick the gold out of sand.  
大藥三般精氣神 The great medicines are three-vitality, energy, spirit;  
須先辨別假和真 It is necessary first to distinguish the true from the false.  
是非隻隔一些子 The division between right and wrong is slight;  
莫把魁罡認北辰 Be careful not to mix them up.

5

以鉛制汞 Use lead to control mercury.  
真知不昧 When real knowledge is not obscured,  
靈知不飛 Conscious knowledge is not flighty.  
金情別號是真鉛 Another name for sense is true lead;  
木性輕浮以汞傳 Essence, light and mercuric, is represented as mercury.  
曉得情來鈴性法 When you understand the method of bringing sense to stabilize essence,  
人心不起道心園 The human mentality does not arise and the mind of Tao is complete.

6

黃婆調和 The yellow woman harmonizes.  
真意不散 When true intent does not scatter,  
陰陽自和 Yin and yang naturally harmonize.  
可知真意是黃婆 You should know that the true intent is the "yellow woman";  
一信能調四象和 Truthfulness alone can harmonize the four forms,  
攢簇五行皆借力 Aggregating the five elements uses its power;  
全形造命不離它 Perfecting the being and building life are not apart from it.

7

鉛汞相投           Lead and mercury intermingle.  
 性去求情           Essence goes to seek sense;  
 情來歸性           Sense comes back to essence.  
 以鉛投汞情歸性   Putting the lead in the mercury, sense returns to essence;  
 以汞投鉛性戀情   Putting the mercury in the lead, essence cleaves to sense.  
 情性相交無隔礙   When sense and essence merge without obstruction,  
 何愁大道不能成   There is no worry that the great Way will not be accomplished.

8

運火鍛鍊           Work the fire to smelt and refine.  
 振發正氣           Activate sane energy;  
 掃除邪氣           Sweep out aberrant energy.  
 文烹武鍊是仙方   Gentle cooking and fierce refinement are the methods of immortals;  
 火發神爐陰與陽   Fire comes forth in the spiritual furnace, yin and yang,  
 鍛儘千般波滓物   Burning away the thousand kinds of pollutants.  
 自然大藥起霞光   Naturally the great medicines emanate misty light.

9

還丹凝結           The restored elixir congeals.  
 剛柔相當           Firmness and flexibility balance each other;  
 性情如一           Essence and sense are as one.  
 性情如一號還丹   When essence and sense are unified, that is called the restored elixir;  
 朗朗真靈結就團   Bright and clear, reality and consciousness join into one whole.  
 已得當初無價寶   Having obtained the original priceless jewel,  
 小心護守運神觀   Carefully guard it; practice observation of the spirit.

10

沐浴溫養           Bathe and incubate.  
 念莫教起           Do not let thoughts arise;  
 意不使散           Do not let attention scatter.  
 滌垢洗塵沐浴方   Washing off defilement and dust is the method of bathing;  
 勿忘勿助閻陰陽   Do not be negligent, do not be forceful, join yin and yang.  
 諸緣不起丹元固   When entanglements do not arise, the basis of the elixir is stable;  
 養的靈根花蕊芳   Nurturing the spiritual root, the flower buds are fragrant.

11

丹元成熟           The basis of the elixir becomes mature.  
 黑中有白           Within black there is white;  
 靜極而動           When quietude culminates, there is movement.  
 黑中有白長生藥   Within black there is white-the herb of long life.  
 暗裡藏明續命湯   Within darkness is concealed light-the life-prolonging tonic.  
 鍊就玲瓏明淨物   Refining it into something crystal-clear and pure,  
 通天徹地放毫光   It penetrates heaven and earth with a ray of light.

12

吞服金丹           Ingest the gold elixir.  
 收神入室           Gather the spirit into the room,  
 點化群陰           Transmuting earthliness  
 服丹不是外來丹   The elixir ingested does not come from outside;  
 鍊就真靈在內安   The refined real consciousness rests within.  
 五府生光陰氣化   The internal organs produce light; earthly energy is transmuted;  
 不迷不昧破關闡   Without confusion or obscurity, obstacles are broken through.

13

移爐換鼎 Move the furnace and crucible.  
 本原到手 The root source in hand,  
 隨時種栽 Plant and nurture according to the time.  
 金丹到手有真傳 The gold elixir in hand, there is true transmission;  
 換鼎移爐玄又玄 Moving the furnace and crucible is a mystery within mystery.  
 從此虛心烹大藥 Henceforth carefully cook the great medicine,  
 先天竅裡鍊先天 Refining the primordial within the primordial opening.

14

凝結聖胎 Congeal the spiritual embryo.  
 百神俱集 All the spirit gathered,  
 五行混成 The five elements merge.  
 五氣朝元聚靈台 The five energies return to the origin and gather on the spiritual pedestal;  
 先天種子已牢栽 The primordial seed is already firmly planted.  
 如痴如醉如昏睡 As though an idiot, as though drunk, as though deep asleep,  
 恍惚杳冥結聖胎 In ecstasy and profound abstraction you congeal the spiritual embryo.

15

朝屯暮矇 Difficulty in the morning, darkness at night.  
 知雄守雌 Know the male, keep the female;  
 天然火鍊 Refine with the natural fire.  
 知雄更要守其雌 Knowing the male, it is also necessary to keep the female.  
 水火燻蒸不問時 Steaming with water and fire is not a matter of the hour.  
 自有樞機番卦象 There is naturally a pivot which turns over the trigrams;  
 何須著意強施爲 What is the need to make conscious effort?

16

溫養胎胚 Incubate the embryo.  
 如雞抱卵 Like a hen sitting on an egg,  
 似蚌含珠 Like an oyster embracing a pearl.  
 專一猶如雞抱卵 Concentrate single-mindedly, like a hen sitting on an egg;  
 至誠恰似蚌含珠 Be thoroughly sincere, like an oyster embracing a pearl.  
 時時靜守虛靈竅 Hour after hour quietly watch over the aperture of open awareness,  
 免得爐中水火孤 To avoid letting water and fire be isolated in the furnace.

17

防危慮險 Forestall danger.  
 外無其身 Externally oblivious of the body,  
 內無其心 Internally oblivious of the mind.  
 陽氣未純猶有險 Before celestial energy is thoroughly pure, there is still danger;  
 餘陰不盡要防危 As long as earthly energy is not exhausted, it is necessary to prevent peril.  
 後天滓質如消化 If the pollution of acquired conditioning is dissolved away,  
 可保胎元莫損虧 It can be guaranteed that the embryo will not be damaged.

18

十月胎圓 In ten months the embryo is mature.  
 先天氣純 Primordial energy is pure;  
 後天氣化 Conditioning is evaporated.  
 十月工夫胎始圓 After ten months of work, the embryo is finally mature;  
 後天化儘先天全 When conditioning is all dissolved, the primal is complete.  
 清清淨淨別無物 Utterly pure and clean, there is nothing else;  
 非色非空一自然 It is one naturalness, neither form nor void.

## 19

待時脫化 Wait for the time to break free.  
 無私無爲 No thought, no doing,  
 不即不離 Not obsessed, not indifferent.  
 脫化原來有日期 Basically there is a time to break free, transformed;  
 錯前錯後俱非宜 It will not do to be too early or too late.  
 誠中達外無容強 Truthfulness within reaches outside, not admitting force;  
 瓜熟自然蒂落離 When a melon is ripe, it naturally separates from the stem.

## 20

嬰兒出現 The infant emerges.  
 打破混沌 Breaking through nondifferentiation,  
 跳入虛無 Leaping into nothingness.  
 守定黃庭養谷神 Keep still in the yellow court and nurture the valley spirit;  
 形全氣足火停輪 With body complete and energy replete, the fire is stopped  
 乍雷一響天門破 With a peal of thunder, the gate of heaven opens,  
 跳出金剛不死人 And out leaps the indestructible immortal person.

## 21

乳哺三年 Breast-feed for three years.  
 光而不耀 Enlightened but not shining,  
 明而不用 Illumined but not using it.  
 真靈鍊就一金身 When real consciousness is refined into a golden body,  
 萬古千秋不落塵 It never ever falls into the dust.  
 乳哺三年光不耀 Nursing it for three years, enlightened but not shining,  
 知前曉後聖而神 Knowing before and understanding after, the sage is spiritual.

## 22

出入自便 Exiting and entering at will.  
 形神俱妙 Body and spirit both sublimated,  
 與道閻真 Merging into reality with the Tao.  
 形神俱妙等虛空 Body and spirit both sublimated, equal to space,  
 與道閻真萬法通 Merging in reality with the Tao, all things are penetrated.  
 顯晦逆從人莫測 Appearing, hiding, going against or along, no one can fathom it;  
 聚而有象散而風 Clustered, there is form; dispersed, the wind.

## 23

面壁九年 Facing a wall for nine years.  
 有無俱不立 Neither being nor nonbeing stand;  
 天地悉歸空 The universe is ultimately empty.  
 九年面壁有誰知 Nine years facing a wall, who is there that knows?  
 入室工夫不待思 The work of entering the room does not depend on thought.  
 天地歸空凡聖去 The universe returns to emptiness; ordinary and holy are gone;  
 寂寥境內結仙居 In the realm of silent serenity, the abode of immortals is built.

## 24

子又生孫 The child also produces grandchildren.  
 變化無窮 Transformation without end,  
 神妙不測 Unfathomable spiritual wonders.  
 子又生孫凡聖同 The child also produces grandchildren; ordinary and sage are the same –  
 隻分順去逆來中 The only distinction is in going along or coming back in reverse.  
 古仙留下大丹訣 Ancient immortals left the secret of a great elixir,  
 變化無窮到處通 With endless transmutations, getting through everywhere.

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**JOHN FREDERICK**

**HELVETIUS'**

**GOLDEN CALF,**

**WHICH THE WORLD WORSHIPS AND ADORES:**

**IN WHICH IS DISCUSSED**

**THE MOST RARE MIRACLE OF NATURE**

**IN THE TRANSMUTATION OF METALS,**

**VIZ.:**

**HOW AT THE HAGUE A MASS OF LEAD WAS IN  
A MOMENT OF TIME CHANGED INTO GOLD  
BY THE INFUSION OF A SMALL  
PARTICLE OF OUR STONE.**

JOB, xxvii., 5:—"Great things doeth God which we cannot comprehend."

SENECA, Epist. 77:—"We must learn, in our pursuit of wisdom, to listen with equanimity to the reproaches of the foolish, and to despise contempt itself."

TO THE  
MOST HONOURABLE AND EXCELLENT  
DR. THEODORE KETJES,

*A great physician, and traveller in Turkey and other  
foreign lands, now in practice at Amsterdam,  
and my intimate friend;*

AND TO THE  
MOST HONOURABLE AND PROFOUNDLY LEARNED  
DR. JOHN CASPAR FAUSIUS,

*Councillor and Court Physician to the Count  
Palatine of Heidelberg;*

AND

DR. CHRISTIAN MENTZELIUS,  
*Councillor and Court Physician to the Elector of Brandenburg,*

MY HONOURED PATRONS, AND

BELOVED FRIENDS.

**DEDICATORY EPISTLE**

**TO THE ABOVE-NAMED NOBLE AND HONOURABLE  
FRIENDS AND MASTERS.**

I neither can nor will withhold from my honoured and beloved friends the knowledge of this Spagyric Art, and of the most precious and miraculous Arcanum, which I have not only seen with my own eyes, but also executed with my own hands, by changing a mass of lead into solid gold, persistently resisting any test of fire, through the addition of a small particle of our transmutatory powder. It can no longer be pretended that our Art does not possess the power which it claims, or that the Mercury of the Sages is not the great and glorious fountain of all natural marvels. This wonderful secret has, through the grace of God, been revealed to me, and as it is unworthy of man, created in the image of God, to maintain silence in regard to God's miraculous works, like the brute beasts, I have determined to unveil this grand Arcanum to you, my beloved friends; and I will now gird myself to tell you all that I know and have heard of the sayings and doings of the Great Artist Elias. It was not, indeed, he who revealed to me the grand secret; yet his conversation was so instructive that I cannot refrain from reporting it to you word for word. It is my earnest wish, honoured friends and masters, that this Book may meet with a kindly reception at your hands, and that you may derive from it both enjoyment and profit. With this hope, I remain,

Your humble Servant,

JOHN FREDERICK HELVETIUS

**CHAPTER I.**

BEFORE I begin to write about the philosophical Pygmy vanquishing the Giants, my honoured friends and masters, you must permit me to transcribe a passage from the works of Helmontius (*Arbor Vitæ*, folio 630): "I cannot but believe that there is such a thing as a gold and silver making Stone. At the same time, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that hundreds of painstaking Alchemists are daily being led astray by impostors or ignorant professors of the Spagyric Art." For this reason I shall not be astonished if—immediately upon perusing my book—multitudes of these deluded victims start up, and contradict the assertion which I have made in regard to the truth of this Art. One of these gentry denounces Alchemy as a work of the Devil; another describes it as sheer nonsense and humbug; a third admits the possibility of transmuting metals into gold, but maintains that the whole process costs more money than it is worth. But I do not wonder at these opinions. It is a hackneyed saying of human nature that we gape at those things whose purpose we do not understand, but we investigate things pleasurable to know. The Sages should therefore remember the words of Seneca (*De Moribus*): "You are not yet blessed, if the multitude does not laugh at you." But I do not care whether they believe or contradict my teaching about the transmutation of metals; I rest calmly satisfied in the knowledge that I have seen it with my own eyes, and performed it with my own hands. Even in our degenerate age these wonders are still possible; even now the Medicine is prepared which is worth twenty tons of gold, nay, more, for it has virtue to bestow that which all the gold of the world cannot buy, *viz.*, health. Blessed is that physician who knows our soothing medicinal Potion of Mercury, the great panacea of



death and disease. But God does not reveal this glorious knowledge to all men indiscriminately; and some men are so obtuse (with a judicial blindness) that they wonder at the activity of the simplest forces of Nature, as, for instance, the attractive power which the magnet exercises upon the steel. But (whether they believe it or not) there is a corresponding magnetic force in gold which attracts Mercury, in silver which attracts copper, and so with all other metals, minerals, stones, herbs, plants, etc. . . . We must not be surprised at this persistent opposition to truth: the light of the sun pains the eyes of owls.

As a matter of fact, we human beings take too much upon ourselves in hastily and dogmatically judging of things which we do not understand. We deny the influence of the stars upon earthly things, and by that denial only exhibit our ignorance. And what do we know of the secret forces which slumber in plants. You may know nothing of the glory of the Angels, the brightness of the heavens, the transparency of the air, the limpidity of the water, the variety of colours in flowers, the hardness of stones and metals, the proportionate beauty of men and animals, the image of God in regenerate souls, the faith of believers, the rationality of the mind, &c.—for we may be blind and without feeling or understanding—and yet the beauty of all these things is not in the least affected by our ignorance.

If we bear these considerations in mind, they ought to stop our mouths when we feel tempted to deny the possibility of such wonderful transmutatory virtue being inherent in our Stone. Still, it must not be supposed that I wish to force this knowledge upon any one. God has reserved it for the worthy, and I know that it can never become known to the wicked, the irreligious, or the scornful. All I propose to do is to lay before the reader, for his diligent consideration, those conversations which have passed between the Artist Elias and myself, in regard to the nature of this Stone, the splendour of which (being more glorious than the dawn, more brilliant than a carbuncle, more bright than the sun or gold) has not yet faded from my mind. The contempt of the scornful, and the ignorance of the foolish I despise. Their ephemeral babble will soon be swept away by the river of forgetfulness; but our triumphant Art, which is established upon a foundation of adamant, upon the foundation of God's own truth, will abide unshaken throughout all ages. For adepts according to ancient experience have given their word that this natural mystery is only to be found with JEHOVA Saturninely placed in the centre of the world. But those we call blessed, who can purge the Queen of the Sages of her impurity, who can circulate the Catholic Virgin Earth by means of our crystalline Physico-magical Art, and who have beheld the King, with his crown on his head, and his strength of inward fire, come forth from the chamber of his crystal grave, his bodily semblance glorified with all the most beautiful hues that the world affords, like a shining carbuncle, or like a transparent, compact, and diaphanous crystal—like a salamander that has spued forth all water, and washes away the leprosy of base metals with fire. Moreover, they shall behold the abyss of the Spagyric Art, where in the mineral kingdom, the same so royal art has, to a certain extent, for many years (in, as it were, the safest retreat of all) lain concealed. The Sages have seen the river in which Æneas was cleansed of his mortality—the river of Pactolus in Lydia which was changed into gold by King Midas bathing in it—the bath of Diana—the spring of Narcissus—the blood of Adonis trickling upon the snowy breast of Venus, whence was produced the anemone—the blood of Ajax, from which sprang the beautiful hyacinth flower—the blood of the Giants killed by Jupiter's thunderbolt—the tears which Althea shed when she doffed her golden robes—the magic water of Medea, out of which grass and flowers sprang forth—the Potion which Medea prepared from various herbs for the rejuvenescence of old Jason—the Medicine of Aesculapius—the magic juice, by the aid of which Jason obtained the Golden Fleece—the garden of the Hesperides, where the trees bear golden apples in rich abundance—Atalanta turned aside from the race by the three golden apples—Romulus transformed by Jupiter into a god—the transfiguration of the soul of Julius Cæsar into a Comet—Juno's serpent, Pytho, born of decomposed earth after Deucalion's flood—the fire at which Medea lit her seven

torches—the Moon kindled by Phaëthon's conflagration—Arcadia, in which Jupiter was wont to walk abroad—the habitation of Pluto in whose vestibule lay the three-headed Cerberus—the Pile, on which Hercules burnt those limbs which he had received from his mother, with fire, till only the fixed and incombustible elements derived from his father were left, and he became a god—and the rustic cottage whose roof was made of pure gold. Blessed, yea, thrice blessed, is the man to whom Jehovah has revealed the method of preparing that Divine Salt by which the metallic or mineral body is corrupted, destroyed, and mortified, while its soul in the meantime is revived for the glorious resurrection of the philosophical body—blessed, I say, is he to whom the knowledge of our Art is vouchsafed in answer to prayer throughout all his work for the Holy Spirit! For it should be remembered that this is the only way in which our Art of Arts is vouchsafed to man, and if you would attain it, the service of God ought to be your chief business. By committing themselves to this sacred and practical path of piety, and to theosophical colloquies alone with Jehovah, all true students of this Art will in due course of time, behold the sight which will gladden their hearts. Blessed, also, is he to whom some adept graciously flings wide the gates of knowledge, and to whom the golden road of the King is thus manifested! . . . I am afraid that the Preface will not please all my readers; nevertheless, I have a good hope that it will cheer and hearten the better part of them. Drink, my friends, from the fountain of truth, which wells forth in the Dialogue that I shall hereafter set down, and slake therewith the thirst of your souls, for my words shall be sweeter to you than nectar or ambrosia. For I bear in mind the saying of Julius Cæsar Scaliger that "the end of wisdom is its communication," and the teaching of Gregory of Nyssenus, who affirms "that the good delight to impart their knowledge to others, because it is the greatest joy to them to be useful."

## CHAPTER II.

The truth of this Art is maintained by many illustrious writers, of whom the following are the most distinguished representatives of their class:

Paracelsus (*Rev. Natur.*, ix., fol. 358) has the following words: "The true sign by which the Tincture of the Physicists is known, is its power of transmuting all imperfect metals into silver (if it be white) or gold (if it be red), if but a small particle of it be injected into a mass of such metals liquefied in a crucible."

Again: "The invincible Star of the Metals vanquishes all things, and changes them into a nature similar to its own. This gold and silver are better than those found in mines for the preparation of arcane medicines from it."

Again: "I say that any Alchemist, who has the Star of Gold, can change all metals into that precious substance."

Again: "Our Tincture of Gold contains stars, is a substance of the greatest fixity, is unchangeable in multiplication, is a red powder (with almost a saffron tinge), liquid like resin, transparent like crystal, fragile like glass, is of a rubinate colour, and of great specific gravity."

Again, in Paracelsus' book called "The Heaven of the Sages," and in his seventh book on the "Transmutation of Natural Things," he bears witness to the same fact: "Transmutation is a great natural mystery, which is by no means—as fools suppose—contrary to the course of Nature, or the law of God.

Without this Philosopher's Stone, the imperfect metals can be transmuted neither into gold nor silver."

Paracelsus, in his Manual concerning the Medicinal Philosopher's Stone, says: "Our Stone is the heavenly and super-perfect Medicine, because it washes away all the impurities of metals."

Henry Khunrath, in his "Amphitheatre of Eternal Wisdom" (fol. 147), has the following words: "I have visited many lands, and had speech of many learned men. I have seen the Green Catholic Lion, and the Blood of the Lion, *i.e.*, the Gold of the Sages, with my own eyes, have touched it with my hands, tasted it with my tongue, smelt it with my nose. By its means I have cured many whose life was despaired of."

Again (fol. 202): "That which I describe is not a myth: you shall handle it with your hands, see it with your eyes,—that Azoth, or Catholic Mercury of the Sages, which, together with inward and outward fire, in sympathetic harmony, through an unavoidable necessity, physico-magically united, is alone sufficient for the preparation of our Stone."

Again: "You shall see the Philosopher's Stone, our King and Lord of Lords, go forth from the chamber of its crystal tomb into this world, with its glorified body, regenerate and transcendently perfect, a brilliant carbuncle, whose most subtle and fully purified parts, being harmoniously mixed, are bound inseparably into one, altogether smooth, translucent as crystal, compact and exceedingly weighty. It is easily fused in fire, as resin, and after the flight of artificial quicksilver, just as wax. Without smoke it enters and penetrates solid bodies as oil enters paper. It is soluble in any liquid, melting and commingling with the same, fragile as glass, in a powder saffron-coloured, but in a solid mass, red like the ruby. Its purple colour is the mark of perfect fixation and fixed perfection, for it remains fixed and incombustible, even when exposed to fire, corrosive waters, or burning sulphur, since it is, like the salamander, incapable of being consumed by fire."

Again: "When the White Tincture is added to metals as a ferment, it transmutes them into purest silver; when the Red Tincture is mixed with pure gold, it is, within three days, multiplied by the quantity of the gold."

Helmontius ("On Life Eternal," page 590) has the following words:—"I have seen the Stone, and touched it with my own hands. . . . One-fourth of a grain of this powder, wrapped up in paper, I have cast upon eight ounces of boiling quicksilver in a crucible, and immediately the whole mixture was congealed into a mass like yellow wax; when the fusion was completed, the crucible contained eight ounces of purest gold (less eleven grains). So one grain of our powder had transmuted into purest gold 19,186 times its own weight of quicksilver,—and this process can be repeated indefinitely. The powder cleanses the metal from all impurity, and protects it from rust, decay, and fire, etc.

Again, the same Helmontius says, in his "Tree of Life" (page 630):—"I am compelled to believe that there is a Stone which produces gold and silver; for I have several times, with my own hands, projected one grain of powder upon one thousand grains of boiling quicksilver, which was thereby, in the presence of a great multitude of spectators, immediately transformed into precious gold. He who first gave me some of this transmutatory powder, had of it at least as much as would have sufficed for the production of 200,000 pounds of gold. He gave me about  $\frac{1}{2}$  grain of the powder, with which I transmuted  $9\frac{3}{4}$  ounces of quicksilver.

Moreover, the most honourable and profoundly learned Dr. Theodore Ketjes, an eminent physician resident

at Amsterdam, gave me a medal on which were the following inscriptions:

[IMAGE NOT INCLUDED]

On the obverse of the medal there appeared the following words:

AS THIS ART IS RARE AMONG MEN,  
SO IT IS RARELY EXHIBITED:  
PRAISED BE GOD FOR EVER WHO  
HAS COMMUNICATED PART OF  
HIS INFINITE POWER TO US HIS MOST  
ABJECT CREATURES.

It is also said that, in 1660, Alexander (a Scotch adept) effected a change of imperfect metals into gold, at Cologne, and at Hanover, etc.

There are also other instances on record of such transmutations having taken place.

The following is a genuine extract from a letter written by Dr. Kuffler:—

"First I found in my own laboratory, aquafortis, next in that of *Charles de Roy*, I poured it over calx of gold prepared in the ordinary way, and after the third cohobation, it sublimated with itself the tincture of gold in the neck of the retort, which I mingled with silver precipitated in the ordinary way, and I beheld that it had transmuted one ounce of sublimated tincture of gold in the crucible with the usual flux, and two ounces of precipitated silver, into an ounce-and-a-half of the best gold, while the third portion remained silver. The gold was white and fixed, but the remaining two parts were the best silver, fixed under the test of any fire. This is my experience, and I need not say that it has made me a most enthusiastic believer in Alchemy."

I, Helvetius, have seen this gold, without the tincture, white.

Another proof of the genuineness of this Art was given at the Hague, in the year 1664, when a silversmith, of the name of Gril, in the presence of many witnesses, transformed one pound of lead, partly into gold, and partly into silver. Gril had obtained the Tincture from a certain weaver of the name of John Caspar Knöttner, with the injunction to use it for metals only - Gril placed it with some lead in a glass cake dish, and after about a fortnight the above change was found to have taken place. I can testify to the genuineness of this case, as Gril was personally known to me, and I saw the transmuted lead, which exhibited on its surface a most beautiful silver crystal, in the form of a star, as though prepared by most ingenious artifice with a circle. The pity was that Gril, being obstinate and crafty, would not let Knöttner know whether it was his "Spirit of Salt" that had effected the change; and some time afterwards, when Gril's obstinacy had at length been overcome, Knöttner had forgotten which of his many chemical preparations he had given to him, and, before he was able to find out, he and his family were swept away by the plague, while Gril fell into the water and was drowned. Afterwards, not one of the many goldseekers was able to discover the secret which died with them. Nevertheless, it is a matter of never ceasing admiration that the Philosopher's Stone should have the power of transmuting, in so short a time, the dull and heavy nature of lead into the bright and brilliant nature of silver and gold; of this natural law, however, we have an illustration in the fact that steel, by contact with the magnet, acquires its magnetic power.

### CHAPTER III.

Since promises are all the more acceptable, the more quickly they are fulfilled, I will now, without any further delay, address myself to the task which I have set myself to accomplish.

On the 27 December, 1666, in the forenoon, there came to my house a certain man, who was a complete stranger to me, but of an honest, grave countenance, and an authoritative mien, clothed in a simple garb like that of a Memnonite. He was of middle height, his face was long and slightly pock-marked, his hair was black and straight, his chin close shaven, his age about 43 or 44, and his native province, as far as I could make out, North Holland.

After we had exchanged salutations, he asked me whether he might have some conversation with me. He wished to say something to me about the Pyrotechnic Art, as he had read one of my Tracts (directed against the Sympathetic Powder of Dr. Digby), in which I hinted a suspicion whether the Grand Arcanum of the Sages was not after all a gigantic hoax. He, therefore, took that opportunity of asking me whether I could not believe that such a grand mystery might exist in the nature of things, by means of which a physician could restore any patient whose vitals were not irreparably destroyed. I answered: "Such a Medicine would be a most desirable acquisition for any physician; nor can any man tell how many secrets there may be hidden in Nature; yet, though I have read much about the truth of this Art, it has never been my good fortune to meet with a real Master of the Alchemical Science." I also enquired whether he was a medical man, since he spoke so learnedly about the Universal Medicine. In reply, he modestly disclaimed my insinuation, and described himself as a brassfounder, who had always taken a great interest in the extraction of medicinal potions from metals by means of fire. After some further conversation; the Artist Elias (for it was he) thus addressed me: "Since you have read so much in the works of the Alchemists about this Stone, its substance, its colour, and its wonderful effects, may I be allowed the question, whether you have not yourself prepared it?" On my answering his question in the negative, he took out of his bag a cunningly-worked ivory box, in which there were three large pieces of a substance resembling glass, or pale sulphur, and informed me that here was enough of the Tincture for the production of 20 tons of gold. When I had held the precious treasure in my hand for a quarter of an hour (during which time I listened to a recital of its wonderful curative properties), I was compelled to restore it to its owner, which I could not help doing with a certain degree of reluctance. After thanking him for his kindness in showing it to me, I then asked how it was that his Stone did not display that ruby colour which I had been taught to regard as characteristic of the Philosopher's Stone. He replied that the colour made no difference, and that the substance was sufficiently mature for all practical purposes. My request that he would give me a piece of his Stone (though it were no larger than a coriander seed), he somewhat brusquely refused, adding, in a milder tone, that he could not give it me for all the wealth I possessed, and that not on account of its great preciousness, but for some other reason which it was not lawful for him to divulge; nay, if fire could be destroyed in that way, he would immediately throw it all into the fire. Then, after a moment's consideration, he enquired whether I could not shew him into a room at the back of the house, where we should be less liable to the observation of passers-by. On my conducting him into the state parlour (which he entered without wiping his dirty boots), he demanded of me a gold coin, and while I was looking for it, he produced from his breast pocket a green silk handkerchief, in which were folded up five medals, the gold of which was infinitely superior to that of my gold piece. On the medals appeared the following inscriptions:—

[IMAGE NOT INCLUDED]

I was filled with admiration, and asked my visitor whence he had obtained that wonderful knowledge of the whole world? He replied that it was a gift freely bestowed on him by a friend who had stayed a few days at his house, who had also taught him to change common flints and crystals into stones more precious than rubies, chrysoliths, and sapphires; he also revealed to me the preparation of crocus of iron (an infallible cure for dysentery), of metallic liquid (an efficacious remedy for dropsy), and of many other infallible Medicines, to which, however, I paid no great heed, as I was impatiently anxious to have the chief secret of all revealed to me. The Artist told me that his Master had bidden him bring him a glass full of warm water, to which he had added a little white powder, and in which one ounce of silver had melted like ice in warm water. Of this draught he emptied one-half, and gave the rest to me. Its taste resembled that of fresh milk, and its effect was most exhilarating."

I asked my visitor whether the potion was a preparation of the Philosopher's Stone? But he answered: "You should not be so inquisitive."

Then he told me that, at the bidding of the Artist, he had taken down a piece of leaden water-pipe, and melted the lead in a pot, whereupon the Artist had taken some sulphureous powder out of a little box on the point of a knife, and cast it into the melted lead, and that after exposing the compound for a short time to a fierce fire, he had poured forth a great mass of molten gold upon the brick floor of the kitchen.

"The Master bade me take one-sixteenth of the gold for myself as a keepsake, and to distribute the rest amongst the poor; which I did by making over a large sum in trust to the Church of Sparrendam. At length, before bidding me farewell, my friend taught me this Divine Art."

When my strange visitor had concluded his narrative, I besought him to give me a proof of his assertion, by performing the transmutatory operation on some metals in my presence. He answered evasively, that he could not do so then, but that he would return in three weeks, and that, if he was then at liberty to do so, he would shew me something that would make me open my eyes. He appeared punctually to the promised day, and invited me to take a walk with him, in the course of which we discoursed profoundly on the secrets of Nature in fire, though I noticed that my companion was very chary in imparting information about the Grand Arcanum; he spoke very learnedly and gravely concerning the holiness of the Art (just as if he were a clergyman), and said that God had commanded the initiated to make the secret known only to the deserving. At last I asked him pointblank to shew me the transmutation of metals. I besought him to come and dine with me, and to spend the night at my house; I entreated; I expostulated; but in vain. He remained firm. I reminded him of his promise. He retorted that his promise had been conditional upon his being permitted to reveal the secret to me. At last, however, I prevailed upon him to give me a piece of his precious Stone—a piece no larger than a grain of rape seed. He delivered it to me as if it were the most princely donation in the world. Upon my uttering a doubt whether it would be sufficient to tinge more than four grains of lead, he eagerly demanded it back. I complied, in the hope that he would exchange it for a larger piece; instead of which he divided it in two with his thumb, threw away one-half and gave me back the other, saying: "Even now it is sufficient for you." Then I was still more heavily disappointed, as I could not believe that anything could be done with so small a particle of the Medicine. He, however, bade me take two drachms, or half an-ounce of lead, or even a little more, and to melt it in the crucible; for the Medicine would certainly not tinge more of the base metal than it was sufficient for. I answered that I could not

believe that so small a quantity of Tincture could transform so large a mass of lead. But I had to be satisfied with what he had given me, and my chief difficulty was about the application of the Tincture. I confessed that when I held his ivory box in my hand, I had managed to extract a few small crumbs of his Stone, but that they had changed my lead, not into gold, but only into glass. He laughed, and said that I was more expert at theft than at the application of the Tincture. "You should have protected your spoil with 'yellow wax,' then it would have been able to penetrate the lead and to transmute it into gold. As it was, your Medicine evaporated, by a sympathetic process, in the metallic smoke. For all metals, gold, silver, tin, and mercury, are corrupted by the fumes of lead, and degenerated into glass." I shewed him the crucible, and there he discovered the yellow piece of Medicine still adhering to it. He promised to return at nine o'clock the next morning, and then he would shew me that my Medicine could well be used for transmuting lead into gold. With this promise I had to declare myself satisfied. Still I asked him to favour me with some information about the preparation of the Arcanum. He would not tell me anything about the cost and the time; "as to its substance," he continued, "it is prepared from two metals or minerals; the minerals are better because they contain a larger quantity of mature Sulphur. The solvent is a certain celestial Salt, by means of which the Sages dissolve the earthy metallic body, and this process elicits the precious Elixir of the Sages. The work is performed from beginning to end in a crucible over an open fire; it is consummated in four days, and its cost is only about three florins. Neither the Mineral from the Egg nor the Solvent Salt are very expensive." I replied that his statement was contradicted by the sayings of the Sages, who assign seven or nine months as the duration of the Work. His only answer was that the sayings of the Sages were to be understood in a philosophical sense and no ignorant person could apprehend their true meaning. I besought him that, as a stranger had made known to him this precious mystery, so he would extend to me the same kindness, and give me at least some information which would remove all the most formidable obstacles out of my path; for if one knew one thing, other facts connected with it were more easily discovered. But the Artist replied: "It is not so in our Magistry; if you do not know the whole operation from beginning to end, you know nothing at all. I have told you all; yet you do not know how the crystal seal of Hermes is broken, and how the Sun colours it with the marvellous splendour of its metallic rays, or in what mirror the metals see with the eyes of Narcissus the possibility of their transmutation, or from what rays adepts collect the fire of perfect metallic fixation." With these words, and a promise to return at nine o'clock the next morning, he left me. But at the stated hour on the following day he did not make his appearance; in his stead, however, there came, a few hours later, a stranger, who told me that his friend the Artist was unavoidably detained, but that he would call at three o'clock in the afternoon. The afternoon came; I waited for him till half-past seven o'clock. He did not appear. Thereupon my wife came and tempted me to try the transmutation myself. I determined, however, to wait till the morrow, and in the meantime, ordered my son to light the fire, as I was now almost sure that he was an impostor. On the morrow, however, I thought that I might at least make an experiment with the piece of "Tincture" which I had received; if it turned out a failure, in spite of my following his directions closely, I might then be quite certain that my visitor had been a mere pretender to a knowledge of this Art. So I asked my wife to put the Tincture in wax, and I myself, in the meantime, prepared six drachms of lead; I then cast the Tincture, enveloped as it was in wax, on the lead; as soon as it was melted, there was a hissing sound and a slight effervescence, and after a quarter of an hour I found that the whole mass of lead had been turned into the finest gold. Before this transformation took place, the compound became intensely green, but as soon as I had poured it into the melting pot it assumed a hue like blood. When it cooled, it glittered and shone like gold. We immediately took it to the goldsmith, who at once declared it to be the finest gold he had ever seen, and offered to pay fifty florins an ounce for it.

The rumour, of course, spread at once like wildfire through the whole city; and in the afternoon, I had visits from many illustrious students of this Art; I also received a call from the Master of the Mint and some other

gentlemen, who requested me to place at their disposal a small piece of the gold, in order that they might subject it to the usual tests. I consented, and we betook ourselves to the house of a certain silversmith, named Brechtil, who submitted a small piece of my gold to the test called "the fourth": three or four parts of silver are melted in the crucible with one part of gold, and then beaten out into thin plates, upon which some strong aquafortis is poured. The usual result of this experiment is that the silver is dissolved, while the gold sinks to the bottom in the shape of a black powder, and after the aquafortis has been poured off, and melted once more in the crucible, resumes its former shape. . . . When we now performed this experiment, we thought at first that one-half of the gold had evaporated; but afterwards we found that this was not the case, but that, on the contrary, two scruples of the silver had undergone a change into gold.

Then we tried another test, *viz.*, that which is performed by means of a septuple of Antimony; at first it seemed as if eight grains of the gold had been lost, but afterwards, not only had two scruples of the silver been converted into gold, but the silver itself was greatly improved both in quality and malleability. Thrice I performed this infallible test, discovering that every drachm of gold produced an increase of a scruple of gold, but the silver is excellent and extremely flexible. Thus I have unfolded to you the whole story from beginning to end. The gold I still retain in my possession, but I cannot tell you what has become of the Artist Elias. Before he left me, on that last day of our friendly intercourse, he told me that he was on the point of undertaking a journey to the Holy Land. May the Holy Angels of God watch over him wherever he is, and long preserve him as a source of blessing to Christendom! This is my earnest prayer on his and our behalf.

#### CHAPTER IV.

I will now proceed to give an account of the conversations which passed between the Artist Elias and myself (the Physician), on the occasion of his kindly visits to my house. The reader is to imagine the Artist entering my room, and introducing himself with the following words:

I salute you, Dr. Helvetius. I am one of the readers of the Tract you wrote against Dr. Digby, and his Sympathetic Pills, and I should like to have some conversation with you on 'his and kindred subjects. I am a close student of Nature's secrets, and delight in the company of those who have a kindred aim. And, certainly, I have found as the result even of my paltry investigations, that no natural marvels are to be rashly pronounced impossible.

PHYSICIAN.

Let me bid you a hearty welcome. Discourses on the secrets of Nature are the great delight of my heart, as they are of yours. Come with me, I pray you, into my study.

ARTIST ELIAS.

You do, indeed, possess a wonderfully well-equipped laboratory, and I make no doubt that, by its means, you have sounded all the secret depths of Alchemy. But why do you keep so many medicines? Do you not believe that there exists in the nature of things one or more remedies, fully capable of counteracting disease in all cases, where neither the heart, the liver, nor the lungs, are entirely destroyed, or the vital juices altogether consumed?



PHYSICIAN.

From what you say I conclude that you are either one of the profession, or else a Master of the Chemical Art. I do believe, as you say, that there exist in Nature other more excellent medicines than any that I possess. This view is both natural and reasonable, and it is supported by the authority of many celebrated writers. They tell us of a certain Universal Medicine, which, as they say, is known only to the elect, but it enables its possessors to heal all diseases (even those otherwise incurable), and to prolong their lives almost indefinitely. Yet is anyone able to conduct us to this miraculous fountain, whence this vitalizing water is drawn? I am afraid it is a hopeless aspiration.

ARTIST ELIAS.

I am not, as you suppose, a physician, but only a brass-founder. I have, however, from a very early age, taken an all-absorbing interest in the Art of Alchemy, and the secret qualities of metals. And as a result of my investigations (humble as they have been), I most decidedly incline to the belief that the discovery of the Medicine you mention will, even in our degenerate age, be vouchsafed to some earnest student, as a reward of prayer and work.

PHYSICIAN.

It is true that God grants His gifts to those who love Him ungrudgingly and without upbraiding. But I also find that in former ages, as in our own, there have lived hosts of chemists who have spent their lives, as the saying is, in scooping up water with a sieve. Moreover, it seems quite impossible to gain from the writings of the genuine Sages any intelligible information, either as to the substance or the mode of preparation of this Universal Philosopher's Stone. . . . In the meantime, it is the duty of a good physician to make the most of those appliances for the cure of disease, which are actually within his reach. If he refused to give any medicines until he had discovered the Universal Remedy, his patients would suffer through his folly and carelessness. Moreover, taking into consideration the great variety of human constitutions, I really do not see how one Medicine can possibly cure all diseases; the effect of morbid matter upon the glands and vital juices of different persons being well known to be utterly different. If you give a certain quantity of wine to Peter, it will make him quarrelsome, and even furious; its effect on Paul is to produce in him the mildness and timidity of a lamb; in Matthew it causes gaiety and laughter; while it makes Luke melancholy and tearful. In the same way, the morbid matter known as scorbutic poison becomes, in Peter's case, an acid, consuming the whole of the vital juices and organs, and breaking out on his hands and feet in the shape of bluish, discoloured boils. The same poison in the body of Paul is changed into a bitter aperient, which shews itself on the arms and feet in the form of subcutaneous red spots, with punctures like flea-bites, and, in times of plague, turns to anthrax. In the body of Matthew the poisonous fluid is of a sweetish taste, and produces on arms and legs watery tumours, like those seen in dropsical subjects; in times of plague, they turn to plague sores. In Luke's case, the humour is saltish and acrid; the swellings on his arms and legs are dry and inflammatory; and when there is infectious matter in the air, the sores become so red and malignant as to produce madness and death. It stands to reason, then, that these different symptoms require different treatment, and that no one herb or medicine could possibly suffice for such different cases. The volatile bitter salt of Cochlearia, which relieves Peter, makes Paul worse; a fixed acid salt only aggravates the symptoms of Luke, but it very often suffices to produce a complete cure in the case of Paul. In every instance we require a remedy which is different from the morbid matter already in the system, and therefore

capable of counteracting it. In the face of this need of specific remedies for every particular form of disease, you must pardon a medical man if he does not quite see the possibility of an Universal Medicine.

ARTIST ELIAS.

I admit the truth of all that you say, as far as the Vegetable Kingdom is concerned, though very few physicians employ this method of cure. At the same time, I see no reason why there should not be in the Mineral Kingdom an Universal Medicine which combines all the virtues of the different vegetable remedies you have named. I acknowledge that this Gift of Grace is bestowed only on a few persons; but the truth of the Alchemistic Art is too strongly supported to admit of any doubt.

PHYSICIAN.

I have by no means exhausted the list of objections which may with reason be urged against the existence of this Universal Medicine. But how can the same remedy be equally suited to the case of a man or a woman, a delicate and a robust person, the initiatory or the final stage of a disease, a chronic or an acute affection?

ARTIST ELIAS.

Your arguments against the Universal Medicine are very learned and orthodox, and I am not disinclined to allow to them some importance. At the same time, you will admit that "many men many minds" is a saying of some weight, and those who know anything by experience, are the best qualified to speak about it. The sweetest music does not delight all hearers; the best story appears dull to some readers; some like one kind of food or wine and some another: and so there are as many different verdicts about this Universal Medicine as there are (self-constituted) judges. But only he who is acquainted with its properties has a right to deliver an authoritative opinion. Now, it is quite true that in your common, tinkering Medicinal Art, which seeks to counteract only the separate symptoms or manifestations of disease, there is no room for an Universal Medicine. But the true physician knows that all disease (whatever shape it may assume) is simply a depression of the vital spirits, and that whatever strengthens vitality, will cut off the possibility of disease at the very source, expelling the humours which each produce their own peculiar malady, and I maintain that our Universal Medicine is a remedy of this radical kind. It gently promotes and quickens the movement of the vital spirits, and thus, by renewing the source of life, renovates and quickens the whole frame, infusing new vitality and strength into every part. For this reason adepts call it the Great Mystery of Nature, and the preventive of old age and disease. By its aid any man may live the full term of days naturally allotted to him, and need have no fear of contagion, even when the plague, or some other malignant epidemic, is striking down hundreds of his neighbours.

PHYSICIAN.

If I take your meaning, this Remedy does not set itself merely to correct depraved humours, but directly restores the vital spirits themselves; and it cannot prolong existence beyond the span of life originally allotted to each man by the Creator, though it does prevent his being cut off prematurely by weakness or disease. All this sounds very reasonable. But there is another question I should like to ask. Does this Medicine change a man's temperament, so as to convert a phlegmatic person into one of a sanguine character, or a melancholy person into a gay and jovial boon companion?

ARTIST ELIAS.

Certainly not. It is impossible for any medicine of any kind to alter the nature of a man: just as wine does not produce a change in a man, but only brings out his true character. The effect of the Universal Medicine is of a corresponding kind. It is like the warmth of the Sun, which does not change or even modify the shapes, colours, and scents of the different flowers, but only fully develops all that is in them by means of its genial influence. . . . If our Universal Medicine possessed the property of prolonging the life of man beyond the term assigned to each individual by Divine foreknowledge, no doubt Sages like Hermes Trismegistus, Paracelsus, Raymond Lullius, Count Bernhard, and many other genuine possessors of this Great Mystery, would be still with us in the land of the living. It would be folly and madness to suppose that any medicine in the whole world can do more than protect a man against being cut off prematurely, *i.e.*, before his appointed time.

PHYSICIAN.

All that you have said about the operation of this Blessed Universal Medicine seems both reasonable and in harmony with Nature's general plan of working. The worst of it is that, though I now fully believe in the existence of the Medicine, all my efforts to find it have hitherto resembled the futile endeavours of a mariner who, attempting to put out to sea in a frail boat, is again and again driven back to the shore by the united force of wind and wave. Though many illustrious persons have written concerning the preparation, they have so cautiously veiled it, that the smallest possible number might become acquainted with the steps to be taken to arrive at their desire. The best thing one can do, I think, is to stay in one's laboratory, work and pray, and wait for God's blessing.

ARTIST ELIAS.

You reason well, my friend; yet you must not despair of learning the secret of the Alchemists' Art, especially if you can induce some adept to become your teacher. But we will now proceed to discuss the transmutatory virtues of our most precious Stone, which are still more wonderful than its medicinal properties.

PHYSICIAN.

Oh, I see! You wish to discuss the transmutation of metals. In the possibility of such transmutation, I certainly do feel constrained to believe, considering that I have heard and read of cases which admit of no manner of doubt, and in which such transmutation is attested by the most authentic and trustworthy witnesses (such as Dr. Kiffler, Helmont, Scotus, &c.), as having really taken place. I am especially thinking of that wonderful experiment of metallic transformation which was achieved at Prague, in the presence of the German Emperor Ferdinand III., when, by means of one grain of the Tincture, three pounds of Mercury were changed into the best gold; for that event was commemorated by a medal struck at the Imperial Mint. But though I firmly believe in the possibility of such a transmutatory Tincture, I have never in the whole course of my life come across any one who possessed it.

ARTIST ELIAS.

You are quite right in what you say, albeit your belief or unbelief could not make any difference to the truth

of our Art, just as a magnet would go on attracting steel, and rendering it magnetic by such contact, even if you did not credit it. It is also true that hitherto our secret has been rather hidden than revealed by those who have written about it in the obscurest of language. But you can no longer feel disposed to doubt that which you see with your own eyes; and here in this box you behold a large quantity of the true substance of the Sages. There! Examine it.

PHYSICIAN.

Is this yellow, sulphureous, glassy substance really and truly the Philosopher's Stone? Did you prepare it yourself? Surely you are hoaxing me!

ARTIST ELIAS.

No, indeed; you now hold the most precious of mundane treasures in your hand; and I myself prepared it from beginning to end. If you can take me to a room where we shall be more secret, I will show you some gold obtained through its means (and having been ushered into the state parlour, he produced the five medals described above). These (said he) I keep in memory of my Master.

PHYSICIAN.

So you had a Master from whom you learned the glorious secret! How wonderful that I should at this moment be holding the true substance in my hands! Can you not give me a small piece of it, just enough to transmute four grains of lead into gold, so that I may be able to test the truth of your statement? Do give me a piece, at least as large as a grain of mustard seed, and let me make the trial! It would be a great kindness.

ARTIST ELIAS.

I admit that a certain stranger once instructed me both as to the possibility of this Art, and in its methods of procedure. But I cannot give you even a small fragment of my Tincture, though you offered me this room full of ducats; not because the substance is so precious in my eyes, but for another momentous reason which I may not reveal. Indeed, if fire could consume fire, I should at once throw the whole of this Tincture on the hearth. I will, however, return to you after the lapse of three weeks, and shew you some beautiful experiments which will both surprise and delight you. If by that time I shall have obtained leave to do so, I will also satisfy your curiosity by performing in your presence a change of lead into gold. In the meantime, I bid you good-bye, and warn you not to invest too much of your substance in the pursuit of this Art, as it will all turn to ashes.

PHYSICIAN.

I am deeply obliged to you for your kindness in coming to me, and shewing me this Stone; but you can hardly expect me to be satisfied with the mere sight of it. I am one of those whose souls are always athirst for knowledge; and I believe that if our first parent Adam, who lost Paradise by touching the forbidden fruit, were alive at the present day, he would once more risk the happiness of his life in order to become possessed of the "golden apples from the garden of Atlas." I thank you most heartily, however, for comforting me with the prospect of your return in three weeks. I will endeavour to spend the interval in strict obedience to your wise and kindly counsel; but you may easily suppose that the feeling uppermost in my mind will be one of eager hope and longing for the fulfilment of your promise. I also thank you for the

proof of your confidence involved in making yourself known to me as an adept of this Art. If the secret which you have entrusted to my safe keeping, were, by any accident, to come to the ears of a tyrannical prince or noble, would you be terrified by his threats into betraying it?

ARTIST ELIAS.

I have never made this secret known to anyone except to. yourself and one good old man. Nor must any human being hear or see the like in future. But if any prince or king were to cast me into prison, or put me to the rack, he would not be able to extract a single syllable of direct or indirect information from me by the most cruel tortures which he could devise; not even death itself would make me shrink from the path of duty, or become disloyal to my trust.

PHYSICIAN.

Are there any Alchemistic writers that are more easily understood than the rest, or who can at least be warranted to possess a real knowledge of those things wherein they undertake to instruct others?

ARTIST.

I do not read many of these books; but of all the writers on Alchemy whose works I have studied, I have found Sendivogius, the Cosmopolitan, to be the most trustworthy; also Basilius, in his twelve Keys. Truth has chosen the obscure style of Sendivogius for her hiding-place, if you could only discover her—just as our Substance is really and truly hidden and concealed in the outward bodies of all metals and minerals.

PHYSICIAN.

Accept once more my warmest thanks for all your kindness and friendly counsel. I do indeed believe that, as you say, the essences of metals are hidden in their outward bodies, as the kernel is hidden in the nut. Every earthly body, whether animal, vegetable, or mineral, is the habitation and terrestrial abode of that celestial spirit, or influence, which is its principle of life and growth. The secret of Alchemy is the destruction of the body, which enables the Artist to get at, and utilize for his own purposes, the living soul. But what man is sufficient to search out this wonderful secret?

ARTIST ELIAS.

You have spoken truly, and judged rightly concerning the natural destruction of things; and if you find grace in the sight of God, He will commission either me or some other adept of our Art to unfold to you the right way of destroying the outward bodies of metals and seizing the inward, vital, life-giving soul. This gracious gift, I say, God may bestow on you sooner than you think, in answer to devout and earnest prayer. Once more, farewell, and rest assured that I will always remain your friend. I cherish a fond hope that I shall soon see you again, in a flourishing state of health.

With these words he departed; and I have already told you how after three weeks he came back and gave me a small piece of the transmutatory Tincture. But since our second parting I have neither set eyes on him, nor heard either of him or from him.

He has, however, left deeply seated in my heart the conviction that through metals and out of metals purified by highly refined and spiritualized metals there may be prepared the living gold and quicksilver of the Sages, which bring both metals and human bodies to perfection. If my friend had condescended to give me one or two practical hints as to the best method of proceeding in this Magistry, I might have discovered the grand secret of collecting the rays of the Sun and Moon in their own proper womb, whereby their power of metallic transmutation by magnetic sympathy might have been brought out. Thus I might have obtained the red seed which transmutes into gold, and the white seed which transmutes into silver. For the Artist Elias told me that the Chalybs of Sendivogius was that true Mercurial metallic humour which—without the aid of any corrosive—would suffice to separate the fixed rays of the Sun and Moon from their body, and to render them volatile and Mercurial for the dry philosophical Tincture which he shewed me, and the efficacy of which I subsequently experienced. This is the same method by which metals are still being produced day by day in the bowels of the earth, and stones developed, in their different saline wombs, out of the spiritual tingent sulphureous seed. . . . Metallic sulphur mixed with saltpetre, may be converted, by gentle heat, first into solid earth, then into air, then into limpid water, and then into glass of a most beautiful colour, and of a penetrativeness superior to that of fire—just as the chicken is developed out of the apparently lifeless egg by gentle heat. Between the different metals there exists a sympathy such as that between the magnet and steel, gold and quicksilver, silver and copper; and this sympathy is the *rationale* of the transmutation of metals. On the other hand, there are also metallic antipathies, such as that of lead to tin, of iron to gold, of lead to mercury—antipathies which have their counterpart in the animal and vegetable worlds. An accurate and comprehensive knowledge of these sympathies and antipathies is the one great qualification of every man who aspires to be a Master of this Art.

In making known to you all that I have seen and experienced, I am only following the maxim of Seneca, who said that he desired knowledge chiefly that he might impart it to others. If anyone doubts the truth of my statements, let him but live a pious and Christ-like life here below, and he will learn the truth of all things in the new Jerusalem above. That a share of this glory may be vouchsafed to you and him, is the prayer of

Your faithful and loving servant,  
JOHN FREDERICK HELVETIUS, M.D.

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# MAGNALIA NATURAE, PRAECIPUE QUOAD USUS HUMANOS

[Tr: "The Wonderful Works of Nature, in Particular Regard to Human Uses"]

The prolongation of life.  
The restitution of youth in some degree.  
The retardation of age.  
The curing of diseases counted incurable.  
The mitigation of pain.  
More easy and less loathsome purgings.  
The increasing of strength and activity.  
The increasing of ability to suffer torture or pain.  
The altering of complexions, and fatness and leanness.  
The altering of statures.  
The altering of features.  
The increasing and exalting of the intellectual parts.  
Versions of bodies into other bodies.  
Making of new species.  
Transplanting of one species into another.  
Instruments of destruction, as of war and poison.  
Exhilaration of the spirits, and putting them in good disposition.  
Force of the imagination, either upon another body, or upon the body itself.  
Acceleration of time in maturations.  
Acceleration of time in clarifications.  
Acceleration of putrefaction.  
Acceleration of decoction.  
Acceleration of germination.  
Making rich composts for the earth.  
Impressions of the air, and raising of tempests.  
Great alteration; as in induration, emollition, &c.  
Turning crude and watry substances into oily and unctuous substances.  
Drawing of new foods out of substances not now in use.  
Making new threads for apparel; and new stuffs, such as paper, glass, &c.  
Natural divinations.  
Deceptions of the senses.  
Greater pleasures of the senses.  
Artificial minerals and cements.

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# **Metamorphosis of Metals**

by

**Eirenaeus PHILALETHES**

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## Chapter I

### Of the Claims of our Art, its Students, and its Method

All men who devote their lives to the study of any art, or to any kind of occupation, have before their eyes, as the aim of their efforts, perfection in the thing which they pursue. But only few attain to the goal of their wishes: there are many architects, but few masters of the art of architecture; many students of medicine, but few men like Hippocrates or Galen; many mathematicians, but few proficient like Archimedes; many poets, but few worthy to rank with Homer. Yet, even men who have nothing more than a respectable knowledge of their calling, are capable of being useful to society.

Among those who devote themselves to the transmutation of metals, however, there can be no such thing as mediocrity of attainment. A man who studies this Art, must have either everything or nothing. An Alchemist who knows only half his craft, reaps nothing but disappointment and waste of time and money; moreover, he lays himself open to the mockery of those who despise our Art. Those, indeed, who succeed in reaching the goal of the Magistry, have not only infinite riches, but the means of continued life and health. Hence it is the most popular of all human pursuits. Anyone who has read a few "Receipts" claims the title of a Sage, and conceives the most extravagant hopes; and, in order to give themselves the appearance of very wise men indeed, such persons immediately set themselves to construct furnaces, fill their labora

tories with stills and alembics, and approach the work with a wonderful appearance of profundity. They adopt an obscure jargon, speak of the first matter of the metals, and discuss with a learned air the rotation of the elements, and the marriage of Gabritius with Beya. In the meantime, however, they do not succeed in bringing about any metamorphosis of the metals, except that of their gold and silver into copper and bronze.

When captious despisers of our Art see this, they draw from such constant failures the conclusion that our Art is a combination of fiction and imposture; whilst those who have ruined themselves by their folly confirm this suspicion by preying on the credulity of others, pretending to have gained some skill by the loss of their money. In this way the path of the beginner is beset with difficulties and pestilent delusions of every kind; and, through the fault of these swindlers, who give themselves such wonderful airs of profundity and learning, our Art itself has fallen into utter disrepute, though these persons, of course, know nothing whatever about it. The beginner finds it extremely difficult to distinguish between the false and the true in this vast Labyrinth of Alchemy. Bernard of Trevisa warns him to eschew like the plague these persons who hold out so many vain and empty promises; while I have written this Treatise for the guidance of the blind, and the instruction of the erring. I wish, in the first place, to clear our Art from the slanders which have been cast upon it, then to describe the qualifications of its students and its methods of procedure. After these prefatory explanations, I will gird myself to a description of the Art itself.

Before I say anything else, I would record my most earnest protest against that method of reasoning by which the deceptions of certain wretched sophists are laid to the charge of this science. The wickedness of some of its lying professors can prove nothing either for or against its genuineness. Such a position could be made good only

by arguments based on natural relations; but such arguments it is impossible to find. The light of Nature is too bright to be darkened by these obscurists. I hope my Book will shew that the Transmutation of Metals, from an imperfect to a perfect state, is a real and true achievement, and that by the cooperation of Nature and Art. The only thing that distinguishes one metal from another, is its degree of maturity, which is, of course, greatest in the most precious metals; the difference between gold and lead is not one of substance, but of digestion; in the baser metal the coction has not been such as to purge out its metallic impurities. If by any means this superfluous impure matter could be organically removed from the baser metals, they would become gold and silver. So miners tell us that lead has in many cases developed into silver in the bowels of the earth; and we contend that the same effect is produced in a much shorter time by means of our Art. It is a fact that the Mercury which is generated in the bowels of the earth, is the common substance of all metals --- since this Mercury will enter into combination with every kind of metal --- which could not be the case if it were not naturally akin to them all. Mercury is a water that will mix with nothing that is not of the same nature. By Art, the handmaid of Nature, Mercury can be so successively concocted with all metals, that one and the same under the same colour and flux, may subalternately shew and express the true temperature and properties of them all. Moreover, all metals are capable of being resolved into running Mercury --- and surely this could not be if it were not their common substance. Again, the Mercury of lead may become that of iron, the Mercury of iron that of copper; while the Mercury of tin may even be transmuted into that of silver and gold --- a fact which triumphantly demonstrates the substantial affinity of all the metals. From antimony, too, a good Mercury is obtained, which some of our Artists are able to change into metallic mercury. It is also a well-established fact that the Mercury gained from any metallic or mineral body possesses the properties of assimilating common Mercury to its own nature; thus common Mercury may become that of all metals in turn. Do not these arguments clearly shew that there is one Mercury, and that in the various metals it is only differentiated according to their different degrees of digestion or purity? I do not see how these arguments can be answered. It is possible indeed that some dull person may allege in refutation of our reasoning his inability to accomplish those chemical transformations on which it is based; but such operators would be vindicating too great an honour for their ignorance if they claimed to advance it as an argument against the truth of our Art. They must not make their own little understandings the standard or measure of the possibilities of Nature. At any rate, my word is as good as theirs (and better, since they can never prove a negative), and I do most positively and solemnly assert that I have with my own hands performed every one of the experiments which I have described; and I know many others whose experience has shewn these things to be true. How can our opponents hope to prevail against eye-witnesses by bare negation? My testimony is borne out by the experience of such men as Albertus, Raymund, Riplaeus, Flamellus, Morienus, and a host of others. I confess that the transformations of which I have spoken are not easy to accomplish, but whoever has the Key of our Art can unlock all gates, and has power over all the secrets of Nature. But this Key is possessed only by those who have both a theoretical and a practical knowledge of natural processes. I could here reckon up divers mutations of metals, as, for instance, Mars into Venus, by the acid stalagma of vitriol, Mercury into Saturn, Saturn into Jupiter, Jupiter into Lune, which operations, indeed, many vulgar chemists (far enough from the top of the art) know how to perform. I might also add what is known only to a few philosophers, that there is a secret substance intermediate between metals and minerals the mixed heavenly virtues of which produce a certain metal without a name, which is, strictly speaking, not a metal at all, but a Chaos, or Spirit, for it is all volatile: from this all metals can be

educated without transmutatory Elixir, even gold, silver, and mercury. It is called Chalybs by the author of the "New Light," and it is the true key and first principle of our Art. What though the Sages have hidden all these things, and set them forth parabolically for the true sons of knowledge? Are they any the less true for that reason?... All that is wanted for the perfect development of an imperfect substance, is the gentle, digestive action of a homogeneous agent. This agent is gold, as highly matured as natural and artificial digestion can make it, and a thousand times more perfect than the common metal of that name. Gold, thus exalted, radically penetrates, tinges, and fixes metals. This scientific fact we may illustrate in the following manner. If you take six pounds of silver, and gild it with a single ounce of gold, you may afterwards draw out the silver into threads of the greatest fineness, and still distinctly perceive in each thread the brilliancy of gold. If then this dead, bodily, and earthy metal (which, as a body, of course, has no power to enter another body) can produce so wonderful an effect, does it seem incredible that the spirit of this gold, which can enter and animate the bodies of other metals, should transform them into its own nature? If we had this spiritual tincture, is it not clear that it would do inwardly what the body of the gold is seen to do outwardly? Remember that our Tincture is the Quintessence of gold, and infinitely more perfect than the mere body of gold can ever be; and that it has, therefore, an infinitely greater power of diffusing its essential quality. If gold thus spiritually enters another metal, it will clearly assimilate it to its own nature. The method of this spiritual ingestion we shall describe further on. Let us only add in this place, where we are discussing the rationale of metallic transmutation, that seed is the perfection of any seed-bearing substance; that which has no seed is altogether imperfect. It is, then, as the poet sings: "Gold contains the seeds of gold, though they be deeply hidden." Gold is not only perfect, but the most perfect thing of its kind (ie., of metals). If gold has seed, it must be contained in water, which is the habitation of all spirits, seed being a certain spiritual means of conserving any species. If gold is to be dissolved for the purpose of educating its seed, the dissolution will have to take place by means of this same metallic water. When this dissolution takes place, the gold puts off its earthly form, and assumes a watery form. Now, gold being both the starting point and the goal in the whole of this generative process, it is clear that all intermediate operations must be of a homogeneous character, ie., they must consist in gradual modifications of this seed of gold. The processes of our Art must begin with the dissolution of gold; they must terminate in a restoration of the essential quality of gold. But as the negative can never become the positive, the final form of our gold must be essentially different from its initial one. The final form is so much more noble than the initial one as fire is more subtle and spiritual than earth. What I have written is enough for the faithful student of our Art; and to its hostile and carping critics this book is not addressed. Therefore, I will now go on to add a word or two about the qualifications of those who should study this noble science. Our Art has fallen into disrepute, as I have said, through the stupidity and dishonesty of many of its professors. They are ignorant mechanics who, not having skill and brains enough for an honest trade, must needs meddle with our Art, and, of course, soon lose all they possess. Others, again are only just less ignorant than these persons; they are in too great a hurry to make gold before they have mastered even the rudiments of natural science; of course they fail, spend all they have, borrow money from their friends, amuse themselves and others with hopes of infinite wealth, learn to talk a barbarous semiphilosophical jargon, and afford a capital handle to those who have an interest in abusing our Art. Again, there are others who really have a true knowledge of the secret, but who grudge others the light which has irradiated their own path; and who therefore write about it in hopelessly puzzling language, which the perplexed beginner cannot possibly understand. To this class belong Geber, Arnold, and Lullius, who

would have done much better service to the student, if they had never dipped pen in ink. The consequence is that every one who takes up this study at once finds himself lost in a most perplexing labyrinth of falsehood and uncertainty, in which he has no clue. I will therefore try to give him some sound advice as to the best way of accomplishing his object.

In the first place, let him carry on his operations with great secrecy in order that no scornful or scurrilous person may know of them; for nothing discourages the beginner so much as the mockery, taunts, and well-meant advice of foolish outsiders. Moreover, if he does not succeed, secrecy will save him from derision; if he does succeed, it will safeguard him against the persecution of greedy and cruel tyrants. In the second place, he who would succeed in the study of this Art, should be persevering, industrious, learned, gentle, good-tempered, a close student, and neither easily discouraged nor slothful; he may work in co-operation with one friend, not more, but should be able to keep his own counsel; it is also necessary that he should have a little capital to procure the necessary implements etc., and to provide himself with food and clothing while he follows this study, so that his mind may be undistracted by care and anxiety. Above all, let him be honest, God-fearing, prayerful, and holy. Being thus equipped, he should study Nature, read the books of genuine Sages, who are neither impostors nor jealous churls, and study them day and night; let him not be too eager to carry out every idea practically before he has thoroughly tested it, and found it to be in harmony not only with the teaching of all the Sages, but - also of Nature herself. Not until then let him gird himself for the practical part of the work, and let him constantly modify his operations until he sees the signs which are described by the Sages. Nor let him despair though he take many false steps; for the greatest philosophers have learned most by their mistakes. For his guidance in these operations he will find all the light he requires in the following treatises.

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## Chapter II

### **Of the Origin of this Art and its Writers; its Fundamental Metallic Principles, and the Gradual Production of Metals and Minerals**

Hermes, surnamed Trismegistus, is generally regarded as the father of this Art; but there are different opinions with regard to his identity. Some say he was Moses; all agree that he was a very clear-sighted philosopher, the first extant author on the subject, and was also of Egyptian extraction. Others say that Enoch invented the Art, and, before the coming of the Flood described it on the so-called emerald tables, which were afterwards found by Hermes in the valley of Hebron. Many assert that it was known to Adam, who revealed it to Seth; that Noah carried the secret with him into the Ark, and that God revealed it to Solomon. But I do not agree with those who claim for our Art a mystical origin, and thus only make it ridiculous in the eyes of a scornful world. If it is founded on the eternal verities of Nature, why need I trouble my head with the problem whether this or that antediluvian personage had a knowledge of it? Enough for me to know that it is now true and possible, that it has been exercised by the initiated for many centuries, and under the most distant latitudes; it may also be observed that though most of these write in an obscure, figurative, allegorical, and altogether perplexing style, and though some of them have actually mixed falsehood with truth, in order to confound the ignorant, yet they, though existing in many series of ages, differing in tongue and nation, have not diversely handled one operation, but do all exhibit a most marvellous and striking agreement in regard to the main features of their teaching --- an agreement which is absolutely inexplicable, except on the supposition that our Art is something more than a mere labyrinth of perplexing words. Our Art is most plainly and straightforwardly expounded by Bernard of Trevisa, Ripley the English man, Flamellus the Frenchman, Sendivogius, the author of the "New Light," the anonymous author of the "Arcanum of Hermes," who also wrote *Enchiridion Physicae Restituae*, and "The Ladder of Philosophers," the great "Rosary," the "Child's Play," the Tract of Dionysius Zachary, the works of Morienus, the works of Egidius de Vadis, Augurellus' poem entitled "Goldmaking," the works of Peter Bonus of Ferrara, and the "Abridged Rosary." Let the student procure one or more of these, and similar genuine works on Alchemy, and let him study the secrets of Nature by the light which they throw upon it. He will find a knowledge of natural science, and more particularly of mineralogy, indispensable for his purpose.

All philosophers tell us that there are four elements, which compose all things, and, by means of their diverse combination, produce various forms. But the truth is that there are only three elements, i.e., those which of their own nature are cold --- air, water, and earth. The defect of heat which we perceive in them is in proportion to their distance from the sun. Fire I do not acknowledge as an element. There is no fire, except the common fire which burns on the hearth; and its heat is essentially destructive. The heat there is in things is the product either of light, or motion, or life, or alterative processes. Fire is not an element, but a robber that preys on the products of the four elements; it is a violent corruptive motion caused by the clashing of two active principles. Thus, we see that it is an operation of two other substances, not a substance in itself --- a result of the active co-operation of a comburent and a combustible. The nature and characteristic quality of the three elements is cold, and they possess heat only as an accident... Nor is it true that objects are formed by a mixture of these three elements; for dissimilar things can never really unite, seeing

that union is a complete mixture and concretion of the smallest atoms or molecules of two substances. But such a mixture is impossible in the case of two dissimilar matters, as, for instance, between water and earth (or water and wine); they admit of being separated at any time on account of the disproportion of their smallest particles. It may be said that for the sake of union the grosser element becomes as subtle as the other; but if this were the case, if for the purpose of union water became as subtle as air, that would simply mean that water became air, an assumption which would thus fail to prove the possibility of an amalgamation of water and air. Is it not a simpler and more credible supposition that only water or air, as the case may be, enters into the composition of any given object? But if any one still persists in maintaining this permutation of the elements (which, after all, would only mean that all things consist of air) -- let me ask the humble question --- by the activity of what agent they are so transmuted? Moreover, one would also be glad to enquire what is the use of this permutation of earth into water, and of water into air? What can earth converted into water, or water converted into air, perform, that could not be just as well accomplished by simple unchanged water or air? Surely, Nature does nothing in vain: I but here would be a difficult and wasteful process of transmutation constantly going on, which is not calculated to serve any useful purpose whatsoever. If it be said that earth rarefied into water is like water, yet not exactly water, my answer is that this is a mere quibble about words, and that if the rarefied earth is only like water, and not really water, it cannot possibly combine with it in its smallest particles; so nothing is gained by this hypothesis. Hence we may conclude that all things derive their origin from one element, which can be neither earth nor air. This I could prove at great length if I were not cramped for space. It follows, then, that water must be the first principle of all things, *i.e.*, of all concrete bodies in this world; earth is the fundamental element in which all bodies grow and are preserved; air is the medium into which they grow, and by means of which the celestial virtues are communicated to them. The seed of all things has been placed by God in water. This seed some exhibit openly, like vegetables, some keep in their kidneys, like animals; some conceal in the depths of their essential being, like metals. The seed is stirred into action by its form (*i.e.*, a certain appropriate celestial influence) coagulates the material water, and passes through a series of fermentative processes (fermentation being the principle of all transmutation), until it has produced that for the production of which it was specially suited. If the seed is metallic, there; generated from it first a dry liquid, which does not wet the hand *viz.*, Mercury, the mother of all metals. Mercury may be described as the true first matter of metals; for not until the elemental water has become Mercury can it be affirmed with any degree of certainty that a metal or mineral must result from it. Water is, in itself, potentially the seed of either an animal vegetable, or mineral; but Mercury is metallically differentiated water, *i.e.*, it is water passed into that stage of development, in which it can no longer produce anything but mineral substances. Mercury, then, is the common seed of gold, silver, copper, tin iron, lead, etc.; their difference is only to be sought in the degree of their digestion. The digestive is not any fat sulphur which is brought to bear on them from without; but Mercury contains within itself the active principle of its development, *viz.*, the inward heat due to celestial influences, causing vitality, and dependent on the fitness of the womb. These heavenly influences are at work throughout the world; but their exact mode of action is determined by the potential nature of the seed; if the inward life be metallic, the course of its development by means of outward agents will also be metallic. Still Mercury develops only where these outward influences (celestial and terrestrial) can be brought to bear. In every other place it will appear a cold, dead, and lifeless substance. But in the centre of its nativity it is quickened by the action of celestial influences, conveyed to it through the medium of air, whence

results heat, wherewith life is necessarily associated. Now, the womb in which this Mercury is placed, is either more, less, or not at all suited to it; and according to the different degrees of this fitness, the substance either remains altogether stationary, or is more or less perfectly developed; imperfection of development yields the imperfect metals, while by means of perfect development are produced silver and gold; but all metals, though differentiated by the degree of their digestion or maturity, have the same first substance, *viz.*, Mercury. The dross and impurities which are largely found in the base metals, form no part of the original Mercury but are added afterwards through some flaw in the process of coagulation, or through the impurity of the place or womb in which their metallic generation (fermentation) takes place. But I will now go on to deal with the special subject of this Treatises, *viz.*, . the renovation or multiplication of gold and silver.

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## Chapter III

### **Of the Generation of Gold and Silver from the Mercurial Substance, and the Possibility of bringing Imperfect Metals to the same State of Perfection**

To the aforesaid source (Mercury) we trace the birth of gold, and of its sister, silver; they represent this substance brought to perfection by means of digestion. Perfection is of two kinds, inchoative or complete, partial or entire. Complete perfection (the complete digestion of all crudities and elimination of all impurities) is the ultimate aim of Nature; and she has reached it in our gold, which with its brilliancy lights up the whole earth. Inchoative perfection may be so named, not absolutely but relatively, when compared with essentially imperfect bodies. Those bodies are formally or essentially imperfect in the composition of which the impure predominates over the pure, so that they could never of themselves (by natural development attain perfection; this is the case with all metals except gold and silver. But whenever the pure is freed from the corruptive tyranny of the impure, and obtains the mastery over it, we have inchoative perfection, though the development of the body may be still incomplete. These crudities and impurities do not originally belong to the metallic substance, and are very well capable of being separated from it; if they are so purged off before coagulation, we get a perfect metal. But even if they are coagulated together with the Mercury, it is still possible to separate them from it, and thus to perfect the Mercury. It is on this possibility that our Art is based; and its business is to perform this separation. The base metals contain the same mercury as gold; if we can free this Mercury from the impurities which hinder its development, it must also go on to perfection, *i.e.*, become gold. If we could find some separating agent which would perform this office for the impure minerals, it would also be a digestive, *i.e.*, it would quicken the inward metallic digestion of the long-entombed Mercury. Such a separant is our divine Arcanum, which is the heavenly spirit of water with fiery penetrative power. Compared with common gold, it is what the soul is in comparison of the body; and having attained the highest degree of corporeal fixity, it takes up the Mercury of the base metals into its own nature, and protects it from the fire while the impurities are being burnt up. The Mercury of the base metals (unlike the Mercury of gold), if exposed to the fire without such protection, would not be able to encounter the searching ordeal, but (having no cohesion with its impure body and possessing no fixity in itself) would simply evaporate, and leave the impurities to be burned. But our Arcanum, being both a spiritual and a homogeneous substance, is capable of entering into a perfect atomic union with the imperfect metals, of taking up into its own nature that which is like to it, and of imparting to this Mercury its own fixity, and protecting it from the fire, so when the fire has burnt up all the impurities, that which is left is, of course, pure gold or silver, according to the quality of the Medicine -- which from that time forward is (like all other gold and silver) capable of resisting the most searching ordeal. So you see we do not, as is sometimes said, profess to create gold and silver, but only to find an agent which --- on account of its homogeneity and spirituality --- is capable of entering into an intimate (atomic) and maturing union with the Mercury of the base metals. And we contend that our Elixir is calculated, by the intense degree of its fixity and colour, to impart these qualities to any homogeneous substance which does not possess them.

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## Chapter IV

### Of the Seed of Gold; and Whether Other Metals have Seed

Seed is the means of generic propagation given to all perfect things here below; it is the perfection of each body; and anybody that has no seed must be regarded as imperfect. Hence there can be no doubt that there is such a thing as metallic seed. If metals have seed, they certainly do not lose it in coagulation, which is the effect of perfection (or rather of perfect conditions). Now, in all seed-bearing things maturity means the perfect development of the seeds, and it stands to reason that metallic seed is therefore most certainly not destroyed by coagulation (the maturing process). If it be asked whether all metals have seed, my answer is, that the seed of all metals is the same; but that in some it is found nearer to, and in some further from the surface. All metallic seed is the seed of gold; for gold is the intention of Nature in regard to all metals. If the base metals are not gold, it is only through some accidental hindrance; they are all potentially gold. But, of course, this seed of gold is most easily obtainable from well-matured gold itself. Hence it would be lost labour to endeavour to obtain it from tin or lead by some laborious process, when it may be more readily obtained from gold itself. Remember that I am now speaking of metallic seed, and not of Mercury. Lead is to be multiplied, not in lead, but only in gold; for only when it attains its maturity as gold can its seed become fruitful. It may be admitted that silver has its own seed, as there is a white (as well as a red) multiplicative Tincture. Still, the White Tincture is really contained in the Red; and the seed of silver is nothing but a modification of that of gold. The whiteness of silver is the first degree of perfection, the yellowness of gold is the second, or highest degree. For the mother of our Stone (the silver of the Sages) is white, and imparts its whiteness to our gold, whence the offspring of these two parents first becomes white, like its mother, and then red with the royal blood of its father.

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## Chapter V

### Of the Virtue of Golden Seed, and Where it is Most Readily Found

In order that we may obtain this means of perfecting imperfect metals, we must remember that our Arcanum is gold exalted to the highest degree of perfection to which the combined action of Nature and Art can develop it. In gold, Nature has reached the term of her efforts; but the seed of gold is something more perfect still, and in cultivating it we must, therefore, call in the aid of Art. The seed of metals is hidden out of sight still more completely than that of animals; nevertheless, it is within the compass of our Art to extract it. The seed of animals and vegetables is something separate, and may be cut out, or otherwise separately exhibited; but metallic seed is diffused throughout the metal, and contained in all its smallest parts, neither can it be discerned from its body: its extraction is therefore a task which may well tax the ingenuity of the most experienced philosopher; the virtues of the whole metal have to be intensified, so as to convert it into the sperm of our seed, which, by circulation, receives the virtues of superiors and inferiors, then next becomes wholly form, or heavenly virtue, which can communicate this to others related to it by homogeneity of matter. In respect of the Stone, the whole of gold is its substance. The place in which the seed resides is --- approximately speaking --- water; for, to speak properly and exactly, the seed is the smallest part of the metal, and is invisible; but as this invisible presence is diffused throughout the water of its kind, and exerts its virtue therein, nothing being visible to the eye but water, we are left to conclude from rational induction that this inward agent (which is, properly speaking, the seed) is really there. Hence we call the whole of the water seed, just as we call the whole of the grain seed, though the germ of life is only a smallest particle of the grain. But the seminal life is not distinct from the remaining substance of metals; rather, it is inseparably mingled with the smallest parts of the body. Roughly speaking, however, we describe the whole of our golden water as the seed of gold, because this seminal virtue pervades it in a most subtle manner. This seminal virtue the ancient Sages called the hidden ferment, the poison, or the invisible fire; again, they said that it was fire, or that fire resided in the water; they distinguished between soul and spirit, of which the former is the medium, the latter the active virtue. If anyone wonders that we describe water as the seat of the seed, or the seminal spirit, let him remember that in the beginning the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters, *i.e.*, penetrated them with His heavenly quickening power. Thus, from the very first day of Creation, water has been the source and element of all things. For water alone contains the seeds of all things; yet in vegetables they are put forth in crude air; in animals they are preserved in the kidneys; while in minerals they are diffused throughout the whole substance; nevertheless, seed can never leave its original seat (*i.e.*, water). Things are preserved by that from which they derive their origin; for the cause of their origin being removed, the things which are the effect must also cease to exist; hence the multiplication and nutrition of all things is in water and through water. Vegetables are generated and nourished by the aqueous Teffas of the earth; animals by the liquid chyle; metals by the mercurial liquid. Animals preserve their seed in their kidneys, and in due time project it into the proper womb, where it is first moulded into a tender and very compacted foetus; this fetus is nourished by the liquid female menstruum, and thus grows until the time comes for it to be born. Then it is nourished with milk until it can bear stronger food; but this solid food does not become real nutriment until the stomach has converted it into a liquid chyle (as, for instance, bones in the stomach of the dog). In the same way the metals keep their perfect seed where it cannot be

seen; but even there it is preserved in water. Thence the Artist extracts it, puts it into its own proper womb, where it is cherished and grows, until (by means of corruption) it attains to its glorification. This is a most difficult operation, because the Metals, in which the seed is hidden, are so firmly and tightly compacted, and will not yield to violence, but only to a gentle and exquisitely subtle chemical process. Then I say to you, that there is a womb into which the gold (if placed therein) will, of its own accord, emit its seed, until it is debilitated and dies, and by its death is renewed into a most glorious King, who thenceforward receives power to deliver all his brethren from the fear of death.

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## Chapter VI

### Of the Mode and Means of Extracting this Seed

That the most beautiful things are the most difficult to produce is the experience of all mankind; and it is not to be wondered at, therefore, that the most glorious of sublunary operations is attended with a very great amount of difficulty. If any student of this Art is afraid of hard work, let him stop with his foot upon the threshold. When, indeed, the Father of Lights has entrusted the Key of the Art to any man, that which remains to be done is mere child's play; his eyes are ravished with the sight of the most glorious signs, until the time of harvest arrives. Without this, error and vexation will be the result. Therefore the wise man, before commencing the work, will be chiefly solicitous of knowing it by its marks. Let the sons of knowledge learn that the great object of our Art is the manifestation of the hidden seed of gold, which can be effected only by full and perfect volatilisation of that which is fixed, and the subsequent corruption of its particular form. To break up gold in this way is the most profound secret in the world. It is not brought about by corrosive depravation of the metal, nor by the usual method of dissolution, but by our philosophical solution of the metal into mercurial water, by means of a previous mercurial calcination (made by means of the agent ), which is produced through the subtle rotation and conversion of the elements; this calcination, again, is a mortification of our homogeneous liquid with the dry element belonging to it; afterwards the dry is so far revived by means of this same liquid, that the perfectly matured virtue, extracted from the substance by the solvent, is the cause of this calcination and solution. Here, then, there is no room for the action of a corrosive. Gold, which is the most solid, strong, fire-proof, and fixed of all substances, is to be volatilised, and no mere corrosive will accomplish such a perfect change of nature. The mighty agent required for this purpose must be homogeneous, amicable, and spiritual, i.e., it must be akin to the body (of gold), and yet strong enough to overcome it; and penetrate to its very core, still leaving each smallest part of the gold true gold. Gold does not easily give up its nature, and will fight for its life, but our agent is strong enough to overcome and kill it, and then it also has power to restore it to life, and to change the lifeless remains into a new pure body.

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## Chapter VII

### Of the First Agent or Womb, into Which our Seed should be Emitted and Where it is Matured

There remains to be found an Agent, by means of which the aforesaid operation may be performed. For this purpose we require a homogeneous water. For we have seen that the seed Of gold is concealed, and can remain effectual only in water, and this water must be homogeneous with the body, or else it could not penetrate all the thick integuments by means of which this seed is secured. For like generates like, that is to say, every agent that exercises a generative action upon anything, transmutes it (as far as possible) into its own nature. The Agent then must be akin to the body which is to be dissolved, and, moreover, perfectly pure from all dross or alloy. Again, whereas gold is fixed and solid, the Agent must be highly volatile and spiritual; gold is thick and gross, our Agent is subtle gold is dead our Agent is living and life-giving: in short, our Agent should have all those qualities which gold has not, and which it is to impart to the gold. Hence we conclude that Mercury alone is the true Key of our Art; for it is in truth the dry water described by the Sages, which, though liquid, does not wet the hands, nor anything else that does not belong to the unity of its substance. Mercury is our doorkeeper, our balm, our honey, oil, urine, may-dew, mother, egg, secret furnace, oven, true fire, venomous Dragon, Theriac, ardent wine, Green Lion, Bird of Hermes, Goose of Hermogenes, two-edged sword in the hand of the (Cherub that guards the Tree of Life, &c., &c.; it is our true, secret vessel, and the Garden of the Sages, in which our Sun rises and sets. It is our Royal Mineral, our triumphant vegetable Saturnia, and the magic rod of Hermes, by means of which he assumes any shape he likes. It is of this water that the Sage uses the words: "Let Alchemists boast as much as they like, but without this water the transmutation of metals is impossible. In Nature it is not such as we use it in our Art; it is a most common thing, and yet the most precious treasure of all the world... Therefore, Son of Knowledge, pay diligent heed to my words: Take that which in itself is most impure, the strumpet woman, purge it radically of all its uncleanness, and extract from it that which is most pure, namely, our menstruum (solvent), the Royal Diadem." Behold, I have told you in a few words that which ennobles the Sage, delivers him from error, and leads him to the most beautiful meadow of delights... The Arcanum which we seek is nothing but gold exalted to its highest degree of perfection, through the operation of Nature assisted by our Art. When the sperm hidden in the body of gold is brought out by means of our Art, it appears under the form of Mercury, whence it is exalted into the quintessence which is first white, and then, by means of continuous coction becomes red. All this is the work of our homogeneous Agent our Mercurial Ponticum, which is pure crystalline without transparency, liquid without humectation, and, in short, the true Divine water, which is not found above-ground, but is prepared by the hand of the Sage, with the cooperation of Nature, which we know, have seen, have made, and still possess which also we desire to make known to the true students of our Art, while it is our wish to hide it only from the unworthy.

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## Chapter VIII

### Concerning the Genealogy of the Mercury of the Sages, its Origin, Birth, and the Signs which Precede and Accompany It

Some boastful and arrogant sophists, who have read in books that our Mercury is not common Mercury, and who know that it is called by different names, do not blush to come forward as pretenders to a knowledge of this Art, and take upon themselves to describe this solvent as diaphanous and limpid, or as a metallic gum which is permiscible with metals, though they do not in reality know anything whatsoever about it. The same may be said of those who would extract our Mercury from herbs or other still more fantastic substances. These gentry know not why the Sages do not use Mercury such as is sold by apothecaries as their substance. They are aware of the fact, but are unacquainted with its causes; and the consequence is the idea which they have that anything which changes the nature of common Mercury, will convert it into that of the Sages. But in regard to these foolish persons, I have already expressed our opinion... All metals, as I demonstrated in the second chapter, have the same substantial principle, viz., Mercury. From this proposition it follows that the substance of common Mercury is homogeneous with that of all the other metals, and if the Mercury of the Sages be the homogeneous metallic water, it can differ from common Mercury only in respect of its purity and heat. The first substance of common Mercury is that of all other metals, viz., our Mercury. So long as it remains in the veins of the earth, in a place perfectly adapted to its generation, and is sheltered from crude air, it retains its inward movement and heat, which are the cause of all metallic development. But if it be marred by any accident, or if the place become unfit for it, the inward movement is stopped, and the germinal life chilled like that of an egg which a hen has left after sitting on it for some time. This is the reason why those who have attempted to digest common Mercury by means of artificial heat have failed as ludicrously as any one who should endeavour to incubate artificially an addled egg. The difference between the egg and the metal is that our Art is capable of making good the damage, but not by artificial means. We have a crude, undigested, frigid, unmatured metallic mass, which wants the form of our Mercury, for which it must exchange its own, if it is to become that which we seek. With this end in view, its deficiencies are twofold; its nature is clogged with superfluous foreign matter, and it does not possess the requisite spiritual virtue. Its superfluities consist of earthy leprosy, and aqueous dropsy. Its deficiency is one of true sulphureous heat, by means of which it would be enabled to purge off these superfluities. Water, indeed, is the womb, but no womb can receive a vital germ without warmth. Supplement your (common) Mercury, therefore, with the inward fire which it needs, and it will soon get rid of all superfluous dross. If you can do this, you have accomplished the great feat of the Sages. Jupiter has recovered his empire; the black clouds of Saturn are dispersed, and the sparkling fountain wells forth clear and pure. This substance will dissolve gold by means of a true philosophical solution, which is as different as can be from that foolish use of corrosives which only destroy the metallic nature. This Mercury (with) gold and silver naturally produces the Arcanum, or potable gold, as all adepts know and can testify.

Here I conclude this Tract, as all that remains to be said is set forth in a special (the next) Treatise.

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## NEW ATLANTIS.

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WE sailed from Peru, (where we had continued by the space of one whole year,) for China and Japan, by the South Sea;<sup>1</sup> taking with us victuals for twelve months; and had good winds from the east, though soft and weak, for five months' space and more. But then the wind came about, and settled in the west for many days, so as we could make little or no way, and were sometimes in purpose to turn back. But then again there arose strong and great winds from the south, with a point east; which carried us up (for all that we could do) towards the north: by which time our victuals failed us, though we had made good spare of them. So that finding ourselves in the midst of the greatest wilderness of waters in the world, without victual, we gave ourselves for lost men, and prepared for death. Yet we did lift up our hearts and voices to God above, who *showeth his wonders in the deep*; beseeching him of his mercy, that as in the beginning he discovered<sup>2</sup> the face of the deep, and

<sup>1</sup> The words "by the South Sea" are omitted in the translation.

<sup>2</sup> So in the original. If *discovered* be the right word, it must mean *removed the covering of* the face of the deep. But I think there must be some mistake. The Latin version has *quemadmodum in principio congregationes aquarum mandavit et Aridam apparere fecit*. The allusion is, no doubt, to Genes. i. 9.: "Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear."

brought forth dry land, so he would now discover land to us, that we might<sup>1</sup> not perish. And it came to pass that the next day about evening, we saw within a kenning before us, towards the north, as it were thick clouds, which did put us in some hope of land; knowing how that part of the South Sea was utterly unknown; and might have islands or continents, that hitherto were not come to light. Wherefore we bent our course thither, where we saw the appearance of land, all that night; and in the dawning of the next day, we might plainly discern that it was a land; flat to our sight, and full of boscage; which made it shew the more dark. And after an hour and a half's sailing, we entered into a good haven, being the port of a fair city; not great indeed, but well built, and that gave a pleasant view from the sea:<sup>2</sup> and we thinking every minute long till we were on land, came close to the shore, and offered to land. But straightways we saw divers of the people, with bastons in their hands, as it were forbidding us to land; yet without any cries or fierceness, but only as warning us off by signs that they made. Whereupon being not a little discomforted, we were advising with ourselves what we should do. During which time there made forth to us a small boat, with about eight persons in it; whereof one of them had in his hand a tipstaff of a yellow cane, tipped at both ends with blue, who came aboard our ship, without any show of distrust at all. And when he saw one of our number present himself somewhat afore the rest, he drew forth a little scroll of parchment,

<sup>1</sup> *mought* in the original; a form of the word frequently, though not uniformly, adopted by Bacon. I have always substituted *might*.

<sup>2</sup> *ex qua parte Mare spectabat, elegantiam magnam præ se tulit.* — *Lat vers.*



(somewhat yellower than our parchment, and shining like the leaves of writing tables, but otherwise soft and flexible,) and delivered it to our foremost man. In which scroll were written in ancient Hebrew, and in ancient Greek, and in good Latin of the School, and in Spanish, these words ; “ Land ye not, none of you ; and provide to be gone from this coast within sixteen days, except you have further time given you. Meanwhile, if you want fresh water, or victual, or help for your sick, or that your ship needeth repair, write down your wants, and you shall have that which belongeth to mercy.” This scroll was signed with a stamp of cherubins’ wings, not spread but hanging downwards, and by them a cross. This being delivered, the officer returned, and left only a servant with us to receive our answer. Consulting hereupon amongst ourselves, we were much perplexed. The denial of landing and hasty warning us away troubled us much ; on the other side, to find that the people had languages and were so full of humanity, did comfort us not a little. And above all, the sign of the cross to that instrument was to us a great rejoicing, and as it were a certain presage of good. Our answer was in the Spanish tongue ; “ That for our ship, it was well ; for we had rather met with calms and contrary winds than any tempests. For our sick, they were many, and in very ill case ; so that if they were not permitted to land, they ran danger of their lives.” Our other wants we set down in particular ; adding, “ that we had some little store of merchandise, which if it pleased them to deal for, it might supply our wants without being chargeable unto them.” We offered some reward in pistolets unto the servant, and a piece of crimson velvet to

be presented to the officer ; but the servant took them not, nor would scarce look upon them ; and so left us, and went back in another little boat which was sent for him.

About three hours after we had dispatched our answer, there came towards us a person (as it seemed) of place. He had on him a gown with wide sleeves, of a kind of water chamolet, of an excellent azure colour, far more glossy than ours ; his under apparel was green ; and so was his hat, being in the form of a turban, daintily made, and not so huge as the Turkish turbans ; and the locks of his hair came down below the brims of it. A reverend man was he to behold. He came in a boat, gilt in some part of it, with four persons more only in that boat ; and was followed by another boat, wherein were some twenty. When he was come within a flight-shot<sup>1</sup> of our ship, signs were made to us that we should send forth some to meet him upon the water ; which we presently did in our ship-boat, sending the principal man amongst us save one, and four of our number with him. When we were come within six yards of their boat, they called to us to stay, and not to approach farther ; which we did. And thereupon the man whom I before described stood up, and with a loud voice in Spanish, asked, "Are ye Christians?" We answered, "We were ;" fearing the less, because of the cross we had seen in the subscription. At which answer the said person lifted up his right hand towards heaven, and drew it softly to his mouth, (which is the gesture

<sup>1</sup> *spiculi jactum*. When archers try which can shoot furthest, they call it flight-shooting. The distance would be between 200 and 300 yards. Old Double, according to Justice Shallow, would have "carried you a forehand shaft a fourteen and fourteen and half;" that is, 284 or 294 yards. See Hen. IV. Part II. act 3. sc. 2.

they use when they thank God,) and then said: "If ye will swear (all of you) by the merits of the Saviour that ye are no pirates, nor have shed blood lawfully nor unlawfully within forty days past, you may have licence to come on land." We said, "We were all ready to take that oath." Whereupon one of those that were with him, being (as it seemed) a notary, made an entry of this act. Which done, another of the attendants of the great person, which was with him in the same boat, after his lord had spoken a little to him, said aloud; "My lord would have you know, that it is not of pride or greatness that he cometh not aboard your ship; but for that in your answer you declare that you have many sick amongst you, he was warned by the Conservator of Health of the city that he should keep a distance." We bowed ourselves towards him, and answered, "We were his humble servants; and accounted for great honour and singular humanity towards us that which was already done; but hoped well that the nature of the sickness of our men was not infectious." So he returned; and a while after came the notary to us aboard our ship; holding in his hand a fruit of that country, like an orange, but of colour between orange-tawney and scarlet, which cast a most excellent odour. He used it (as it seemeth) for a preservative against infection. He gave us our oath; "By the name of Jesus and his merits:" and after told us that the next day by six of the clock in the morning we should be sent to, and brought to the Strangers' House, (so he called it,) where we should be accommodated of things both for our whole and for our sick. So he left us; and when we<sup>1</sup> offered him

<sup>1</sup> So ed. 1635. Ed. 1629 has *he*.

some pistolets, he smiling said, "He must not be twice paid for one labour:" meaning (as I take it) that he had salary sufficient of the state for his service. For (as I after learned) they call an officer that taketh rewards, *twice paid*.

The next morning early, there came to us the same officer that came to us at first with his cane, and told us, "He came to conduct us to the Strangers' House; and that he had prevented the hour, because we might have the whole day before us for our business. For," said he, "if you will follow my advice, there shall first go with me some few of you, and see the place, and how it may be made convenient for you; and then you may send for your sick, and the rest of your number which ye will bring on land." We thanked him, and said, "That this care which he took of desolate strangers God would reward." And so six of us went on land with him: and when we were on land, he went before us and turned to us, and said,<sup>1</sup> "He was but our servant and our guide." He led us through three fair streets; and all the way we went there were gathered some people on both sides standing in a row; but in so civil a fashion, as if it had been not to wonder at us<sup>2</sup> but to welcome us; and divers of them, as we passed by them, put their arms a little abroad; which is their gesture when they bid any welcome. The Strangers' House is a fair and spacious house, built of brick, of somewhat a bluer colour than our brick; and with handsome windows, some of glass, some of a kind of cambric oiled. He brought us first into a fair parlour above stairs, and

<sup>1</sup> *et dixit, per humanè certè, &c.*

<sup>2</sup> *ut viderentur non tam ad otiosum spectaculum convenisse quam &c.*

then asked us, "What number of persons we were? And how many sick?" We answered, "We were in all (sick and whole) one and fifty persons, whereof our sick were seventeen." He desired us to have patience a little, and to stay till he came back to us; which was about an hour after; and then he led us to see the chambers which were provided for us, being in number nineteen: they having cast it (as it seemeth) that four of those chambers, which were better than the rest, might receive four of the principal men of our company, and lodge them alone by themselves; and the other fifteen chambers were to lodge us two and two together. The chambers were handsome and cheerful chambers, and furnished civilly. Then he led us to a long gallery, like a dorture,<sup>1</sup> where he showed us all along the one side (for the other side was but wall and window) seventeen cells, very neat ones, having partitions of cedar wood. Which gallery and cells, being in all forty, (many more than we needed,) were instituted as an infirmary for sick persons. And he told us withal, that as any of our sick waxed well, he might be removed from his cell to a chamber; for which purpose there were set forth ten spare chambers, besides the number we spake of before. This done, he brought us back to the parlour, and lifting up his cane a little, (as they do when they give any charge or command,<sup>2</sup>) said to us, "Ye are to know that the custom of the land requireth, that after this day and to-morrow, (which we give you for removing of your people from your ship,) you are to keep within doors

<sup>1</sup> Dormitory. The Latin translation has, *qualia solent esse dormitoria monachorum.*

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.*, any charge which they have received from superior authority -- (*quod in more illis erat quoties ministri mandata superiorum referunt*).



for three days. But let it not trouble you, nor do not think yourselves restrained, but rather left to your rest and ease. You shall want nothing, and there are six of our people appointed to attend you, for any business you may have abroad." We gave him thanks with all affection and respect, and said, "God surely is manifested in this land." We offered him also twenty pistolets; but he smiled, and only said; "What? twice paid!" And so he left us. Soon after our dinner was served in; which was right good viands, both for bread and meat:<sup>1</sup> better than any collegiate diet that I have known in Europe. We had also drink of three sorts, all wholesome and good; wine of the grape; a drink of grain, such as is with us our ale, but more clear; and a kind of cider made of a fruit of that country; a wonderful pleasing and refreshing drink. Besides, there were brought in to us great store of those scarlet oranges for our sick; which (they said) were an assured remedy for sickness taken at sea. There was given us also a box of small grey or whitish pills, which they wished our sick should take, one of the pills every night before sleep; which (they said) would hasten their recovery. The next day, after that our trouble of carriage and removing of our men and goods out of our ship was somewhat settled and quiet, I thought good to call our company together; and when they were assembled said unto them; "My dear friends, let us know ourselves, and how it standeth with us. We are men cast on land, as Jonas was out of the whale's belly, when we were as buried in the deep: and now we are on land, we are but between

<sup>1</sup> The translation has both for meat and *drink*; *tam respectu ciborum quam potus*: and in the next line but one, *Potus erat trium generum, &c.*

death and life; for we are beyond both the old world and the new; and whether ever we shall see Europe, God only knoweth. It is a kind of miracle hath brought us hither: and it must be little less that shall bring us hence. Therefore in regard of our deliverance past, and our danger present and to come, let us look up to God, and every man reform his own ways. Besides we are come here amongst a Christian people, full of piety and humanity: let us not bring that confusion of face upon ourselves, as to show our vices or unworthiness before them. Yet there is more. For they have by commandment (though in form of courtesy) cloistered us within these walls for three days: who knoweth whether it be not to take some taste of our manners and conditions? and if they find them bad, to banish us straightways; if good, to give us further time. For these men that they have given us for attendance may withal have an eye upon us. Therefore for God's love, and as we love the weal of our souls and bodies, let us so behave ourselves as we may be at peace with God, and may find grace in the eyes of this people." Our company with one voice thanked me for my good admonition, and promised me to live soberly and civilly, and without giving any the least occasion of offence. So we spent our three days joyfully and without care, in expectation what would be done with us when they were expired. During which time, we had every hour joy of the amendment of our sick; who thought themselves cast into some divine pool of healing, they mended so kindly and so fast.

The morrow after our three days were past, there came to us a new man that we had not seen before,

clothed in blue as the former was, save that his turban was white, with a small red cross on the top. He had also a tippet of fine linen. At his coming in, he did bend to us a little, and put his arms abroad. We of our parts saluted him in a very lowly and submissive manner; as looking that from him we should receive sentence of life or death. He desired to speak with some few of us: whereupon six of us only stayed, and the rest avoided the room. He said, "I am by office governor of this House of Strangers, and by vocation I am a Christian priest; and therefore am come to you to offer you my service, both as strangers and chiefly as Christians. Some things I may tell you, which I think you will not be unwilling to hear. The state hath given you licence to stay on land for the space of six weeks; and let it not trouble you if your occasions ask further time, for the law in this point is not precise; and I do not doubt but myself shall be able to obtain for you such further time as may be convenient. Ye shall also understand, that the Strangers' House is at this time rich, and much aforehand; for it hath laid up revenue these thirty-seven years; for so long it is since any stranger arrived in this part: and therefore take ye no care; the state will defray you all the time you stay; neither shall you stay one day the less for that. As for any merchandise ye have brought, ye shall be well used, and have your return either in merchandise or in gold and silver: for to us it is all one. And if you have any other request to make, hide it not. For ye shall find we will not make your countenance to fall by the answer ye shall receive. Only this I must tell you, that none of you must go above a *karan*" (that is with them a mile and



an half) "from the walls of the city, without especial leave." We answered, after we had looked awhile one upon another admiring this gracious and parent-like usage; "That we could not tell what to say: for we wanted words to express our thanks; and his noble free offers left us nothing to ask. It seemed to us that we had before us a picture of our salvation in heaven; for we that were awhile since in the jaws of death, were now brought into a place where we found nothing but consolations. For the commandment laid upon us, we would not fail to obey it, though it was impossible but our hearts should be inflamed to tread further upon this happy and holy ground." We added; "That our tongues should first cleave to the roofs of our mouths, ere we should forget either his reverend person or this whole nation in our prayers." We also most humbly besought him to accept of us as his true servants, by as just a right as ever men on earth were bounden; laying and presenting both our persons and all we had at his feet. He said; "He was a priest, and looked for a priest's reward: which was our brotherly love and the good of our souls and bodies." So he went from us, not without tears of tenderness in his eyes; and left us also confused with joy and kindness, saying amongst ourselves, "That we were come into a land of angels, which did appear to us daily and prevent us with comforts, which we thought not of, much less expected."

The next day, about ten of the clock, the governor came to us again, and after salutations said familiarly, "That he was come to visit us:" and called for a chair, and sat him down: and we, being some ten of us, (the rest were of the meaner sort, or else gone

abroad,) sat down with him. And when we were set, he began thus: "We of this island of Bensalem," (for so they call it in their language,) "have this; that by means of our solitary situation, and of the laws of secrecy which we have for our travellers, and our rare admission of strangers, we know well most part of the habitable world, and are ourselves unknown. Therefore because he that knoweth least is fittest to ask questions, it is more reason, for the entertainment of the time, that ye ask me questions, than that I ask you." We answered; "That we humbly thanked him that he would give us leave so to do: and that we conceived by the taste we had already, that there was no worldly thing on earth more worthy to be known than the state of that happy land. But above all," (we said,) "since that we were met from the several ends of the world, and hoped assuredly that we should meet one day in the kingdom of heaven, (for that we were both parts Christians,) we desired to know (in respect that land was so remote, and so divided by vast and unknown seas, from the land where our Saviour walked on earth,) who was the apostle of that nation, and how it was converted to the faith?" It appeared in his face that he took great contentment in this our question: he said, "Ye knit my heart to you, by asking this question in the first place; for it sheweth that you *first seek the kingdom of heaven*; and I shall gladly and briefly satisfy your demand.

"About twenty years after the ascension of our Saviour, it came to pass that there was seen by the people of Renfusa, (a city upon the eastern coast of our island,) within night, (the night was cloudy and

alm,) as it might be some mile into the sea, a great pillar of light; not sharp, but in form of a column or cylinder, rising from the sea a great way up towards heaven: and on the top of it was seen a large cross of light, more bright and resplendent than the body of the pillar. Upon which so strange a spectacle, the people of the city gathered apace together upon the sands, to wonder; and so after put themselves into a number of small boats, to go nearer to this marvellous sight. But when the boats were come within about sixty yards of the pillar, they found themselves all bound, and could go no further; yet so as they might move to go about, but might not approach nearer: so as the boats stood all as in a theatre, beholding this light as an heavenly sign.<sup>1</sup> It so fell out, that there was in one of the boats one of the wise men of the society of Salomon's House; which house or college (my good brethren) is the very eye of this kingdom; who having awhile attentively and devoutly viewed and contemplated 'this pillar and cross, fell down upon his face; and then raised himself upon his knees, and lifting up his hands to heaven, made his prayers in this manner:

“ Lord God of heaven and earth, thou hast vouchsafed of thy grace to those of our order, to know thy works of creation, and the secrets of them; and to discern (as far as appertaineth to the generations of men) between divine miracles, works of nature, works of art, and impostures and illusions of all sorts.<sup>2</sup> I do here acknowledge and testify before this people, that the thing which we now see before our eyes is thy

<sup>1</sup> *tanquam scenam cœlestem*, in the translation.

<sup>2</sup> *illusiones demonum, cum imposturis omnimodis.*

Finger and a true Miracle ; and forasmuch as we learn in our books that thou never workest miracles but to a divine and excellent end, (for the laws of nature are thine own laws, and thou exceedest them not but upon great cause,) we most humbly beseech thee to prosper this great sign, and to give us the interpretation and use of it in mercy ; which thou dost in some part secretly promise by sending it unto us.’

“ When he had made his prayer, he presently found the boat he was in moveable and unbound ; whereas all the rest remained still fast ; and taking that for an assurance of leave to approach, he caused the boat to be softly and with silence rowed towards the pillar. But ere he came near it, the pillar and cross of light brake up, and cast itself abroad, as it were, into a firmament of many stars ; which also vanished soon after, and there was nothing left to be seen but a small ark or chest of cedar, dry, and not wet at all with water, though it swam. And in the fore-end of it, which was towards him, grew a small green branch of palm ; and when the wise man had taken it with all reverence into his boat, it opened of itself, and there were found in it a Book and a Letter ; both written in fine parchment, and wrapped in sindons of linen. The Book contained all the canonical books of the Old and New Testament, according as you have them, (for we know well what the Churches with you receive) ; and the Apocalypse itself,<sup>1</sup> and some other books of the New Testament which were not at that time written, were nevertheless in the Book. And for the Letter, it was in these words :

<sup>1</sup> The original has a semicolon after “ itself,” which would seem to connect this clause with the last. But the translation (*Apocalypsis ipsa*) shows that it was meant to be the beginning of a new sentence.

“ ‘ I Bartholomew, a servant of the Highest, and Apostle of Jesus Christ, was warned by an angel that appeared to me in a vision of glory, that I should commit this ark to the floods of the sea. Therefore I do testify and declare unto that people where God shall ordain this ark to come to land, that in the same day is come unto them salvation and peace and good-will, from the Father, and from the Lord Jesus.’ ”

“ There was also in both these writings, as well the Book as the Letter, wrought a great miracle, conform to that of the Apostles in the original Gift of Tongues. For there being at that time in this land Hebrews, Persians, and Indians, besides the natives, every one read upon the Book and Letter, as if they had been written in his own language. And thus was this land saved from infidelity (as the remain of the old world was from water) by an ark, through the apostolical and miraculous evangelism of St. Bartholomew.” And here he paused, and a messenger came, and called him from us. So this was all that passed in that conference.

The next day, the same governor came again to us immediately after dinner, and excused himself, saying, “ That the day before he was called from us somewhat abruptly, but now he would make us amends, and spend time with us, if we held his company and conference agreeable.” We answered, “ That we held it so agreeable and pleasing to us, as we forgot both dangers past and fears to come, for the time we heard him speak; and that we thought an hour spent with him, was worth years of our former life.” He bowed himself a little to us, and after we were set again, he said; “ Well, the questions are on your part.” One



of our number said, after a little pause; "That there was a matter we were no less desirous to know, than fearful to ask, lest we might presume too far. But encouraged by his rare humanity towards us, (that could scarce think ourselves strangers, being his vowed and professed servants,) we would take the hardiness to propound it: humbly beseeching him, if he thought it not fit to be answered, that he would pardon it, though he rejected it." We said; "We well observed those his words, which he formerly spake, that this happy island where we now stood was known to few, and yet knew most of the nations of the world; which we found to be true, considering they had the languages of Europe, and knew much of our state and business; and yet we in Europe (notwithstanding all the remote discoveries and navigations of this last age,) never heard any of the least inkling or glimpse of this island. This we found wonderful strange; for that all nations have inter-knowledge<sup>1</sup> one of another either by voyage into foreign parts, or by strangers that come to them: and though the traveller into a foreign country doth commonly know more by the eye, than he that stayeth at home can by relation of the traveller; yet both ways suffice to make a mutual knowledge, in some degree, on both parts. But for this island, we never heard tell of any ship of theirs that had been seen to arrive upon any shore of Europe; no, nor of either the East or West Indies; nor yet of any ship of any other part of the world that had made return from them. And yet the marvel rested not in this. For the situation of it (as his lordship said) in the secret conclave of such a vast sea might cause it. But

<sup>1</sup> *enterknowledge* in the original.

then that they should have knowledge of the languages, books, affairs, of those that lie such a distance from them, it was a thing we could not tell what to make of; for that it seemed to us a condition and propriety of divine powers and beings, to be hidden and unseen to others, and yet to have others open and as in a light to them." At this speech the governor gave a gracious smile, and said; "That we did well to ask pardon for this question we now asked; for that it imported as if we thought this land a land of magicians, that sent forth spirits of the air into all parts, to bring them news and intelligence of other countries." It was answered by us all, in all possible humbleness, but yet with a countenance taking knowledge that we knew that he spake it but merrily, "That we were apt enough to think there was somewhat supernatural in this island; but yet rather as angelical than magical. But to let his lordship know truly what it was that made us tender and doubtful to ask this question, it was not any such conceit, but because we remembered he had given a touch in his former speech, that this land had laws of secrecy touching strangers." To this he said; "You remember it aright; and therefore in that I shall say to you I must reserve some particulars, which it is not lawful for me to reveal;—but there will be enough left to give you satisfaction.

"You shall understand (that which perhaps you will scarce think credible) that about three thousand years ago, or somewhat more, the navigation of the world, (specially for remote voyages,) was greater than at this day. Do not think with yourselves that I know not how much it is increased with you within these six-score years: I know it well: and yet I say greater

then than now; whether it was, that the example of the ark, that saved the remnant of men from the universal deluge, gave men confidence to adventure upon the waters; or what it was; but such is the truth. The Phœnicians, and especially the Tyrians, had great fleets. So had the Carthaginians, their colony, which is yet further west. Toward the east, the shipping of Egypt and of Palestina was likewise great. China also, and the great Atlantis (that you call America), which have now but junks and canoes,<sup>1</sup> abounded then in tall ships. This island (as appeareth by faithful registers of those times) had then fifteen hundred strong ships, of great content. Of all this there is with you sparing memory, or none; but we have large knowledge thereof.

“At that time, this land was known and frequented by the ships and vessels of all the nations before named. And (as it cometh to pass) they had many times men of other countries, that were no sailors, that came with them; as Persians, Chaldeans, Arabians; so as almost all nations of might and fame resorted hither; of whom we have some stirps and little tribes with us at this day. And for our own ships, they went sundry voyages, as well to your Straits, which you call the Pillars of Hercules,<sup>2</sup> as to other parts in the Atlantic and Mediterrane Seas; as to Paguin<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Canoe's* in the original.

<sup>2</sup> Hercules is called by Edrisi Dhoulcarnain. He says he lived in the time of Abraham, and has been confounded with Iscander Dhoulcarnain, or Alexander the two-horned. That the limits beyond which it is impossible to pass were set up by Dhoulcarnain gives the obvious explanation of the passage in Chaucer's *Troilus and Cressida*:—

“I am tyl God me bettre mynde sende,  
At Dulcarnon, right at my wyte's end.”

“qui interpretes mire torsit.” — *R. L. E.*

<sup>3</sup> Peking. It seems as if Bacon supposed that Peking was a sea-port. — *L. E.* [The translation adds *civitatem in Chinâ antiquissimam.*]



(which is the same with Cambaline<sup>1</sup>) and Quinzy,<sup>2</sup> upon the Oriental Seas, as far as to the borders of the East Tartary.

“At the same time, and an age after, or more, the inhabitants of the great Atlantis did flourish.<sup>3</sup> For though the narration and description which is made by a great man with you, that the descendants of Neptune planted there; and of the magnificent temple, palace, city, and hill; and the manifold streams of goodly navigable rivers, (which, as so many chains, environed the same site and temple); and the several degrees of ascent whereby men did climb up to the same, as if it had been a *scala cœli*; be all poetical and fabulous: yet so much is true, that the said country of Atlantis, as well that of Peru, then called Coya, as that of Mexico, then named Tyrambel, were mighty and proud kingdoms in arms, shipping, and riches: so mighty, as at one time (or at least within the space of ten years) they both made two great expeditions; they of Tyrambel through the Atlantic to the Mediterranean Sea; and they of Coya through the South Sea upon this our island. And for the former of these, which was into Europe, the same author amongst you (as it seemeth) had some relation from the Egyptian priest whom he

<sup>1</sup> Cambalu is the reading of the common text of Marco Polo. The word is properly Khambalik. It is the Tartar name for Peking. — *R. L. E.* [It is *Cambalu* in the translation; and in the English Bacon probably wrote *Cambalue*. — *J. S.*]

<sup>2</sup> The Quinsai of Marco Polo, now Hanchowfoo. — *R. L. E.*

<sup>3</sup> See Plato, *Critias*, p. 113., and *Timæus*, p. 25. Everything relating to the story of Atlantis has been collected by Humboldt, *Examen critique de l'Histoire de la Géographie*, &c., i. p. 167. Compare Martin, *Etudes sur le Timée*; and see Gesenius, *Monumenta Phœnicia*, for an account of a spurious Phœnician inscription, purporting to give the history of the destruction of Atlantis. It may be a question whether there be not some affinity between Atlantis and Homer's Phœacia. — *R. L. E.*

citeth. For assuredly such a thing there was. But whether it were the ancient Athenians that had the glory of the repulse and resistance of those forces, I can say nothing: but certain it is, there never came back either ship or man from that voyage. Neither had the other voyage of those of Coya upon us had better fortune, if they had not met with enemies of greater clemency. For the king of this island (by name Altabin) a wise man and a great warrior, knowing well both his own strength and that of his enemies, handled the matter so, as he cut off their land-forces from their ships; and entailed both their navy and their camp with a greater power than theirs, both by sea and land; and compelled them to render themselves without striking stroke: and after they were at his mercy, contenting himself only with their oath that they should no more bear arms against him, dismissed them all in safety. But the Divine Revenge overtook not long after those proud enterprises. For within less than the space of one hundred years, the great Atlantis was utterly lost and destroyed: not by a great earthquake, as your man saith, (for that whole tract is little subject to earthquakes,) but by a particular deluge or inundation; those countries having, at this day, far greater rivers and far higher mountains to pour down waters, than any part of the old world. But it is true that the same inundation was not deep; not past forty foot, in most places, from the ground: so that although it destroyed man and beast generally, yet some few wild inhabitants of the wood<sup>1</sup> escaped. Birds also were saved by flying to the high trees and

<sup>1</sup> The translation says, of the *mountains: silvestres habitatores quidam montium.*

woods. For as for men, although they had buildings in many places higher than the depth of the water, yet that inundation, though it were shallow, had a long continuance; whereby they of the vale that were not drowned, perished for want of food and other things necessary. So as marvel you not at the thin population of America, nor at the rudeness and ignorance of the people; for you must account your inhabitants of America as a young people; younger a thousand years, at the least, than the rest of the world; for that there was so much time between the universal flood and their particular inundation. For the poor remnant of human seed which remained in their mountains peopled the country again slowly, by little and little; and being simple and savage people, (not like Noah and his sons, which was the chief family of the earth,) they were not able to leave letters, arts, and civility to their posterity; and having likewise in their mountainous habitations been used (in respect of the extreme cold of those regions) to clothe themselves with the skins of tigers, bears, and great hairy goats, that they have in those parts; when after they came down into the valley, and found the intolerable heats which are there, and knew no means of lighter apparel, they were forced to begin the custom of going naked, which continueth at this day. Only they take great pride and delight in the feathers of birds, and this also they took from those their ancestors of the mountains, who were invited unto it by the infinite flights of birds that came up to the high grounds, while the waters stood below. So you see, by this main accident of time, we lost our traffic with the Americans, with whom of all others, in regard they

lay nearest to us, we had most commerce. As for the other parts of the world, it is most manifest that in the ages following (whether it were in respect of wars, or by a natural revolution of time,) navigation did every where greatly decay; and specially far voyages (the rather by the use of galleys,<sup>1</sup> and such vessels as could hardly brook the ocean,) were altogether left and omitted. So then, that part of intercourse<sup>2</sup> which could be from other nations to sail to us, you see how it hath long since ceased; except it were by some rare accident, as this of yours. But now of the cessation of that other part of intercourse, which might be by our sailing to other nations, I must yield you some other cause. For I cannot say (if I shall say truly,) but our shipping, for number, strength, mariners, pilots, and all things that appertain to navigation, is as great as ever: and therefore why we should sit at home, I shall now give you an account by itself: and it will draw nearer to give you satisfaction to your principal question.

“There reigned in this island, about nineteen hundred years ago, a King, whose memory of all others we most adore; not superstitiously, but as a divine instrument, though a mortal man; his name was Sól-amona: and we esteem him as the lawgiver of our nation. This king had a *large heart*, inscrutable for good; and was wholly bent to make his kingdom and people happy. He therefore, taking into consideration how sufficient and substantive this land was to maintain itself without any aid at all of the foreigner; being five thousand six hundred miles in circuit, and

<sup>1</sup> *propterea quod triremes . . . in usum venire cœperunt.*

<sup>2</sup> *entercourse* in orig.

of rare fertility of soil in the greatest part thereof, and finding also the shipping of this country might be plentifully set on work, both by fishing and by transportations from port to port, and likewise by sailing unto some small islands that are not far from us, and are under the crown and laws of this state; and recalling into his memory the happy and flourishing estate wherein this land then was, so as it might be a thousand ways altered to the worse, but scarce any one way to the better; thought nothing wanted to his noble and heroical intentions, but only (as far as human foresight might reach) to give perpetuity to that which was in his time so happily established. Therefore amongst his other fundamental laws of this kingdom, he did ordain the interdicts and prohibitions which we have touching entrance of strangers; which at that time (though it was after the calamity of America) was frequent; doubting novelties, and commixture of manners. It is true, the like law against the admission of strangers without licence is an ancient law in the kingdom of China, and yet continued in use. But there it is a poor thing; and hath made them a curious, ignorant, fearful, foolish nation. But our lawgiver made his law of another temper. For first, he hath preserved all points of humanity, in taking order and making provision for the relief of strangers distressed; whereof you have tasted." At which speech (as reason was) we all rose up, and bowed ourselves. He went on. "That king also, still desiring to join humanity and policy together; and thinking it against humanity to detain strangers here against their wills, and against policy that they should return and discover their knowledge of this estate, he took this course: he did ordain



that of the strangers that should be permitted to land, as many (at all times) might depart as would ; but as many as would stay should have very good conditions and means to live from the state. Wherein he saw so far, that now in so many ages since the prohibition, we have memory not of one ship that ever returned ; and but of thirteen persons only, at several times, that chose to return in our bottoms. What those few that returned may have reported abroad I know not. But you must think, whatsoever they have said could be taken where they came but for a dream. Now for our travelling from hence into parts abroad, our Lawgiver thought fit altogether to restrain it. So is it not in China. For the Chinese sail where they will or can ; which sheweth that their law of keeping out strangers is a law of pusillanimity and fear. But this restraint of ours hath one only exception, which is admirable ; preserving the good which cometh by communicating with strangers, and avoiding the hurt ; and I will now open it to you. And here I shall seem a little to digress, but you will by and by find it pertinent. Ye shall understand (my dear friends) that amongst the excellent acts of that king, one above all hath the pre-eminence. It was the erection and institution of an Order or Society which we call *Salomon's House* ; the noblest foundation (as we think) that ever was upon the earth ; and the lanthorn of this kingdom. It is dedicated to the study of the Works and Creatures of God. Some think it beareth the founder's name a little corrupted, as if it should be Solamona's House. But the records write it as it is spoken. So as I take it to be denominate of the King of the Hebrews, which is famous with you, and no stranger to us. For we

have some parts of his works which with you are lost ; namely, that Natural History which he wrote, of all plants, from the *cedar of Libanus*' to the *moss that groweth out of the wall*, and of all things that have life and motion. This maketh me think that our king, finding himself to symbolize in many things with that king of the Hebrews (which lived many years before him), honoured him with the title of this foundation.<sup>1</sup> And I am the rather induced to be of this opinion, for that I find in ancient records this Order or Society is sometimes called Salomon's House, and sometimes the College of the Six Days Works ; whereby I am satisfied that our excellent king had learned from the Hebrews that God had created the world and all that therein is within six days ; and therefore he instituting that House for the finding out of the true nature of all things,<sup>2</sup> (whereby God might have the more glory in the workmanship of them, and men the more fruit in the use of them,) did give it also that second name. But now to come to our present purpose. When the king had forbidden to all his people navigation into any part that was not under his crown, he made nevertheless this ordinance ; That every twelve years there should be set forth out of this kingdom two ships, appointed to

<sup>1</sup> Bacon in speaking of this king who symbolizes with Solomon seems to allude to James I. — *R. L. E.* [If the *New Atlantis* had been written in the earlier part of James's reign, Bacon might have been suspected perhaps of some such allusion. He might have hoped to encourage James to justify the parallel by going and doing likewise. But since James had now reigned above twenty years without doing or attempting to do anything for the furtherance of Natural Philosophy ; without showing any interest in it or any taste or capacity for it ; I cannot understand what the allusion can be or where the resemblance. Nor does it seem necessary to suppose anything of the kind in order to explain why a model-king for wisdom and knowledge should be likened to Solomon. — *J. S.*]

<sup>2</sup> *ad inquisitionem et inventionem naturæ veræ et interioris rerum omnium*

several voyages ; That in either of these ships there should be a mission of three of the Fellows or Brethren of Salomon's House ; whose errand was only to give us knowledge of the affairs and state of those countries to which they were designed, and especially of the sciences, arts, manufactures, and inventions of all the world ; and withal to bring unto us books, instruments, and patterns in every kind ; That the ships, after they had landed the brethren, should return ; and that the brethren should stay abroad till the new mission. These ships are not otherwise fraught, than with store of victuals, and good quantity of treasure to remain with the brethren, for the buying of such things and rewarding of such persons as they should think fit. Now for me to tell you how the vulgar sort of mariners are contained from being discovered at land ; and how they that must be put on shore for any time, colour themselves under the names of other nations ; and to what places these voyages have been designed ; and what places of *rendez-vous* are appointed for the new missions ; and the like circumstances of the practise ; I may not do it : neither is it much to your desire. But thus you see we maintain a trade, not for gold, silver, or jewels ; nor for silks ; nor for spices ; nor any other commodity of matter ; but only for God's first creature, which was *Light* : to have *light* (I say) of the growth of all parts of the world." <sup>1</sup> And when he had said this, he was silent ; and so were we all. For indeed we were all astonished to hear so strange things so probably told. And he, perceiving that we were willing to say somewhat but

<sup>1</sup> i. e., in whatever parts of the world it is to be found. *Luce, inquam, quacunq; tandem terræ regione prorumpente et germinante.*



had it not ready, in great courtesy took us off, and descended to ask us questions of our voyage and fortunes; and in the end concluded, that we might do well to think with ourselves what time of stay we would demand of the state; and bade us not to scant ourselves; for he would procure such time as we desired. Whereupon we all rose up, and presented ourselves to kiss the skirt of his tippet; but he would not suffer us; and so took his leave. But when it came once amongst our people that the state used to offer conditions to strangers that would stay, we had work enough to get any of our men to look to our ship, and to keep them from going presently to the governor to crave conditions. But with much ado we refrained them, till we might agree what course to take.

We took ourselves now for free men, seeing there was no danger of our utter perdition; and lived most joyfully, going abroad and seeing what was to be seen in the city and places adjacent within our tedder; and obtaining acquaintance with many of the city, not of the meanest quality; at whose hands we found such humanity, and such a freedom and desire to take strangers as it were into their bosom, as was enough to make us forget all that was dear to us in our own countries: and continually we met with many things right worthy of observation and relation; as indeed, if there be a mirror in the world worthy to hold men's eyes, it is that country. One day there were two of our company bidden to a Feast of the Family, as they call it. A most natural, pious, and reverend custom it is, shewing that nation to be compounded of all woodness. This is the manner of it. It is granted to

any man that shall live to see thirty persons descended of his body alive together, and all above three years old, to make this feast; which is done at the cost of the state. The Father of the Family, whom they call the *Tirsan*, two days before the feast, taketh to him three of such friends as he liketh to choose; and is assisted also by the governor of the city or place where the feast is celebrated; and all the persons of the family, of both sexes, are summoned to attend him. These two days the *Tirsan* sitteth in consultation concerning the good estate of the family. There, if there be any discord or suits between any of the family, they are compounded and appeased. There, if any of the family be distressed or decayed, order is taken for their relief and competent means to live. There, if any be subject to vice, or take ill courses, they are reprov'd and censured. So likewise direction is given touching marriages, and the courses of life which any of them should take, with divers other the like orders and advices. The governor assisteth, to the end to put in execution by his public authority the decrees and orders of the *Tirsan*, if they should be disobey'd; though that seldom needeth; such reverence and obedience they give to the order of nature. The *Tirsan* doth also then ever choose one man from amongst his sons, to live in house with him: who is called ever after the Son of the Vine. The reason will hereafter appear. On the feast-day, the Father or *Tirsan* cometh forth after divine service into a large room where the feast is celebrated; which room hath an half-pace<sup>1</sup> at the upper end. Against the wall, in the

<sup>1</sup> Half-pace or dais, the part raised by a low step above the rest of the floor. — R. L. E.

middle of the half-pace, is a chair placed for him, with a table and carpet before it. Over the chair is a state,<sup>1</sup> made round or oval, and it is of ivy; an ivy somewhat whiter than ours, like the leaf of a silver asp, but more shining; for it is green all winter. And the state is curiously wrought with silver and silk of divers colours, broiding or binding in the ivy; and is ever of the work of some of the daughters of the family; and veiled over at the top with a fine net of silk and silver. But the substance of it is true ivy; whereof, after it is taken down, the friends of the family are desirous to have some leaf or sprig to keep. The Tirsan cometh forth with all his generation or lineage,<sup>2</sup> the males before him, and the females following him; and if there be a mother from whose body the whole lineage is descended, there is a traverse placed in a loft above on the right hand of the chair, with a privy door, and a carved window of glass, leaded with gold and blue; where she sitteth, but is not seen. When the Tirsan is come forth, he sitteth down in the chair; and all the lineage place themselves against the wall, both at his back and upon the return of the half-pace,<sup>3</sup> in order of their years without difference of sex; and stand upon their feet. When he is set; the room being always full of company, but well kept and without disorder; after some pause there cometh in from the lower end of the room a *Taratan* (which is as much as an herald) and on either side of

<sup>1</sup> i. e. a canopy, *conopeum*.

<sup>2</sup> *linage* in the original; which seems to be the proper form of the word. The *e* may have been introduced originally as a direction for the lengthening of the first syllable; and then the resemblance of the word to such words as *lineal* may have suggested the modern pronunciation.

<sup>3</sup> *juxta parietem, tam a tergo quam a lateribus aulae, super gradum ascendis.*

him two young lads; whereof one carrieth a scroll of their shining yellow parchment; and the other a cluster of grapes of gold, with a long foot or stalk. The herald and children are clothed with mantles of seawater green sattin; but the herald's mantle is streamed with gold, and hath a train. Then the herald with three curtesies, or rather inclinations, cometh up as far as the half-pace; and there first taketh into his hand the scroll. This scroll is the King's Charter, containing gift of revenew, and many privileges, exemptions, and points of honour, granted to the Father of the Family; and is ever styled and directed, *To such an one our well-beloved friend and creditor*: which is a title proper only to this case. For they say the king is debtor to no man, but for propagation of his subjects. The seal set to the king's charter is the king's image, imbossed or moulded in gold; and though such charters be expedited of course, and as of right, yet they are varied by discretion, according to the number and dignity of the family. This charter the herald readeth aloud; and while it is read, the father or Tirsan standeth up, supported by two of his sons, such as he chooseth. Then the herald mounteth the half-pace, and delivereth the charter into his hand: and with that there is an acclamation by all that are present in their language, which is thus much: *Happy are the people of Bensalem*. Then the herald taketh into his hand from the other child the cluster of grapes, which is of gold, both the stalk and the grapes. But the grapes are daintily enamelled; and if the males of the family be the greater number, the grapes are enamelled purple, with a little sun set on the top; if the females, then they are enamelled into a greenish yellow, with a

crescent on the top. The grapes are in number as many as there are descendants of the family. This golden cluster the herald delivereth also to the Tirsan; who presently delivereth it over to that son that he had formerly chosen to be in house with him: who beareth it before his father as an ensign of honour when he goeth in public, ever after; and is thereupon called the Son of the Vine. After this ceremony ended, the father or Tirsan retireth; and after some time cometh forth again to dinner, where he sitteth alone under the state, as before; and none of his descendants sit with him, of what degree or dignity soever, except he hap to be of Salomon's House. He is served only by his own children, such as are male; who perform unto him all service of the table upon the knee; and the women only stand about him, leaning against the wall. The room below the half-pace hath tables on the sides for the guests that are bidden; who are served with great and comely order; and towards the end of dinner (which in the greatest feasts with them lasteth never above an hour and an half) there is an hymn sung, varied according to the invention of him that composeth it, (for they have excellent poesy,) but the subject of it is (always) the praises of Adam and Noah and Abraham; whereof the former two peopled the world, and the last was the Father of the Faithful: concluding ever with a thanksgiving for the nativity of our Saviour, in whose birth the births of all are only blessed. Dinner being done, the Tirsan retireth again; and having withdrawn himself alone into a place where he maketh some private prayers, he cometh forth the third time, to give the blessing; with all his descendants, who stand about him as at the first. Then he



calleth them forth by one and by one, by name, as he pleaseth, though seldom the order of age be inverted. The person that is called (the table being before removed) kneeleth down before the chair, and the father layeth his hand upon his head, or her head, and giveth the blessing in these words: *Son of Bensalem, (or Daughter of Bensalem,) thy father saith it: the man by whom thou hast breath and life speaketh the word: The blessing of the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, and the Holy Dove be upon thee, and make the days of thy pilgrimage good and many.* This he saith to every of them; and that done, if there be any of his sons of eminent merit and virtue, (so they be not above two,) he calleth for them again; and saith, laying his arm over their shoulders, they standing; *Sons, it is well ye are born, give God the praise, and persevere to the end.* And withal delivereth to either of them a jewel, made in the figure of an ear of wheat, which they ever after wear in the front of their turban or hat. This done, they fall to music and dances, and other recreations, after their manner, for the rest of the day. This is the full order of that feast.

By that time six or seven days were spent, I was fallen into strait acquaintance with a merchant of that city; whose name was Joabin. He was a Jew, and circumcised: for they have some few stirps of Jews yet remaining among them, whom they leave to their own religion. Which they may the better do, because they are of a far differing disposition from the Jews in other parts. For whereas they hate the name of Christ, and have a secret inbred rancour against the people amongst whom they live: these (contrariwise) give unto our Saviour many high attributes, and love the nation

of Bensalem extremely. Surely this man of whom I speak would ever acknowledge that Christ was born of a Virgin, and that he was more than a man; and he would tell how God made him ruler of the Seraphims which guard his throne; and they call him also the *Milken Way*, and the *Elijah* of the *Messiah*; and many other high names; which though they be inferior to his divine Majesty, yet they are far from the language of other Jews. And for the country of Bensalem, this man would make no end of commending it: being desirous, by tradition among the Jews there, to have it believed that the people thereof were of the generations of Abraham, by another son, whom they call Nachoran; and that Moses by a secret cabala ordained the laws of Bensalem which they now use; and that when the Messiah should come, and sit in his throne at Hierusalem, the king of Bensalem should sit at his feet, whereas other kings should keep a great distance. But yet setting aside these Jewish dreams, the man was a wise man, and learned, and of great policy, and excellently seen in the laws and customs of that nation. Amongst other discourses, one day I told him I was much affected with the relation I had from some of the company, of their custom in holding the Feast of the Family; for that (methought) I had never heard of a solemnity wherein nature did so much preside. And because propagation of families proceedeth from the nuptial copulation, I desired to know of him what laws and customs they had concerning marriage; and whether they kept marriage well; and whether they were tied to one wife? For that where population is so much affected, and such as with them it seemed to be, there is commonly permission of plu-

rality of wives. To this he said, " You have reason for to commend that excellent institution of the Feast of the Family. And indeed we have experience, that those families that are partakers of the blessing of that feast do flourish and prosper ever after in an extraordinary manner. But hear me now, and I will tell you what I know. You shall understand that there is not under the heavens so chaste a nation as this of Bensalem ; nor so free from all pollution or foulness. It is the virgin of the world. I remember I have read in one of your European books, of an holy hermit amongst you that desired to see the Spirit of Fornication ; and there appeared to him a little foul ugly Æthiop.<sup>1</sup> But if he had desired to see the Spirit of Chastity of Bensalem, it would have appeared to him in the likeness of a fair beautiful Cherubin. For there is nothing amongst mortal men more fair and admirable, than the chaste minds of this people. Know therefore, that with them there are no stews, no dissolute houses, no courtesans, nor anything of that kind. Nay they wonder (with detestation) at you in Europe, which permit such things. They say ye have put marriage out of office : for marriage is ordained a remedy for unlawful concupiscence ; and natural concupiscence seemeth as a spur to marriage. But when men have at hand a remedy more agreeable to their corrupt will, marriage is almost expelled. And therefore there are with you seen infinite men that marry not, but chuse rather a libertine and impure single life, than to be yoked in marriage ; and many that do marry, marry late, when the prime and strength of their years is past. And when they do marry, what is marriage to them but a

<sup>1</sup> The Klein Meister of La Motte Fouqué's *Sintram*. — R. L. E.



very bargain ; wherein is sought alliance, or portion, or reputation, with some desire (almost indifferent) of issue ; and not the faithful nuptial union of man and wife, that was first instituted. Neither is it possible that those that have cast away so basely so much of their strength, should greatly esteem children, (being of the same matter,<sup>1</sup>) as chaste men do. So likewise during marriage, is the case much amended, as it ought to be if those things were tolerated only for necessity? No, but they remain still as a very affront to marriage. The haunting of those dissolute places, or resort to courtesans, are no more punished in married men than in bachelors. And the depraved custom of change, and the delight in meretricious embracements, (where sin is turned into art,)<sup>2</sup> maketh marriage a dull thing, and a kind of imposition or tax. They hear you defend these things, as done to avoid greater evils ; as advoutries, deflouring of virgins, unnatural lust, and the like. But they say this is a preposterous wisdom ; and they call it *Lot's offer*, who to save his guests from abusing, offered his daughters : nay they say farther that there is little gained in this ; for that the same vices and appetites do still remain and abound ; unlawful lust being like a furnace, that if you stop the flames altogether, it will quench ; but if you give it any vent, it will rage. As for masculine love, they have no touch of it ;<sup>3</sup> and yet there are not so faithful and inviolate friendships in the world again as are there ; and to speak generally, (as I said before,) I have not

<sup>1</sup> *liberi (pars nostri altera).*

<sup>2</sup> Non v' era giunto ancor Sardanapalo  
A mostra- cio ch' in camera si puote.

DANTE, *Paradiso*, xiv.—R. L. E.

<sup>3</sup> *istos ne fando quidem norunt.*

read of any such chastity in any people as theirs. And their usual saying is, *That whosoever is unchaste cannot reverence himself*; and they say, *That the reverence of a man's self is, next religion, the chiefest bridle of all vices.*" And when he had said this, the good Jew paused a little; whereupon I, far more willing to hear him speak on than to speak myself, yet thinking it decent that upon his pause of speech I should not be altogether silent, said only this; "That I would say to him, as the widow of Sarepta said to Elias; that he was come to bring to memory our sins; and that I confess the righteousness of Bensalem was greater than the righteousness of Europe." At which speech he bowed his head, and went on in this manner: "They have also many wise and excellent laws touching marriage. They allow no polygamy. They have ordained that none do intermarry or contract, until a month be passed from their first interview. Marriage without consent of parents they do not make void, but they mulct it in the inheritors: for the children of such marriages are not admitted to inherit above a third part of their parents' inheritance. I have read in a book of one of your men, of a Feigned Commonwealth, where the married couple are permitted, before they contract, to see one another naked.<sup>1</sup> This they dislike; for they think it a scorn to give a refusal after so familiar knowledge: but because of many hidden defects in men and women's bodies,<sup>2</sup> they have a more civil way; for they have near every town a couple of pools, (which they call *Adam and Eve's pools*,) where it is permitted to one of the friends of the man, and

<sup>1</sup> See More's *Utopia*, book ii. — *R. L. E.*

<sup>2</sup> The translation adds *qui matrimonium postea infelix reddere possint.*

another of the friends of the woman, to see them severally bathe naked."

And as we were thus in conference, there came one that seemed to be a messenger, in a rich huke,<sup>1</sup> that spake with the Jew: whereupon he turned to me and said; "You will pardon me, for I am commanded away in haste." The next morning he came to me again, joyful as it seemed, and said, "There is word come to the governor of the city, that one of the Fathers of Salomon's House will be here this day seven-night: we have seen none of them this dozen years. His coming is in state; but the cause of his coming is secret. I will provide you and your fellows of a good standing to see his entry." I thanked him, and told him, "I was most glad of the news." The day being come, he made his entry. He was a man of middle stature and age, comely of person, and had an aspect as if he pitied men. He was clothed in a robe of fine black cloth, with wide sleeves and a cape. His under garment was of excellent white linen down to the foot, girt with a girdle of the same; and a sindon or tippet of the same about his neck. He had gloves that were curious, and set with stone; and shoes of peach-coloured velvet. His neck was bare to the shoulders. His hat was like a helmet, or Spanish Montera; and his locks curled below it decently: they were of colour brown. His beard was cut round, and of the same colour with his hair, somewhat lighter.<sup>2</sup> He was carried in a rich chariot without wheels, litter-wise; with two horses at either end, richly trapped

<sup>1</sup> *indutus tunicâ pictâ et inauratâ.*

<sup>2</sup> The words "somewhat lighter" are omitted in the translation.

in blue velvet embroidered; and two footmen on each side in the like attire. The chariot was all of cedar gilt, and adorned with crystal; save that the fore-end had pannels of sapphires, set in borders of gold, and the hinder-end the like of emeralds<sup>1</sup> of the Peru colour. There was also a sun of gold, radiant, upon the top, in the midst;<sup>2</sup> and on the top before, a small cherub of gold, with wings displayed. The chariot was covered with cloth of gold tissue upon blue. He had before him fifty attendants, young men all, in white sattin loose coats to the mid-leg; and stockings of white silk; and shoes of blue velvet; and hats of blue velvet; with fine plumes of divers colours, set round like hat-bands. Next before the chariot went two men, bare-headed, in linen garments down the foot, girt, and shoes of blue velvet; who carried the one a crosier, the other a pastoral staff like a sheep-hook; neither of them of metal, but the crosier of balm-wood, the pastoral staff of cedar. Horsemen he had none, neither before nor behind his chariot: as it seemeth, to avoid all tumult and trouble. Behind his chariot went all the officers and principals of the Companies of the City. He sat alone, upon cushions of a kind of excellent plush, blue; and under his foot curious carpets of silk of divers colours, like the Persian, but far finer. He held up his bare hand as he went, as blessing the people, but in silence. The street was wonderfully well kept:<sup>3</sup> so that there was never any army had their men stand in better battle-array, than the people stood. The windows likewise were not crowded, but

<sup>1</sup> *emerauds* in orig.

<sup>2</sup> *Etiam in medio verticis cathedræ, sol erat, ex auro radians.*

<sup>3</sup> *Plateæ ita erant ordinatæ ut via ampla pateret, nullibi interclusa.*

every one stood in them as if they had been placed. When the shew was past, the Jew said to me; "I shall not be able to attend you<sup>1</sup> as I would, in regard of some charge the city hath laid upon me, for the entertaining of this great person." Three days after, the Jew came to me again, and said; "Ye are happy men; for the Father of Salomon's House taketh knowledge of your being here, and commanded me to tell you that he will admit all your company to his presence, and have private conference with one of you that ye shall choose: and for this hath appointed the next day after to-morrow. And because he meaneth to give you his blessing, he hath appointed it in the forenoon." We came at our day and hour, and I was chosen by my fellows for the private access. We found him in a fair chamber, richly hanged, and carpeted under foot, without any degrees to the state. He was set upon a low throne richly adorned, and a rich cloth of state over his head, of blue sattin embroidered. He was alone, save that he had two pages of honour, on either hand one, finely attired in white. His under-garments were the like that we saw him wear in the chariot; but instead of his gown, he had on him a mantle with a cape, of the same fine black, fastened about him. When we came in, as we were taught, we bowed low at our first entrance; and when we were come near his chair, he stood up, holding forth his hand ungloved, and in posture of blessing; and we every one of us stooped down, and kissed the hem of his tippet. That done, the rest departed, and I remained. Then he warned the pages forth of the room, and caused me to sit down beside him, and spake to me thus in the Spanish tongue:

<sup>1</sup> *Per aliquot jam dies detinebor, quò minus, &c.*



“God bless thee, my son; I will give thee the greatest jewel I have. For I will impart unto thee, for the love of God and men, a relation of the true state of Salomon’s House. Son, to make you know the true state of Salomon’s House, I will keep this order. First, I will set forth unto you the end of our foundation. Secondly, the preparations and instruments we have for our works. Thirdly, the several employments and functions whereto our fellows are assigned. And fourthly, the ordinances and rites which we observe.

“The End of our Foundation is the knowledge of Causes, and secret motions of things;<sup>1</sup> and the enlarging of the bounds of Human Empire, to the effecting of all things possible.

“The Preparations and Instruments are these. We have large and deep caves of several depths: the deepest are sunk six hundred fathom; and some of them are digged and made under great hills and mountains: so that if you reckon together the depth of the hill and the depth of the cave, they are (some of them) above three miles deep. For we find that the depth of a hill, and the depth of a cave from the flat, is the same thing; both remote alike from the sun and heaven’s beams, and from the open air. These caves we call the Lower Region. And we use them for all coagulations, indurations, refrigerations, and conservations of bodies. We use them likewise for the imitation of natural mines; and the producing also of new artificial metals, by compositions and materials which we use,

<sup>1</sup> *et motuum, ac virtutum interiorum in Natura.*

<sup>2</sup> *quæ ibi præparamus.*

and lay there for many years. We use them also sometimes, (which may seem strange,) for curing of some diseases, and for prolongation of life in some hermits that choose to live there, well accommodated of all things necessary; and indeed live very long; by whom also we learn many things.

“We have burials in several earths,<sup>1</sup> where we put divers cements, as the Chinese do their porcellain. But we have them in greater variety, and some of them more fine. We have also great variety of composts, and soils,<sup>2</sup> for the making of the earth fruitful.

“We have high towers; the highest about half a mile in height; and some of them likewise set upon high mountains; so that the vantage of the hill with the tower is in the highest of them three miles at least. And these places we call the Upper Region: accounting the air between the high places and the low, as a Middle Region. We use these towers, according to their several heights and situations, for insolation, refrigeration, conservation; and for the view of divers meteors; as winds, rain, snow, hail; and some of the fiery meteors also. And upon them, in some places, are dwellings of hermits, whom we visit sometimes, and instruct what to observe.

“We have great lakes both salt and fresh, whereof we have use for the fish and fowl.<sup>3</sup> We use them also for burials of some natural bodies: for we find a difference in things buried in earth or in air below the earth, and things buried in water. We have also

<sup>1</sup> *Habemus etiam alias sepulturas corporum naturalium et materialium; non in concavo aliquo, sed in ipsa terra contigua, ubi complura cœmenta condimus, &c.*

<sup>2</sup> *stercorationum et fîmorum varietatem magnam, item congestionum et massarum aliarum, &c.*

<sup>3</sup> *aves item palustres et aquaticas, omnis generis.*

pools, of which some do strain fresh water out of salt ; and others by art do turn fresh water into salt. We have also some rocks in the midst of the sea, and some bays<sup>1</sup> upon the shore, for some works wherein is required the air and vapour of the sea. We have likewise violent streams and cataracts, which serve us for many motions :<sup>2</sup> and likewise engines for multiplying and enforcing of winds, to set also on going divers motions.<sup>3</sup>

“ We have also a number of artificial wells and fountains, made in imitation of the natural sources and baths ; as tinted upon vitriol, sulphur, steel, brass, lead, nitre, and other minerals. And again we have little wells for infusions of many things, where the waters take the virtue<sup>4</sup> quicker and better than in vessels or basons. And amongst them we have a water which we call Water of Paradise, being, by that we do to it, made very sovereign for health, and prolongation of life.

“ We have also great and spacious houses, where we imitate and demonstrate<sup>5</sup> meteors ; as snow, hail, rain, some artificial rains of bodies and not of water, thunders, lightnings ;<sup>6</sup> also generations of bodies in air ; as frogs, flies, and divers others.

“ We have also certain chambers, which we call Chambers of Health, where we qualify the air as we think good and proper for the cure of divers diseases, and preservation of health.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *loca quædam aprica.*

<sup>2</sup> *motuum violentorum.*

<sup>3</sup> *quæ ventos excipiant, multiplicent, et roborent.*

<sup>4</sup> *ubi aqua (currrens scilicet) virtutem corporum melius et vivacius, &c.*

<sup>5</sup> *i. e. exhibit: in quibus imitamenta et representationes meteororum exhibentur.*

<sup>6</sup> The translation adds *coruscationum.*

<sup>7</sup> This experiment has been tried, especially by Dr. Beddoes of Clifton



“ We have also fair and large baths, of several mixtures, for the cure of diseases, and the restoring of man’s body from arefaction: and others for the confirming of it in strength of sinews, vital parts, and the very juice and substance of the body.

“ We have also large and various orchards and gardens, wherein we do not so much respect beauty, as variety of ground and soil, proper for divers trees and herbs: and some very spacious, where trees and berries are set whereof we make divers kinds of drinks, besides the vineyards. In these we practise likewise all conclusions of grafting and inoculating, as well of wild-trees as fruit-trees, which produceth many effects. And we make (by art) in the same orchards and gardens, trees and flowers to come earlier or later than their seasons; and to come up and bear more speedily than by their natural course they do. We make them also by art greater much than their nature; and their fruit greater and sweeter and of differing taste, smell, colour, and figure, from their nature. And many of them we so order, as they become of medicinal use.

“ We have also means to make divers plants rise by mixtures of earths without seeds; and likewise to make divers new plants, differing from the vulgar; and to make one tree or plant turn into another.

“ We have also parks and inclosures of all sorts of beasts and birds, which we use not only for view or rareness, but likewise for dissections and trials; that thereby we may take light what may be wrought upon the body of man. Wherein we find many strange ef-

but without any marked result. Some relief has been obtained in cases of phthisis by inhaling oxygenated air. — *R. L. E.*

fects ; as continuing life in them, though divers parts, which you account vital, be perished and taken forth ; resuscitating of some that seem dead in appearance ; and the like. We try also all poisons and other medicines upon them, as well of chirurgery as physic.<sup>1</sup> By art likewise, we make them greater or taller than their kind is ; and contrariwise dwarf them, and stay their growth : we make them more fruitful and bearing than their kind is ; and contrariwise barren and not generative. Also we make them differ in colour, shape, activity, many ways. We find means to make commixtures and copulations of different kinds ; which have produced many new kinds, and them not barren, as the general opinion is. We make a number of kinds of serpents, worms, flies, fishes, of putrefaction ; whereof some are advanced (in effect) to be perfect creatures, like beasts or birds ; and have sexes, and do propagate. Neither do we this by chance, but we know beforehand of what matter and commixture what kind of those creatures will arise.<sup>2</sup>

“ We have also particular pools, where we make trials upon fishes, as we have said before of beasts and birds.

“ We have also places for breed and generation of those kinds of worms and flies which are of special use ; such as are with you your silk-worms and bees.

<sup>1</sup> The translation adds *ut corpori humano melius caveamus.*

<sup>2</sup> This passage is quoted with great approbation by Geoffroi St. Hilaire at the end of a memoir on the results of artificial incubation read before the Academy of Sciences in 1826, and published in the *Annales du Museum* for that year. It may be said that he was the first by whom the scientific importance of monstrosities was fully appreciated, and in answer to the objections which were made to the study of Teratology on the ground of its inutility, he invokes the authority of Bacon. — *R. L. E.*

“I will not hold you long with recounting of our brew-houses, bake-houses, and kitchens, where are made divers drinks, breads, and meats, rare and of special effects. Wines we have of grapes; and drinks of other juice of fruits, of grains, and of roots:<sup>1</sup> and of mixtures with honey, sugar, manna, and fruits dried and decocted. Also of the tears or woundings of trees, and of the pulp of canes. And these drinks are of several ages, some to the age or last of forty years. We have drinks also brewed with several herbs, and roots, and spices; yea with several fleshes, and white meats;<sup>2</sup> whereof some of the drinks are such, as they are in effect meat and drink both:<sup>3</sup> so that divers, especially in age, do desire to live with them, with little or no meat or bread. And above all, we strive to have drinks of extreme thin parts, to insinuate into the body, and yet without all biting, sharpness, or fretting; insomuch as some of them put upon the back of your hand will, with a little stay, pass through to the palm, and yet taste mild to the mouth. We have also waters which we ripen in that fashion, as they become nourishing; so that they are indeed excellent drink; and many will use no other. Breads we have of several grains, roots, and kernels: yea and some of flesh and fish dried; with divers kinds of leavenings and seasonings: so that some do extremely move appetites; some do nourish so, as divers do live of them, without any other meat; who live very long. So for meats, we

<sup>1</sup> *decoctionibus granorum et radicum.*

<sup>2</sup> *quin e. additis quandoque carnibus, ovis, lacticiniis, et aliis esculentis.*

<sup>3</sup> Chocolate, which however was well known in Bacon's time, seems to fulfil this description. It long since gave rise to a doubt whether drinking it amounted to breaking fast. See the treatise of the Jesuit Hurtado, *Utrum potio chocolatica frangat jejuniū Ecclesiæ.*—*R. L. F.*

have some of them so beaten and made tender and mortified, yet without all corrupting, as a weak heat of the stomach will turn them into good chylus, as well as a strong heat would meat otherwise prepared. We have some meats also and breads and drinks, which taken by men enable them to fast long after; and some other, that used make the very flesh of men's bodies sensibly more hard and tough, and their strength far greater than otherwise it would be.

“ We have dispensatories, or shops of medicines. Wherein you may easily think, if we have such variety of plants and living creatures more than you have in Europe, (for we know what you have,) the simples, drugs, and ingredients of medicines, must likewise be in so much the greater variety. We have them likewise of divers ages, and long fermentations. And for their preparations,<sup>1</sup> we have not only all manner of exquisite distillations and separations, and especially by gentle heats and percolations through divers strainers, yea and substances;<sup>2</sup> but also exact forms of composition, whereby they incorporate almost, as they were natural simples.

“ We have also divers mechanical arts, which you have not; and stuffs made by them; as papers, linen, silks, tissues; dainty works of feathers of wonderful lustre; excellent dyes, and many others; and shops likewise,<sup>3</sup> as well for such as are not brought into vulgar use amongst us as for those that are. For you must know that of the things before recited, many of

<sup>1</sup> *medicinarum preparationes.*

<sup>2</sup> *per diversa lintea, lanea, ligna, imò et substantias solidiores.*

<sup>3</sup> *officinas etiam aliquarum artium prædictarum.*

them are grown into use throughout the kingdom ; but yet if they did flow from our invention, we have of them also for patterns and principals.<sup>1</sup>

“ We have also furnaces of great diversities, and that keep great diversity of heats ; fierce and quick ; strong and constant ; soft and mild ; blown, quiet ; dry, moist ; and the like. But above all, we have heats in imitation of the sun’s and heavenly bodies’ heats, that pass divers inequalities and (as it were) orbs, progresses, and returns, whereby we produce admirable effects. Besides, we have heats<sup>2</sup> of dungs, and of bellies and maws of living creatures, and of their bloods and bodies ; and of hays and herbs laid up moist ; of lime unquenched ; and such like. Instruments also which generate heat only by motion.<sup>3</sup> And farther, places for strong insolutions ; and again, places under the earth, which by nature or art yield heat. These divers heats we use, as the nature of the operation which we intend requireth.

“ We have also perspective-houses, where we make demonstrations of all lights and radiations ; and of all colours ; and out of things uncoloured and transparent, we can represent unto you all several colours ; not in rain-bows,<sup>4</sup> as it is in gems and prisms, but of themselves single.<sup>5</sup> We represent also all multiplications of light, which we carry to great distance, and make so sharp as to discern small points and lines ; also all colorations of light : all delusions and deceits of the

<sup>1</sup> eorum quandoque exemplaria, tanquam primigenia, et optimè elaborata, in Domo nostrâ retinemus.

<sup>2</sup> imitationes caloris.

<sup>3</sup> Bacon seems to refer to the result of his investigation into the form of heat, namely that heat is a kind of motion. — R. L. E.

<sup>4</sup> non in formâ iridum gliscentes.

<sup>5</sup> sed per se simplices et constantes.



sight, in figures, magnitudes, motions, colours: all demonstrations of shadows.<sup>1</sup> We find also divers means, yet unknown to you, of producing of light originally from divers bodies. We procure means of seeing objects afar off; as in the heaven and remote places; and represent things near as afar off, and things afar off as near; making feigned distances. We have also helps for the sight, far above spectacles and glasses in use.<sup>2</sup> We have also glasses and means<sup>3</sup> to see small and minute bodies perfectly and distinctly; as the shapes and colours of small flies and worms, grains and flaws in gems, which cannot otherwise be seen; observations in urine<sup>4</sup> and blood, not otherwise to be seen.<sup>5</sup> We make artificial rain-bows, halos, and circles about light.<sup>6</sup> We represent also all manner of reflexions, refractions, and multiplications of visual beams of objects.

“ We have also precious stones of all kinds, many of them of great beauty, and to you unknown; crystals likewise; and glasses of divers kinds; and amongst them some of metals vitrified, and other materials besides those of which you make glass. Also a num-

<sup>1</sup> *umbrarum et imaginum in aëre volitantium.*

<sup>2</sup> *quæ bisoculis vestris et speculis, usu longe præstant.*

<sup>3</sup> *artificia.*

<sup>4</sup> It has been proposed to facilitate the examination of diabetic urine by an apparatus in which the amount of sugar present in it is to be measured by its effect on the plane of polarisation of polarised light transmitted through it.—*R. L. E.*

<sup>5</sup> Nothing that has been accomplished with the microscope would have interested Bacon more than the discoveries of Schleiden and Schwann, because nothing has brought us so near the *latens processus* by which the tissues of organic life are formed. It is remarkable that when Schleiden and as he conceived destroyed the analogy between the developments of vegetable and animal life, by showing that all vegetable tissues are developed by cells, Schwann should have re-established it more clearly than before by showing that this is true of all animal tissues also.—*R. L. E.*

<sup>6</sup> *halones, circulos, vibrationes et trepidationes luminis.*

ber of fossils, and imperfect minerals, which you have not. Likewise loadstones of prodigious virtue; and other rare stones, both natural and artificial.

“ We have also sound-houses, where we practise and demonstrate all sounds, and their generation. We have harmonies which you have not, of quarter-sounds, and lesser slides of sounds.<sup>1</sup> Divers instruments of music likewise to you unknown, some sweeter than any you have; together with bells and rings that are dainty and sweet. We represent small sounds as great and deep; likewise great sounds extenuate and sharp; we make divers tremblings and warblings of sounds, which in their original are entire. We represent and imitate all articulate sounds and letters, and the voices and notes of beasts and birds. We have certain helps which set to the ear do further the hearing greatly. We have also divers strange and artificial echos, reflecting the voice many times, and as it were tossing it: and some that give back the voice louder than it came; some shriller, and some deeper; yea, some rendering the voice differing in the letters or articulate sound from that they receive. We have also means to convey sounds in trunks and pipes, in strange lines and distances.<sup>2</sup>

“ We have also perfume-houses; wherewith we join also practices of taste. We multiply smells, which may seem strange. We imitate smells, making all smells to breathe out of other mixtures than those that give them.<sup>3</sup> We make divers imitations of taste

<sup>1</sup> *miscentes non tantum Beta illud acutum et molle, ut vos, sed quadrantes sonorum; et sonos tremulos aliquos dulcissimos.*

<sup>2</sup> [*ad magnam distantiam, et in lineis tortuosis.*] This is now done very effectually by means of gutta percha tubing.—*R. L. E.*

<sup>3</sup> This power of imitating smells is one of the recent achievements of

likewise, so that they will deceive any man's taste. And in this house we contain also a confiture-house; where we make all sweet-meats, dry and moist,<sup>1</sup> and divers pleasant wines, milks, broths, and sallets, in far greater variety than you have. .

“ We have also engine-houses, where are prepared engines and instruments for all sorts of motions. There we imitate and practise to make swifter motions than any you have, either out of your muskets or any engine that you have; and to make them and multiply them more easily, and with small force,<sup>2</sup> by wheels and other means: and to make them stronger, and more violent than yours are; exceeding your greatest cannons and basilisks. We represent also ordnance and instruments of war, and engines of all kinds: and likewise new inixtures and compositions of gun-powder, wildfires burning in water, and unquenchable. Also fire-works of all variety both for pleasure and use. We imitate also flights of birds, we have some degrees of flying in the air;<sup>3</sup> we have ships and boats for going under water,<sup>4</sup> and brooking

chemistry. From fusil oil, a product of the distillation of spirits from potatoes, itself exceedingly offensive, may be got oil of apples, oil of pears, oil of grapes, and oil of cognac. The oil of pine-apples and that of bitter almonds enable confectioners to imitate perfectly the scent and flavour of pine-apples and bitter almonds respectively, and both, like the perfumes already mentioned, are got from very offensive substances. — *R. L. E.*

<sup>1</sup> The translation adds *imò et condimus ea cum rebus aliis dulcibus, gratissimis, præter saccharum et mel.*

<sup>2</sup> *motus reddere faciliores et intentiores, eos multiplicando per rotas et alios modos.*

<sup>3</sup> *gradus quosdam habemus et commoditates vecturæ per aërem instar animalium alatorum.*

<sup>4</sup> A boat for going under water was one of Drebbel's inventions exhibited in 1620. Bacon in the *De Augmentis* refers to another namely Drebbel's method of producing cold. — *R. L. E.*



of seas; also swimming-girdles and supporters. We have divers curious clocks, and other like motions of return,<sup>1</sup> and some perpetual motions. We imitate also motions of living creatures, by images of men, beasts, birds, fishes, and serpents. We have also a great number of other various<sup>2</sup> motions, strange for equality, fineness, and subtilty.

“ We have also a mathematical house, where are represented all instruments, as well of geometry as astronomy, exquisitely made.

“ We have also houses of deceits of the senses; where we represent all manner of feats of juggling, false apparitions, impostures, and illusions; and their fallacies. And surely you will easily believe that we that have so many things truly natural which induce admiration, could in a world of particulars deceive the senses, if we would disguise those things and labour to make them seem more miraculous. But we do hate all impostures and lies: insomuch as we have severely forbidden it to all our fellows, under pain of ignominy and fines, that they do not shew any natural work or thing, adorned or swelling;<sup>3</sup> but only pure as it is, and without all affectation of strangeness.

“ These are (my son) the riches of Salomon’s House.

“ For the several employments and offices of our fellows; we have twelve that sail into foreign countries, under the names of other nations, (for our own we conceal;) who bring us the books, and abstracts,

<sup>1</sup> *et alios motus aëris et aquarum, in orbem et per vices revertentes.*

<sup>2</sup> The word “various,” which seems to be redundant, is omitted in the translation.

<sup>3</sup> *artificioso apparatu ementitum.*

and patterns of experiments of all other parts.<sup>1</sup> These we call Merchants of Light.

“ We have three that collect the experiments which are in all books. These we call Depredators.

“ We have three that collect the experiments of all mechanical arts ; and also of liberal sciences ; and also of practices which are not brought into arts. These we call Mystery-men.<sup>2</sup>

“ We have three that try new experiments, such as themselves think good. These we call Pioners or Miners.

“ We have three that draw the experiments of the former four into titles and tables, to give the better light for the drawing of observations and axioms out of them. These we call Compilers.<sup>3</sup>

“ We have three that bend themselves, looking into the experiments of their fellows, and cast about how to draw out of them things of use and practice for man’s life, and knowledge<sup>4</sup> as well for works as for plain demonstration of causes, means of natural divinations, and the easy and clear discovery of the virtues and parts of bodies.<sup>5</sup> These we call Dowry-men or Benefactors.<sup>6</sup>

“ Then after divers meetings and consults of our

<sup>1</sup> *qui libros, et materias et exemplaria experimentorum ad nos perferunt.*

<sup>2</sup> In the translation they are called *Venatores*, hunters; a name, however, which does not seem to distinguish their peculiar office so accurately as “mystery-men,” that is, men whose business was to inquire after mysteries, *i. e.* crafts.

<sup>3</sup> These represent the formation of the tables *comparentiæ*, *absentiæ* in *proximo*, and *graduum*. See *Novum Organum*, ii. § 11—13. — *R. L. E.* For “compilers,” the translation has *divisores*, distributors.

<sup>4</sup> *necnon quæ inserviant scientiis, non solum quoad opera, sed, &c.*

<sup>5</sup> *quæ sint in corporibus singulis partes latentes, quæ virtutes.*

<sup>6</sup> These represent the *Vindemiatio prima*. See *Nov. Org.* ii. § 20. — *R. L. E.*

whole number, to consider of the former labours and collections,<sup>1</sup> we have three that take care, out of them, to direct new experiments, of a higher light, more penetrating into nature than the former. These we call Lamps.

“ We have three others that do execute the experiments so directed, and report them. These we call Inoculators.

“ Lastly, we have three that raise the former discoveries by experiments into greater observations, axioms, and aphorisms.<sup>2</sup> These we call Interpreters of Nature.

“ We have also, as you must think, novices and apprentices, that the succession of the former employed men do not fail; besides a great number of servants and attendants, men and women. And this we do also: we have consultations, which of the inventions and experiences which we have discovered shall be published, and which not: and take all an oath of secrecy, for the concealing of those which we think fit to keep secret: though some of those we do reveal sometimes to the state, and some not.<sup>3</sup>

“ For our ordinances and rites: we have two very long and fair galleries: in one of these we place patterns and samples of all manner of the more rare and excellent inventions: in the other we place the statua's of all principal inventors. There we have the statua

<sup>1</sup> *qui labores et collectiones priores penitus introspiciunt et quasi ruminantur.*

<sup>2</sup> The translation adds that this was only done after consultation with the whole body. *Quod faciunt non nisi consultatione et colloquiis prius habitis cum sociis universis.*

<sup>3</sup> *Etsi nonnulla ex iis, cum consensu, interdum Regi aut Senatui revelemus: illa autem omnino intra notitiam nostram cohibemus.*

of your Columbus, that discovered the West Indies : also the inventor of ships : your monk that was the inventor of ordnance and of gunpowder : the inventor of music : the inventor of letters : the inventor of printing : the inventor of observations of astronomy : the inventor of works in metal : the inventor of glass : the inventor of silk of the worm : the inventor of wine : the inventor of corn and bread : the inventor of sugars : and all these by more certain tradition than you have. Then have we divers inventors of our own, of excellent works ; which since you have not seen, it were too long to make descriptions of them ; and besides, in the right understanding of those descriptions you might easily err. For upon every invention of value, we erect a statua to the inventor, and give him a liberal and honourable reward. These statua's are some of brass ; some of marble and touch-stone ; some of cedar and other special woods gilt and adorned : some of iron ; some of silver ; some of gold.

“ We have certain hymns and services, which we say daily, of laud and thanks to God for his marvellous works : and forms of prayers, imploring his aid and blessing for the illumination of our labours, and the turning of them into good and holy uses.

“ Lastly, we have circuits or visits of divers principal cities of the kingdom ; where, as it cometh to pass, we do publish such new profitable inventions as we think good. And we do also declare natural divinations<sup>1</sup> of diseases, plagues, swarms of hurtful creatures, scarcity, tempests, earthquakes, great inundations, comets, temperature of the year, and divers other things.

<sup>1</sup> *Prædicimus etiam antequam advemant (id quod ad Naturales Divinationes pertinet) morbos epidemicos, &c.*

and we give counsel thereupon what the people shall do for the prevention and remedy of them."

And when he had said this, he stood up; and I, as I had been taught, kneeled down; and he laid his right hand upon my head, and said; "God bless thee, my son, and God bless this relation which I have made. I give thee leave to publish it for the good of other nations; for we here are in God's bosom, a land unknown." And so he left me; having assigned a value of about two thousand ducats, for a bounty to me and my fellows. For they give great largesses where they come upon all occasions.

[THE REST WAS NOT PERFECTED.]

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AN ANCIENT CHINESE ALCHEMICAL CLASSIC

KO HUNG ON THE GOLD MEDICINE AND ON THE  
YELLOW AND THE WHITE

THE FOURTH AND SIXTEENTH CHAPTERS OF PAO-P'U-TZŪ  
Translated from the Chinese

BY LU-CH'ANG WU

with an Introduction, etc.

BY TENNEY L. DAVIS

WITH 8 FIGURES

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## INTRODUCTION

*Pao-p'u-tzū*, of which two of the most interesting chapters are now made available for the first time in a European language, is probably the widest known and highest regarded of the ancient Chinese treatises on alchemy. It has been preserved for us as part of the Taoist canon. It shows us the art matured by five or six centuries of practice, having its traditional heroes and an extensive literature, its technique and philosophy now clearly fixed, its objectives and pretensions established. This art the author examines in a hard-headed manner and expounds in language which is remarkably free from subterfuge.

*Ko Hung* (about 281-361 A.D.) was one of the outstanding scholars of the *Chin* dynasty, a Taoist philosopher and writer on medical, alchemical, literary, and historical subjects. He defended the Taoist doctrines at a time when they had not yet gained wide currency, and propagated them before Taoism had assumed a churchly organization. He believed in magic but probably no more so than his contemporaries. He was credulous but had the admirable credulity of an inquiring experimentalist who was well aware of the powers and possibilities of nature.

Alchemy arose in China during the third or fourth century B.C., apparently a spontaneous and indigenous growth out of Taoist mysticism.<sup>1</sup> The *Tao* or Way was to be attained by inaction. Those

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller account of the origins and growth of Chinese alchemy and of the alchemists who practiced the art before *Ko Hung* see *Isis*, 18, 210-230 (1932), the Introduction to Wu's translation of the *Ts'ao T'ung Ch'i* of *Wei Po-yang*.

who sought for it, despairing of accomplishing a perfect control of the self, tried physical means of attaining it, deep breathing, abstinence, and the use of medicines of immortality. Those who had attained the *Tao* became *Hsien*, supernatural immortals having eternal youth and other marvelous powers, capable of passing through fire and water without harm, of traversing great distances in a moment of time, of changing their forms at will, etc. On attaining complete inaction, they were capable of all or any action however extraordinary—in accordance with the usual dialectic of mysticism.

The notion of *Hsien* appears to have arisen naturally out of a discussion and elaboration of the philosophy of *Lao-tzū*. It seems to have been the central idea of Chinese alchemy. Recent evidence, in particular that which is supplied by the present translation and by *Wu's* translation of the *T'sun Tung Ch'i*, tends to support the early opinion of Edkins<sup>2</sup> who believed that European alchemy was derived from that of China, that Chinese alchemy reached the Arabs, and thence Europe, through Persia with which country the Chinese had intercourse both before and after its conquest by the Mohammedans. There is no evidence that alchemy existed in Europe, or in Byzantium or Alexandria, before the eighth century or thereabouts when the Arabs began to practice it—and the opinion of Martin<sup>3</sup> and more recently that of Johnson<sup>4</sup> that Chinese alchemy came to Europe through Byzantium and Alexandria cannot be accepted. Indeed the present translation supplies new evidence of the fundamental dissimilarity between the aims of the Chinese alchemists who sought to make real gold and silver artificially and those of the Alexandrian and Byzantine chemists who strove to tincture base metals to the appearance of the noble ones. The present translation also gives a very full picture of the notion of *Hsien*, which notion must surely have been attached to Chinese alchemy when it came to the Arabs. But the notion does not appear in European alchemy at all. Perhaps it failed to appeal to the European alchemists whose Mohammedanism and Christianity promised them an immortality anyway. They sought for an elixir of long life but not for a medicine of immortality, for the best of natural human powers but not for supernatural ones.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. Joseph Edkins, *Trans. China Branch Roy. Asiatic Soc.*, Hong Kong, 1855, part 5, pp. 83-99.

<sup>3</sup> W. A. P. Martin, *The Lore of Cathay or the Intellect of China*, New York, Chicago, and Toronto, 1901. Chapter 3, *Alchemy in China, the Source of Chemistry*, pp. 44-71.

<sup>4</sup> Otho S. Johnson, *A Study of Chinese Alchemy*, Shanghai, 1928.





Ko Hung.

The notion however seems to have survived in Arab lore. The marvelous powers of the *Hsien* are so like those of the *jinn* of the Arabian Nights that one wonders whether the Arabic work, *jinn*, may not be derived from the Chinese *Hsien*.

*Ko Huang* was a voluminous writer. His most important work, the pseudonymous *Pao-p'u-tzu*,<sup>5</sup> dates from about 317-332 A.D., and consists of seventy chapters or books. The text occupies six volumes or fascicles of a recent edition of the Collected Taoist Classics, and is divided into two parts, each occupying three volumes, the "Outer Chapters," *H'ai-p'ien*, in fifty books, which deal with matters of politics and government from the Confucianist point of view, and the "Inner Chapters," *Yei-p'ien*, in twenty books, which treat of the immortals, alchemy, charms, exorcisms, etc. *Ko Huang* also wrote, evidently somewhat later, the *Shen Hsien Chuan* (Lives of the Immortals), ten books, which describes the lives of eighty-four *Hsien*. He wrote a large collection of medical recipes, *Chiu Kwei Yao Fang*, one hundred books; literary works, legends, funeral orations, poems, etc., one hundred books; fragments relating to his official business, thirty books; and treatises on the classics, historians, and philosophers, three hundred and ten books. The Taoist canon also contains a number of shorter tracts on hygiene, medicine, alchemy, and magic which are ascribed to him, some of them wrongly as Forke<sup>6</sup> believes. The history of the *Chiu* dynasty, which contains his biography, praises his extraordinary learning which was without equal. His writings are deep and very critical, and richer in content than the historical writings of *Sou-wei Ch'ien* and *Pao K'o*.

"Nowhere in *Pao-p'u-tzu's* book," says Waley,<sup>7</sup> "do we find the hierophantic tone that pervades most writings on alchemy both in the East and in the West. He uses a certain number of secret terms. . . . But his attitude is always that of a solidly educated layman examining claims which a narrow-minded orthodoxy had dismissed with contempt. He condemns those who are unwilling to take seriously either 'books that do not proceed from the school of the Duke of *Chou* or facts that Confucius has not tested.' "

<sup>5</sup> This name has been translated *Old Sober-Sides*, but Dr. Wu considers that it has no satirical intent and would better be translated *Solemn-Serious Philosopher*. The gentle smile in the portrait which is reproduced herewith perhaps agrees with its real intent.

<sup>6</sup> Alfred Forke, *Arch. f. Geschichte d. Philosophie*, 41, 115-127 (1932).

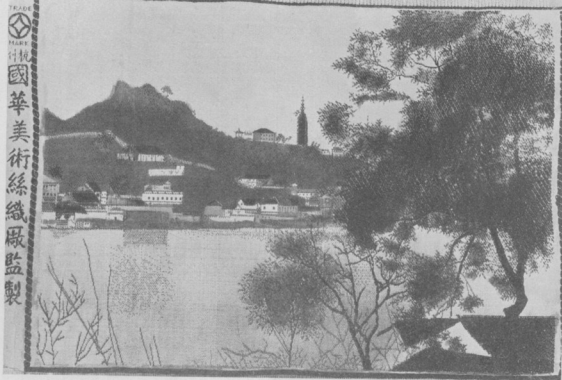
<sup>7</sup> A. Waley, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London Institution*, Vol. VI, Part 1, 24 pp. (1930).

*Ko Hung* was born at *Chiang-ning-fu* in *Kiangsu*. It is reported that he showed an extraordinary fondness for learning while still a boy but that his family was poor and he was obliged to chop wood in order to earn money for the purchase of writing materials. At some time after 326 A.D., he asked the Emperor *Yüan-ti* to send him to *Kuan-lou* because cinnabar, which he needed for his experiments, could be obtained there from Cochin-China. He set out on the journey but lingered in the neighborhood of Canton where he lived in the *Lo Fu* mountain studying and writing, and where he finally died. The account of *Ko Hung* in the *Lich Hsien Chüan chuan* (Complete Biographies of the Immortals) contains the following passage (trans. Wu) which indicates something of the tradition which later attached itself to him.

"One day *Ko Hung* addressed a message to the Governor of Canton stating that he would shortly start on a long journey in search of worthy teachers with whom to study. The Governor made haste to pay him a farewell visit. On that very day *Ko Hung* sat until noon when he died at the age of eighty-one years. He appeared only to have gone to sleep. When the Governor arrived he was already dead. Although dead, he looked alive and his body and limbs were soft. Upon being placed in the coffin, the body disappeared leaving the clothing behind it.

"In the *T'ang* dynasty, one *Tsui H'ci* met an aged woman beggar at the *Kai Yuan Tsu* monastery in *Nankai* who told him of her ability to cure goiters and gave him the medicinal herb, *I*. He later came to the knowledge that she was *Ko Hung's* wife."

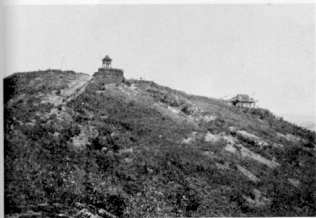
In the chapter on the Gold Medicine *Ko Hung* names twenty-seven mountains which are "fit for profound meditation and the compounding of medicines." Besides these "there are large islands which are next in order as places good for the preparation of the medicine" (he names six), and, since "the famous mountains of the central part of the country are inaccessible," he names eight which are accessible. It may be that he visited some of these places. At any rate he is supposed to have lived and experimented on the hill at the West Lake in Hangchow, for the hill is now known as *Ko's Hill* and is surmounted by a Temple dedicated to him, a Medicine Pavilion, and a Shrine containing a stone tablet on which his portrait is carved. The carved portrait shows the same traits of physiognomy, the same beard, the same lines on the cheeks, and the same painted extra set of eyebrows as the other portrait which we have reproduced herewith.



TRADE  
MARK  
杭國華美術絲織廠監製

SILK PANEL REPRESENTING A SCENE AT THE WEST LAKE IN HANGCHOW. THE HILL SHOWN IN THE BACKGROUND (NOW KNOWN AS *Ko's Hill*) IS ONE UPON WHICH *Ko Hung* IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE LIVED AND EXPERIMENTED. A TEMPLE AND A SHRINE ON THE HILL (NOT SHOWN IN THE PICTURE) ARE DEDICATED TO THE MASTER.

It was not customary for a Chinese alchemist to give instruction in the art to a member of his own family. *Ko Hung* therefore did not learn directly from his great-uncle, *Hsien Kung*, but learned from his great-uncle's disciple, *Cheng Chün*. *Pao-p'u-tzũ* states that *Hsien Kung* had been instructed by *Tao Yüan-Fang* who had received books on the Gold Medicine from a spiritual being. He lists the books on alchemy which *Hsien Kung* received from *Tao Yüan-Fang* and those which he himself received from *Cheng Chün*. He describes some of



KO'S HILL. THE TABLET SHRINE ON THE HILLTOP AT THE LEFT, THE MEDICINE PAVILION LOWER DOWN AT THE RIGHT.

the conversations which he had had with *Cheng Chün* concerning the principles of the art, and reports that *Cheng Chün* asserted that he and *Tao Chün* had accomplished a successful compounding. He tells in a circumstantial manner about his own instruction and explains his position in seeking the *Tao* and in writing on alchemy. He has always had a liking for unusual information and for things unorthodox. His Outer Chapters and miscellaneous writings in two hundred volumes he considers quite enough to speak his mind to posterity. In the Inner Chapters there are no rhetorical flourishes. He is sure of good results and of the truthfulness of his teachers. Although he



THE MEDICINE PAVILION



THE *Pailou*, AN ARCH-LIKE GATEWAY OF STONE, WHICH STANDS  
ASTHIDE THE ROAD LEADING TO THE TEMPLE. ON ACCOUNT OF PHOTO-  
GRAPHIC DIFFICULTIES NO PICTURE WAS MADE OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF.



THE TABLET SHRINE WHICH HOUSES A STONE TABLET ON WHICH IS CARVED A PORTRAIT OF KO HUNG.



THE MEDICINE WELL. THE INSCRIPTION READS *Chin Ko Hsien Lien Tan Ching*, MEDICINE WELL OF KO THE Hsien OF THE CHIN DYNASTY.

像 世 洪 高 侯 內 關 晉



PRINT OF STONE TABLET PORTRAIT. *Chin Kuan Nei Hou Ko Hung Chih Hsiang*, PORTRAIT OF *Ko Hung*, THE MARQUESS OF *KUAN NEI* OF THE *CHIN* DYNASTY.



has not been able to make gold and silver himself, he works hard at his writing for the sake of interesting truth-loving scholars of the future in the study of the *Tao*.

His chapter on the Gold Medicine deals primarily with the preparation of the pill of immortality, and that on the Yellow and White primarily with transmutation—but the two subjects are ultimately the same, for the pill of immortality in certain cases is clearly nothing else but the artificially produced noble metal resulting from the transmutatory process. The Gold Medicine is sometimes the pill of immortality itself, sometimes the product of the transmutation, and sometimes the reagent, the "powder of projection" or the "tincture" as the European alchemists called it, which accomplishes the conversion of the base to the noble metal. In the chapter on the Gold Medicine *Pao-p'u-tzū* describes the preparation of the Nine Furnace-Pot Medicines, any one of which will make the user a *Hsien*, and of a large number of other medicines, of varying powers and efficacy, many of which he ascribes to other workers whom he names. Certain ones convert mercury, copper, and lead to gold, another converts lead to silver and to gold, and one in particular converts mercury into silver of such sort that this silver converts further lead into silver, in which respect it resembles the *ferment* of the Mediaeval alchemists. A certain medicine has the power of imparting immortality to one who eats and drinks out of vessels which are made of it, from which it would appear that the medicine is simply actual gold. The inference is verified by passages in the chapter on the Yellow and the White in which the eating of gold and silver is discussed, kneadable gold, and the relative merits of the gold and silver which are found in nature as compared with those which are made by alchemy. Natural and artificial gold and silver are the same, but the *Tao-shih* are too poor to buy the natural metals and find it more convenient to prepare them.

*Pao-p'u-tzū's* insistence upon the genuineness of the gold and silver of alchemy is especially important because of the light that it throws upon the difference between Chinese alchemy and Alexandrian chemistry. His discussion of make-believes shows that he was aware of the possibility of staining the metals and knew that the changes are only superficial and do not correspond to a real change of substance. Iron takes on the appearance of copper if it smeared with *Ts'ung Ch'ing*, and silver is given the yellow color of gold by the action of egg-white.

*Pao-p'u-tzū* speaks of the general ignorance of the art and of the

pretentiousness of those who are ignorant. He points out that vegetable substances are not suitable materials for the preparation of the medicine, for these, unlike *Tan Sha* (cinnabar), turn to ashes when they are burned. He mentions the necessity for offerings and ceremonials, for isolation from evil and disturbing influences, and for other precautions. He discusses the cost of preparing the medicine and the difficulty of procuring the reagents. He tells anecdotes of certain ones who accomplished, or tried to accomplish, the compounding, and supports his opinions by quotations from earlier sources and by mentioning wonderful things in nature which are well known to be possible. He points out that the secret names by which the substances are designated increase the difficulties, but gives what appear to be very straightforward descriptions of some of the processes. In the chapter on the Yellow and the White in particular, the apparatus and manipulation are sometimes described so clearly that a chemist could carry out the process himself if he knew what reagents to use.

The description of one process deserves special discussion, for it evidently concerns the preparation of stannic sulfide or "mosaic gold" and is perhaps the earliest known description of the preparation of this interesting substance. Mosaic gold exists in flakes or leaflets which have the color and the luster of gold, it does not tarnish, and is used at present for bronzing radiators, gilding picture frames and similar purposes. As *Ko Hung* describes the process, "tin sheets, each measuring six inches square by one and two-tenths inches thick, are covered with a one-tenth inch layer of a mud-like mixture of *Ch'ih Yen* (Red Salt) and *Huei Ch'ih* (potash-water, lime water), ten pounds of tin to every four of *Ch'ih Yen*." They are then heated in a sealed earthenware pot for thirty days with horse manure (probably with a smouldering fire of dried manure). "All the tin becomes ash-like and interspersed with bean-like pieces which are the yellow gold." The large portion of the metallic tin is converted into some ash-like compound or possibly into the ash-like allotropic modification, gray tin. A small portion of the tin is converted into bean-sized aggregates of flaky stannic sulfide. The yield is poor, for the author says that "twenty ounces of gold are obtained from every twenty pounds of tin used."

It seems likely that *Ko Hung* was personally experienced in the chemistry of tin, for the Chinese say that he was the first to make tin foil and that he made magic or spirit money out of it.

The present translation has been prepared from the *Ch'ang Hsün Sün Yüan* (701, 4881, 10024, 13752) edition of *Pao-p'u-tzū*, reprinted

and published by the Commercial Press, Ltd., Shanghai, China. The translator has divided it into paragraphs and these have been numbered for reader reference. It has been supplied with an Abstract and Table of Contents which will enable the student more readily to grasp the trends and ramifications of *Ko Hung's* argument and more quickly to find the passages which relate to particular points. When Chinese words are rendered in Roman letters, we have followed the spellings which are used in Giles' Chinese-English Dictionary, 2d ed., London, 1912. As this does not completely identify the words, we have printed, at the places of the first occurrence of the words in the translation, the numbers which correspond to the ideographs in Giles' Dictionary. Later occurrences are indicated in the Index of Chinese Words.

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## ON THE GOLD MEDICINE

THE FOURTH OF THE INNER CHAPTERS OF *Pao-p'ü-tzû*

## TRANSLATION

1. *Pao-p'ü-tzû* (8709, 9512, 12317) says: Thousands of books on the cultivation of the nature of man and on the art of everlasting sight have I perused, and every one of them have I found to have nothing other than the *Huan Tao* (5047, 10618) (Returned Medicine) and *Chin I* (2032, 5509) (Gold Fluid) as its main subjects of discourse. From this it may be concluded that these two things are the supreme achievements of the *Hsien Tao* (4449, 10780) (The Immortals' Way, The Way to Immortality). If the eating of these two things does not transform the eater into a *Hsien* (4449), then there could never have been any *Hsien* in the past.

2. There was a time when the country was in tumult and the people fled for safety in all directions. I for one toured through the lands of *Hsü* (4748), *Yü* (13078), *Ching* (2157), *Hsinü* (4206), *Chiang* (1208), and *Kuang* (6397), where I met hundreds of *Tao-shih* (10780, 9892) (Seekers of the Way). Some of them had been known to me through their high reputations. However, all of them were alike in their superficial understanding and in their ignorance even. Every one possessed several tens of volumes of books, but these had been copied only for keeping's sake and were never thoroughly understood. Ever so often these people would profess to have acquired the art of *Hsing Chi* (4624, 1064) (the art of directing the movement of the ethereal essence in one's own body) and of thriving on a non-cereal diet of medicinal herbs.

3. All the formula books were very much alike. Every one of the *Tao-shih* had a copy of the *Tao Chi Ching* (10780, 787, 2122) (Book of the Secrets of the Tao) and held it to be the most valuable. Yet these people were so ignorant about the book as erroneously to ascribe its authorship to *Yin Hsi* (13270, 4073). So I set them aright by telling them that it was the work of *Wang Tsu* (12493, 12128), a military inspector-general of the *Wei* (12567) (403-241 B.C.) dynasty, who was no ancient but just our own contemporary. *Wang Tsu* knew nothing about the great medicines, and he was merely attempting to direct the *Chi* (ethereal essences in one's body) into the "chamber of achievement" when he wrote the Book of the Secrets of the Tao, declaring it to be the complete revelation of the Tao. This is indeed very misleading.

4. Upon questioning the *Tao-shih* on the *Shên Tao* (9819, 10618)

(Divine Medicine) and the *Chin I* (Gold Fluid) and on the invocation of *T'ien Shên* (11208, 9819) and *Ti Hsien* (10956, 4449) (Heavenly God and Earthly Spirit), I found that they did not seem to know anything about these things. The majority of them were mere charlatans, who lied to the world when they said that they had been living long among the *Hsien*. As a matter of fact none of them really knew the secrets of the *Tao*. Those of them who had heard something about the Gold Medicine seemed to agree in thinking that its secrets were known only to the ancients who had since become *Hsien*. They did not believe that the Medicine could still be prepared. Again, some of them had secured certain useless formulas and superficial treatises—but never the real book. However, all these people invariably declared that they possessed everything about the art of the Medicine.

5. It was *Tao Yüan-Fang* (11753, 13744, 3455) who, in the midst of profound meditation in the *T'ien Chia Shan* (11208, 2533, 9663) (Sky Pillar Mountain), was given volumes of the divine books on the Gold Medicine by some spiritual being. It was then the close of the *Han* (3836) (206 B.C. to 220 A.D.) dynasty when the land was rife with disturbances. So he fled across the river to come south with the idea of practicing the *Tao* in some famous mountain. From him my great uncle, *Hsien Kung* (4449, 6508), received the *T'ai Ch'ing Tao Ching* (10573, 2188, 10618, 2122) (Book on the Supremely Clear Medicine) in three volumes, the *Chia Ting Tao Ching* (2263, 11268, 10618, 2122) (Book on the Nine Furnace-pot Medicine) in one volume, and the *Chin I Tao Ching* (2062, 5509, 10618, 2122) (Book on the Gold Fluid Medicine) in one volume. My great uncle in turn passed the books on to his disciple, *Ch'eng Chün* (724, 3269). *Ch'eng* was too poor to buy the necessary medicines for the compounding. I had been serving him as a disciple for a long time when we went to the *Ma Chi Shan* (7576, 801, 9863) (Horse Footstep Mountain). There, at an altar especially erected for the purpose and with an oath, I received the book, some magical formulas, and the "Unprinted Magical Formulas." This last book was not known to be in existence until *Tao Yüan-Fang* gave it to my great uncle, who gave it to *Ch'eng Chün*, who in turn gave it to me. No other *Tao-shih* ever knew of it.

6. It has been more than twenty years since I got the books. Being poor I could only lament the want of means to make trial of the compounding. Yet there are those who have caskets full of gold and mountain-piles of money and know nothing of this art of immortality. They would not believe it even if they heard about it. How unfor-

tunate for these people! Just as one would feel the insipidity of ordinary food only after having tasted a well-flavored dish and sense the smallness of hillocks only after having seen the *K'un Lun* (6537, 7496) Mountain, so would one look down on the common recipes after having learned of the *Chin Tau* (2032, 10618) (Gold Medicine). But the Great Medicine is difficult to compound properly, and so one sometimes has to fall back on the preparation of lesser medicines which are more easily secured. However, the eating of thousands of ratties of substances other than the Great Medicine is of little beneficial effect and will not bring immortality to the eater. That is why *Lao-tzu* (6783, 12317) remarked that one's efforts would be of no avail unless he succeeded in obtaining the *Hsun Tau* or *Chin I*. Even common cereals are capable of supporting the lives of the people; with them they live, without them, they die. How else could it be but that the Divine Medicine would be ten thousand times as efficacious!

7. The more the Gold Medicine is heated, the more exquisite are the transformations it passes through. Yellow gold will not be changed even after long heating in the fire, nor will it rot after long burial in the earth. The eating of these two medicines will therefore so strengthen one's body that he will not grow old and die. This is a case of deriving strength from an external substance, comparable to the maintenance of a fire by oil and the protection of the leg from rotting in water by a smear of *Tung Ch'ing* (12285, 2184) (Copper Blue). The Gold Medicine which is to be taken internally is even more effective in nourishing and protecting the body than Copper Blue which merely acts on the surface.

8. Numerous are those in the world who do not believe in the *Tao*. There may be a few who do, but they are not so fortunate as to have set eyes on the practice of the Art or even to have heard about it from an accomplished teacher. For the enlightenment of these people I have herewith made a brief transcription of some practical directions for the practice of the Art. The seeker of the *Tao* should not be satisfied with ordinary methods, thinking that they will suffice to bring him immortality.

9. Upon learning the Art one will feel as if he had just come out of a filthy cesspool into the open sea, or left the firefly for the sunlight and moonlight—just as the hearing of peals of thunder makes one feel the insignificance of the roll of the drum, and the sight of a whale makes one feel the smallness of ordinary fish.

10. The attempt at subliming poor medicine is like driving a lunc

donkey in pursuit of fast-blowing wind or sailing a basket-like vessel on the high seas.

11. There are numerous minor methods of various kinds for the compounding of the medicine. The efficacy of the medicine compounded does not depend merely on the recipe followed in its making, but varies as well with the degree of working to which it has been subjected. The order of efficacy of the medicines compounded according to various recipes of different values may be reversed on account of different degrees of working, just as wine obtained from a single processing can not be compared with that obtained from nine.

12. However low in value a minor medicine may be, it is still far superior to the best of vegetable substances. For vegetable substances turn to ashes when burned. But *Tau* (10618) (Medicine), when acted upon by heat, gives quicksilver; and, after passing through other changes, it returns to *Tau Ska* (10618, 9620) (Red Sand, Cinnabar). How greatly different from vegetable matter! This is understood only by the *Shên Hsien* (9819, 4449) (Spiritual Beings) who are far superior to common people.

13. In this world there are few who are well-informed and many who harbor misgivings about the *Tau*. Many do not even know that mercury comes out of *Tau Ska*. When told, they still refuse to believe it, saying that *Tau Ska* is red, and how can it produce a white substance? They also say that *Tau Ska* is a stone, and that stones upon heating invariably turn to ashes, and how can *Tau Ska* be expected to behave otherwise? These are but simple truths and yet they are beyond their comprehension. What wonder then that they should laugh at the *Hsien Tao* when told.

14. For the sake of the teachable ones of posterity, the *Chên Jên* (589, 5624) (Truth Men, Sages) of antiquity transmitted a method by which they might be freed from the misery of death. These are indeed words of truth. Even these are looked upon by people of the world as unfounded. How can the words be unfounded when the nine turns and nine transformations (in the preparation of the Medicine) appear several times in a day exactly in accordance with the prescription? The way by which the *Chên Jên* arrived at the truth is indeed beyond common people's reach!

15. Since my youthful days I have had a liking for the Art. I travelled all distances and braved all hazards in my eager search for the Truth. Whenever I succeeded in obtaining some unusual piece of information, I would feel gladdened at heart despite people's ridicule.

16. Not that I want to be known to the world through a book of

strange thoughts and fanciful imagination, but that for the sake of those among people of the future who will appreciate, I am writing this—knowing that all those of later times will be of inferior calibre. Just as the highest degree of *Yang* (12883) (Positiveness) will not revive what is decayed and the greatest mind will not be able to enlighten the most stupid, so books are comprehensible only to those who understand and things are valuable only to those who can appreciate. Give a bow of decoration to a farmer, and he will use it to chase birds away from his farm; give an emperor's robe to a southern barbarian and he will wear it to carry wood. They are simply ignorant. What else can be expected of them?

17. People of the world idle their time away. They neither apply themselves to literary pursuits nor to works. They waste away their lives in pursuit of fame and profit. They may be busy running after official positions in the capital or they may be indulging in wine, woman, song, or the chess, squandering their valuable time to the detriment of their health. Stunned would they be when told of the supreme *Tao*, and bored to dozing by the sight of writings on the *Tao*. They do not take proper care of their nature-given persons. Instead, they seek for their dissipation, ending in death. They do not go after the art of life-cultivation. Of course, those who do not know and value the *Tao* cannot be expected to force it on these unwilling people.

18. People often say that if immortality were attainable, then the wealthy ones among the wise of antiquity would have attained it. In putting forth the argument, these people do not seem to realize that wealthy people of all ages are alike; being disbelievers and not seeking the *Tao*, they concentrate their attention on their immediate needs. How then can they be expected to attain the *Tao*?

19. Even if one does not believe firmly in the possibility of life extension and of becoming a *Hsien*, what is there to deter him from making a trial of the Art? If only a slight success should come of the trial and he should gain thereby two or three centuries of life, would not this slight extension of one's life be far superior to the fleeting existence of the mass?

20. Of the numerous things in this world, the Art and the *Tao* are the most difficult to comprehend. How then can people of ordinary endowment pass the judgement that there cannot possibly be a way to immortality? If one harbors doubts about the *Tao* merely because of popular disbelief, then he is assuming the mass to be wise people. How numerous then will the wise ones in this world be! Furthermore, those who understand the *Tao* and work for its attainment—are they



not the most stupid, even more stupid than common people? Many fear to attempt to seek for immortality, lest they should fail and expose themselves to ridicule as victims of folly and deception. But supposing that common people are not infallible and that their idea about the *Tao* is one mistake they make among ten thousand sound judgements, will not those who have laughed be laughed at by the ones who succeed despite discouragement and ridicule? Even the sun and the moon cannot shine on everything; how can the people's mind be so omniscient as to be entirely trustworthy?

21. *Pao-p'u-tz'u* says: It is written in the *Huang Ti Chia Ting Tao Ching* (5124, 10942, 2263, 11268, 10618, 2122) (The Yellow Emperor's Book on the Nine Furnace-pot Medicine) that *Huang Ti* was elevated to a *Hsien* after eating the medicine. Although the proper method of breathing and directing the movements of the *Ch'i* (ethereal essence) of the body, and the eating of vegetable medicine, may extend people's life, yet they will not keep people from death. But the eating of the *Shên Tao* (Divine Medicine) confers immortality on the eater, enabling him to last as long as heaven and earth and to ride on clouds and dragons up and down the *T'ai Chiing* (10573, 2188) (Great Clearness).

22. *Huang Ti* transmitted the book to *Hsüan-tz'u* (4790, 12317), cautioning him that the *Tao* was of great moment and should therefore be made known only to the upright and virtuous and not to any undeserving person even if he were wealthy. He who is ready to follow the *Tao* should send gold effigies as a token of homage, and gold fish into the water which flows eastward, and should besmear his mouth with blood as a sign of allegiance to the cause. No one who is not endowed with bones of *Shên Hsien* will be able to perceive the *Tao*.

23. The medicine should be prepared on a famous mountain, in a lonely spot, with only two or three persons present. The compounder should be on a diet for one hundred days previously and should perfect the purification and anointment of the body with the five perfumes. Meanwhile, strict avoidance of proximity to evil things and complete isolation from vulgarity should be observed. Those who are not believers in the *Tao* and would ridicule the undertaking should be kept in ignorance of it; otherwise the preparation will fail. When the medicine is made, not only will the successful manipulator be immortal, but all the rest of his family will become immortal as well. Common people do not use this method of preparing the *Shên Tao*, preferring instead to use materials of vegetable origin, not knowing that these substances, being themselves subject to decay and destruction when placed in the earth or upon heating, cannot prolong people's lives.

24. The nine preparations, which are so essential to the attainment of immortality, are not what persons of common stamp will ever see or hear of. Those people, numbering millions and millions, stupidly seek for riches and honors and these only. Are they not merely walking corpses?

25. Worship is in order when compounding the medicine. There are separate volumes of diagrams and directions for the service of worship.

26. The first medicine is called *Tan Hua* (10618, 5005) (Medicine Flowers). To begin with, *Hsuan Huang* (4790, 5124) (Black and Yellow, Heaven and Earth, etc.) should be gotten ready. A mixture should be made of some tens of catties of each of *Hsiang Huang Shui* (4099, 5124, 10128) (arsenic sulfide water?), *Fan Shi Shui* (3409, 9964, 10128) (alum water?), *Jung Yen* (5746, 13112) (a red or black salt?), *Lu Yen* (7423, 13112) (niter or potash?), *Yü Shih* (13527, 9964) (a white ore of arsenic?), *Mu Li* (8089, 6970) (chalkstone?), *Ch'ih Shih Ch'ih* (1967, 9964, 1792), *Hua Shih* (5022, 9964) (soapstone?), and *Hu Fên* (4930, 3519) (white lead?). The mixture is then sealed with Six-one Mud. The medicine obtained by thirty-six days heating will confer immortality on the eater in seven days. When mixed with black fat and heated in a strong flame, the medicine will soon turn to yellow gold. This may also be obtained by heating two hundred and forty liangs (ounces) of the medicine with one hundred catties of quicksilver. If yellow gold fails to appear, heating should be repeated and then it will certainly be obtained.

27. The second medicine is called *Shên Tau* (Divine Medicine) or *Shên Fu* (9819, 3687) (Divine Charm) and confers immortality on the eater in a hundred days. He will be able to walk in fire and water uninjured. With this medicine smeared on the soles of his feet he will be able to walk on water. The eating of three knifebladesful of the medicine will kill off all sorts of worms in the body to the end that the eater will be free from all diseases.

28. The third medicine is called *Shên Tau* (Divine Medicine). Whoever eats one knifebladesful of it will become an immortal in one hundred days. Even domestic animals will attain immortality by eating it. It has the power to ward off the five kinds of soldiers. A hundred days after the medicine has been eaten, the *Hsien*, the maids-in-waiting of the spiritual realm, the ghosts and spirits of the mountains and rivers will all come in the form of human beings to wait on the person who has eaten it.

29. The fourth medicine is called *Huan Tau* (Returned Medicine).

Immortality will come to the eater in a hundred days after eating. Above him will hover pheasants, peacocks, and red birds, and at his side will be fairies. Yellow gold will be formed immediately by heating a knifeblade-ful of the medicine admixed with a catty of quicksilver. Whoever has his money painted with it will have it back on the same day that he spends it. Words painted with this medicine on the eyes of common people will keep spirits away from them.

30. The fifth medicine is called *Êk Tan* (3343, 10618) (Food Medicine). Immortality will come to its eater in thirty days. Ghosts and spirits will wait on him and fairies will come to his side.

31. The sixth medicine is called *Lien Tan* (7152, 10618) (Refined Medicine). It transforms the eater into an immortal in ten days. Upon heating with quicksilver, it also gives yellow gold.

32. The seventh medicine is called *Jou Tan* (5653, 10618) (Soft Medicine). Whoever eats a knifeblade-ful of it will become an immortal in a hundred days. The eating of this medicine together with *Ch'ueh P'in Chik* (3250, 8850, 1789) (Imperfect Basin Juice) is so efficacious as to restore the reproductive activity of an old man of ninety. When heated with *Chia Kuang* (2032, 6568) (lead?) it will give yellow gold.

33. The eighth medicine is called *Fu Tan* (3691, 10618) (Latent Medicine). It brings immortality to the eater on the very day that he eats it. The keeping of a quantity of the medicine about the size of the kernel of a date fruit will ward off all evil spirits. Doors with words painted in this medicine will keep off all devils, spirits, thieves, robbers, tigers, and wolves.

34. The ninth medicine is called *Hau Tan* (3825, 10618) (Cold Medicine). Whoever eat a knifeblade-ful of it will become an immortal in a hundred days. There will come angels and fairies to wait on him. He will be light of body and will be flying on wings.

35. All these nine medicines need not be eaten. It will be sufficient to eat one of them in order to be a *Hsien*. The choice as to which one among the nine is left to the discretion of the aspirant. Whoever eats any of the medicines may rise on high or stay in this world according to his desire. He becomes invulnerable and is free to move everywhere.

36. *Pao-p'u-tzu* says: There is also the *T'ai Ch'ing Shen Tan* (10573, 2188, 9819, 10618) (Supreme Clear Divine Medicine) which originated with *Yüan Chün* (13744, 3269) who was teacher to *Lu-mo-tz*. Of the nine chapters in the *T'ai Ch'ing Kuan T'ien Ching* (10573, 2188, 6363, 11208, 2122) (Supreme Clear Observe Sky Book) the

first three cannot be taught, the middle three are not deserved by the world and should therefore be destroyed, but the last three in three separate volumes are books on the medicine.

37. *Yüan Chün* is a great spiritual being who can harmonize *Yin-Yang* (13224, 12883) (The Two Contraries, Negative and Positive, Female and Male, Soft and Hard, etc.), command ghosts, spirits, winds, and rain, drive the nine dragons and twelve white tigers, and lord over all the *Hsien*. Even this great one was not born with all his powers but acquired them by following the *Tao* and eating the medicine. How can common people expect to get powers otherwise?

38. Says the Book: Among those who have acquired the *Tao*, the best ones will be raised on high to be officials in the skies, the mediocre will congregate on the *K'un Lun* mountain, while the lowest class will be living in this world as immortals. Common people, disbelieving the *Tao*, do things to court death day and night. How can nature be expected to force them to live when they themselves do not seek to do so? One should guard against telling those who care only for delicious food, fine clothes, pleasing tones, pretty faces, wealth, and rank to satisfy their desires to the fullest measure. They will ridicule the *Tao* and the real books on the medicine. He who thus erringly lets out the secrets of the *Tao* will be afflicted with misfortune. To those who have devout faith in the *Tao* some of the medicine may be given but not the directions for making it.

39. He who has attained the *Tao* will have no use for being a prince. For, once the medicine has been prepared, he will not only become an immortal by eating it but he will also be able to make gold out of it. When it has been prepared, a grand offering of a hundred catties of the medicine should be made to the various gods and spirits. The directions for the ceremony of offering are given in another volume and are different from those for the nine furnace-pot offering.

40. The hundred catties of the medicine for the offering are to be apportioned as follows: twenty for worshipping the skies, five for the Sun and five for the Moon, eight for the Great Dipper, eight for the Supreme Monad, five for the well, five for the oven, twelve for *Ho Po* (3036, 9340), five for *Sü* (9803), five for the Spirit of the Gateway, five for the Street-gateway, and five for *Ch'ing Chün* (2188, 3269). The remaining twelve catties should be put in a good leather wallet to be taken on a propitious day at a busy hour to the market, where the material is quietly and unnoticedly disposed of at various places. The one who performs this should not look back at what he has left behind. Whatever is in excess of the one hundred catties will be

available for spending. Misfortune will befall the maker of the gold unless he makes offerings of it to the spirits before spending any of it.

41. The Book says further: The Way to immortality does not lie in the worshipping of and doing service to the spirits, nor in the art of bending and unbending. What is necessary in order to be a *Shên* (9819) (a god, a diety) is the *Shên Tzu* (Divine Medicine), which is not so easy to know of and still more difficult to make.

42. Recently, *Hsin Yeh Yin Chün* (4574, 12989, 13224, 3269) of the closing years of the *Han* dynasty succeeded in making this *T'ai Ch'ing Tzu* (10573, 2188, 10618) (Supreme Clear Medicine) and with it became an immortal. He was a Confucian of parts, adept at poetical composition and the writing of commentaries on books and on the medicine. From his pen (brush) came also an account of his early experiences in learning the *Tao* from a certain teacher and of forty people whom he personally knew to have been transformed into spiritual beings.

43. The preparation of this Supreme Clear Medicine is more difficult than that of the Nine Furnace-pot Medicine. However, it is the means to make one raised on high in broad daylight. Before starting the fire for the compounding, *Hua Ch'ih* (5005, 1983) (Flower Pond), *Ch'ih Yeu* (1967, 13112) (Red Salt), *Kên Hsueh* (5972, 4845), *Hsüan Pü* (4790, 8556) (Black-White), *Fei Fu* (3483, 3687), and *Sau H'u Shên Shui* (9552, 12098, 9819, 10128) (Three-Five Divine Water) should be made.

44. The eating of the medicine of the first turn will bring immortality in three years, that of the second turn in two years, of the third in one year, of the fourth in one-half year, that of the fifth turn in one hundred days, of the sixth in forty, of the seventh in thirty, of the eighth in ten, and of the ninth in three days.

45. When the medicine of the ninth turn is placed in a Divine Furnace-pot in the sun sometime after the summer solstice until the pot becomes hot, and then a catty of *Chu Êk* (2544, 3333) (Red Substance) is placed under the lid, it will be noticed by a couching observer, after the sun-spirit has shone on it for a short time, that the substances are raised in dazzlingly brilliant divine lights of rainbow colors. That is the Returned Medicine, the eating of a knife-bladeful of which will raise the eater to the skies in broad daylight.

46. The medicine of the ninth turn may be sealed in a kettle and heated by sawdust, gently at first and then strongly. The speed of transformation is variable from the first change to the ninth. The medicine of fewer turns is less efficacious and will confer the state of

*Hsiao* on its eater only after a lapse of time. The medicine of more turns is more powerful and will do the same in less time.

47. There is also the *Chiu Kuang Tau* (2263, 6389, 10618) (Nine Light Medicine) prepared according to the *Chiu Chuan I Fa* (2263, 2711, 5505, 3306) (Marvellous Method of Nine Turns). This is similar to the one just described. In its making the several medicines are fired together so as to turn the five stones, which are, namely, *Tau Sha* (cinnabar), *Hsiung Huang* (4699, 5124) (arsenic sulfide?), *Pai Fan* (8556, 3409) (white alum), *Tseng Ch'ing* (11735, 2184) (a blue compound of copper?), and *Jui Shih* (5723, 9904). Each stone can make five turns of five different colors. The five stones together can give twenty-five different colors. One liang (ounce) of each should be placed in separate vessels.

48. To resuscitate a person who has been dead for less than three days, bathe the body in a mixture of a knifeblade-ful of *Ch'ing Tau* (2184, 10618) (Blue Medicine) and water, and feed him with another knifeblade-ful. Under such treatment he will be immediately raised from the dead.

49. He who has his left hand painted with some of the black medicine admixed with a little water will be able to get whatever he desires.

50. If one desires to disappear at will, to foresee the future, to tell fortunes, to have eyesight covering thousands of miles, and to be immortal, he needs only to partake of a knifeblade-ful of the Yellow Medicine. All these are to be found in the middle volume of the *T'ai Ch'ing Ching* (10573, 2188, 2122) (Supreme Clear Book).

51. *Pao-p'u-tzu* says: There is also the *Wu Ling Tau Ching* (12698, 7222, 10618, 2122) (Book on Five Efficacious Medicines) in one volume, which treats of five methods. The materials to be used are *Tau Sha*, *Hsiung Huang*, *Ts'ü Huang* (12397, 5124) (arsenic sulfide?), *Tseng Ch'ing*, *Liu Huang* (7245, 5124) (sulfur), *Fan Shih* (3409, 9904) (alum?), *Ts'ü Shih* (12407, 9904), *Jung Yen*, and *T'ai I Yu Liang* (10573, 5341, 13615, 7016) (Remains of Provisions of the Supreme Monad). With *Liu I Ni* (7276, 5342, 8197) (Six-one Mud) these are to be compounded in a divine chamber with proper ceremonies, offerings, and worship. The medicine is made in thirty-six days. A *H'u Ti* (12698, 10942) (Five Emperors) charm painted with the medicine in five colors has the power to bring about immortality. However, this is not as efficacious as the medicines prepared according to the Supreme Clear Method or the Nine Furnace-pot Method previously described.

52. The *Min Shan* (7910, 9663) (Min Mountain) Method is due to *Chang Kai Ta* (416, 5784, 10489) to whom it was revealed in the midst of his profound meditation in a stone chamber in the *Min* Mountain. It is as follows: A vessel of *Huang T'ung* (5124, 12285) (Yellow Copper, Brass?) for the reception of water from the moon is covered with quicksilver and the spirit of the sun is allowed to fire its inside. Repeated eating of the medicine thus prepared will bring immortality. This medicine may be further treated with *Hsiang Huang* in a sunlight-concentrator of copper (bronze) under a covering of quicksilver and exposed to sunlight for twenty days. When a pea-size quantity of the medicine thus prepared is swallowed with some water, if a blind man takes it, he will regain his sight in a hundred days; if an invalid, he will recover his health in the same lapse of time; if a hoary head, his hair will turn black again; and if short of teeth, new ones will grow in place of those which had fallen.

53. In the preparation of *Hu-w-eh'eng-tz'ü's* (12790, 762, 12317) medicine, *Huan Sha Hung* (5047, 9624, 5266) (Return Sand Mercury) is placed in an eight-inch copper (bronze?) plate, which rests on three points of an earthenware stove containing burning charcoal. To the contents of the copper plate sulfur is added from time to time so as to maintain a pasty condition. It takes one hundred days to complete the preparation of the medicine, an elixir.

54. *Hsien-wên-tz'ü's* (4546, 7751, 12317) medicine is prepared by having a mixture of one part of *Tao* and three parts of wine exposed to the sun for forty days. On the first day of eating, the three kinds of worms and all maladies are banished. By eating it regularly for three consecutive years one attains the *Tao*. There will come two fairies to wait on him. His will be the power to get whatever he desires. All spirits and dead ones are kept from doing any harm in the presence of this medicine.

55. The *Li Ch'eng Tao* (6054, 762, 10618) is similar to the Nine Furnace-pot *Tao* but is not as efficacious. One way of preparation is to fire *Tz'ü Huang* and *Hsiang Huang* to get copper for casting into a vessel, which is then inverted over some three-year old wine. Red stalagmites of less than an inch in length or five-colored precious stones will appear inside the vessel in a hundred days. These are then removed and placed for some time in the earth to obtain the elixir. By eating this medicine with the sap of *T'w Ssü* (12124, 10259) one gains the power to transform himself into anything he desires. He who swallows the medicine together with some *Chu Ts'ao* (2544, 11634) (Red Herb) is empowered to walk on emptiness. The Red Herb, *shên*

found in caves, is similar to the small date and attains a height of three or four feet when full-grown. Its branches and leaves are all red and its stems are like corals. When tapped, its sap flows out like blood. By adding jade, the eight stones, gold, and silver to the sap, a thick paste is obtained which may readily be made into pills. On standing the thick paste changes to a liquid which is called *Yü Li* (13630, 6950) (Sweet-wine of Jade).

56. Again, there is the *Ch'ü Fu Tan* (3118, 3727, 10618). In the famous *Tan* (medicine, red) rivers, such as the *Tan* river of *Nan Yang* (8128, 12883), there are *Tan* fishes at night-time ten days before the summer solstice, at which time they are found to be swimming along the borders of the waters with their dazzling colors shining through like blazing fire. They should then be caught in nets. However, only a portion of the catch should be taken and the rest should be returned to the water. He who has his feet painted with the blood of such fish is thereby enabled to walk on the surface of water and to live in the deeps.

57. The preparation of the medicine according to *Ch'ih-sung-tzū* (1967, 10449, 12317) is as follows: *Tan*, covered with the sweat of an old mud container made of vegetable fiber, and the juice of "alum peach" are sealed in a waterproof vessel, which is then buried three feet below the surface of the earth for a hundred days. When mixed with the juices pressed from the red seeds of the *Chu* (2606?) tree and eaten, this medicine will bring redness to the features and hair as well as immortality. It is not improbable that the Red Beards among the Yellow *Hsien* were eaters of this medicine.

58. In *Shih Hsien Shên's* (9964, 4440, 9865) preparation, the young unfledged "black birds" are fed with real *Tan* and beef. When grown up, they have red down and feathers. They are then to be killed and crushed together with their feathers. A knifebladeful of this medicine taken internally will bring a long life of five hundred years.

59. The medicine of *K'ung-fêng-tzū* (5908, 3554, 12317) is compounded by mixing *Tan* with "sheep black," crane's eggs, fowl's blood, *T'ien Hsiung* (11208, 4699), and juice of Mount *Shao Shih*. The mixture is then sealed inside the shell of an egg of the *Ku* (6248) (heron) and soaked in *Yün Mu Shui* (13812, 8067, 10128) (mica water?) for a hundred days. A dose of one tenth of a quart of the red liquid thus obtained prolongs life for ten years and a quart of it brings a long life of a thousand years.

60. According to *Ts'ü-wên-tzū* (11917, 12633, 12317), the medicine



obtained by stuffing *Tau* inside the *H'u* (8085) (a kind of duck) effects an extension of life when swallowed occasionally and brings immortality when eaten regularly.

61. *Liu Yüan* (7270, 13744) prepared his medicine by soaking *Tau Sha* in *Hsüan Shui* (4790, 10128) (Black Water, Mystic Water) for a hundred days. It turns purple and will not soil the hands. It is next mixed with *Yün Mu Shui* (mica water?), sealed in a tube, and placed in a well. At the end of a hundred days the mixture is transformed into a red liquid. When taken internally, one tenth of a quart of this medicine enables one to live a thousand years; habitual drinking of it brings immortality.

62. In preparing his medicine, *Lo-ch'ang-tzū* (7331, 450, 12317) placed some *Tseng Ch'ing*, *Ch'ien Tau* (1733, 10618) (Lead Red), quicksilver, and *Tau Sha* in a copper vessel. This is then sealed with dry tile and white soapstone (slate?) and heated in white sand for eighty days. By swallowing a pea-size quantity of this medicine, one will attain the state of a *Hsien* in three years.

63. In *Li H'üan's* (6884, 12633) preparation *Tau* is wrapped in raw silk and boiled in bamboo sap to get the Red Springwater. This is then floated on water and cooked. A potion of one tenth of a quart of a mixture of this medicine with *Hsüan Shui* will bring about the state of *Hsien* in a year.

64. The preparation of the medicine according to *Yin-tzū* (13270, 12317): Have a mixture of *Yün Mu Shui* (mica water?) sealed in a vessel to be buried in a Gold Flower Pond for a year. A catty of this medicine ingested in knifebladeful doses confers on the eater a long life of five hundred years.

65. The compounding of the *T'ai I Chao Hun P'o Tau* (10573, 5341, 466, 5244, 9420, 10618) (The Supreme Monad's Medicine for the Summoning of the Spirit) is similar to that of the *Chiu Kung Tau* (The Nine Light Medicine) in the use of the five stones and the sealing of the vessel with Six-one Mud. When swallowed with a *Liu Huang* (sulfur) pill and some water, this medicine has the power of reviving persons who have been dead for three days or less. Life comes back to these persons instantly. Those who have been revived in this manner invariably tell the story that they followed the beckoning of a messenger on their return to this world.

66. The *Ts'ai Nü Tau* (11504, 8419, 10618) is prepared by cooking *Tau* with hare's blood and honey for a hundred days. He who swallows pills of this medicine of the size of a dryandra seed, one pill at a time and three times a day for a hundred days, will have two fairies at his service.

67. To prepare the medicine of *Chi-ch'iu-tzū* (904, 2310, 12317), clear and colorless wine, sesame oil, sweet-wine of a hundred blossoms, and dragon fat, enclosed with *Liu I Ni* (Six-one Mud), are heated for ten days by a flameless fire of husks. The ingestion of this medicine in pea-size doses will bring a long life of five hundred years.

68. In compounding *Mo-tzū Tan* (8022, 12317, 10618), mercury and Five Stone Fluid are cooked for ten days in a copper vessel with stirring by an iron ladle. A knifebladesful of the Returned Medicine thus obtained is sufficiently potent as a panacea. Habitual ingestion brings immortality.

69. When lead, mercury, *Tseng Ch'ing*, and water are sealed together and cooked in red millet seeds for eighty days the *Chang-tzū Ho Tan* (416, 12317, 3945, 10618) is obtained. Regular ingestion of pea-size pills made of this medicine and some date meal for a hundred days brings a long life of five hundred years.

70. The elixir of *Ch'i Li* (998, 6870) is a five-colored medicine compounded by cooking the five-stones, snow, *Tau Sha*, and mercury in a large copper vessel for a hundred days.

71. By firing together a hundred knifebladesful of the *Ch'i Li* medicine and a hundred catties of lead, white silver will be obtained. Upon firing it with *Hsiang Huang* for a hundred days, yellow gold is formed which, if too hard, may be softened by boiling with lard, and if too soft, may be hardened by boiling with some white plums.

72. The *Yü Kwei Tan* (13630, 6435, 10618) is made in the following manner: *Tan* is moistened with saliva and placed between two layers of a mixture of *Tseng Ch'ing* and sulfur powder in a bamboo pipe which is heated in a sand bath for fifty days. He who has taken this medicine internally for a hundred days will have fairies and spirits (such as those who have control over the elements, etc.) at his service and he will be a seer.

73. In making the *Chou Hou Tan* (2474, 4025, 10618) saliva and *Tan* are mixed, sealed in dry tile, and cooked for eighty days. A pea-size quantity of the substance obtained is then stirred in the sun so that the light coming from it mixes with the sunlight. A pea-size amount of this medicine is enough to bring about immortality. When fired in copper of *Tan Yang* (10618, 12883), this medicine is transformed into gold.

74. The medicine of *Li Kung* (6884, 6568) is prepared by mixing *Chên Tan* (589, 10618) (Real Medicine) with one quart each of the waters of the five-stones so as to form a thick paste. After firing in a caldron for thirty-six days, *Shih Liu Huang I* (9964, 7245, 5124,

5509) (Stone Sulfur Liquor) is added and mixed. Ten years' regular ingestion of the medicine thus prepared will enable a man to last as long as the sky and the earth.

75. To compound the medicine of *Liu Shêng* (7270, 8065), *Tau* admixed with the juices of the *Ti Ch'u* (10956, 2649) herb, the *Ch'u* (2627) tree, and chrysanthemum flowers is heated for thirty days and then ground to a powder. A year's eating of this medicine will bring a long life of five hundred years. If the eater be an old man, he will be rejuvenated beyond recognition; if a youth, he will not grow old.

76. The medicine of *H'ang Chün* (12493, 3269) is made as follows: *Pa Ska* (8510, 9624) and mercury are sealed in eggs, which are then brooded by a hen. Ageing and decay of the human body will be avoided by eating three such eggs on a propitious day. Children should not be allowed to swallow them, else they will be stunted in their bodily development. The same result obtains with new-born chickens, dogs, and all other fowls and animals.

77. The preparation of the medicine of *Ch'ên Shêng* (658, 9865) consists of sealing some white honey and *Tau* in a copper vessel, which is then placed in the water of a well for a year. The eating of this medicine protects one from hunger for a year. The consumption of a catty of the medicine makes one live a hundred years.

78. The medicine of *Han Chung Chung* (3827, 2900, 2894) is made by cooking honey and *Tau* in a sealed vessel. He who eats it will have his life prolonged, the strength of his eyesight improved, and no shadow cast from his person when standing in the sun. Besides the methods of preparation of the medicine just described, there are still others, which, however, need not be discussed here.

79. *Pao-p'u-tzũ* says: *Chün I* (Gold Fluid) is what *T'ai I* (10573, 5341) (the Supreme Monad) swallowed and was thereby transformed into a *Hsien*. Its efficacy is no less than that of the nine medicines. In its making one pound (old weight) of yellow gold is sealed in a vessel together with *Hsüan Ming Lung Kao* (4790, 7946, 7479, 5936) (Dark Clear Dragon Grease), *T'ai I Hsün Shou Chung Shik* (10573, 5341, 4864, 10014, 2875, 9964) (Stone in the Head of the Supreme Monad), *Ping Shik* (9277, 9964) (Ice-Stone), *Tzũ Yu Nü* (12329, 13423, 8419) (Purple Itinerant Damsel) *Hsüan Shui I* (4790, 10128, 5509) (Dark Water Fluid), *Chiu Hua Shik* (2032, 5001, 9964) (Gold Petrified Stone), and *Tau Ska*. The mixture changes into a fluid in a hundred days. According to the *Chên Ching* (589, 2122) (Real Book), the swallowing of the Gold Fluid causes the whole body to assume a gold color. *Lao-tzũ* transmitted the secret to *Yüan Chün*, saying

that the *Tuo* was of great import and that, since it came to light only once in about a hundred years, he should preserve the secret well in a stone chamber inside a special building by the side of an eastward-flowing stream on the side of a celebrated mountain. The process occupies a hundred days, during which time the compounder should be dieting and be isolated from the mass. A dose of a liang (ounce) of the medicine will transform one into a *Hsien*, who however shall remain in this mundane world and shall be known as a *Ti Shui Hsien* (10956, 10128, 4449) (An Immortal of the Earth and Waters). In order to be raised to the skies, one must abstain from eating cereals for a year before swallowing the medicine. One-half liang of the medicine will bring immortality and immunity from all evils and maladies. He will be able to raise a family and to rank in officialdom to the full of his desires. Those who desire to ascend to the skies should diet and should swallow an ounce of the medicine.

80. The method of *Chia I Wei Wei Hsi Chü Sheng Fa* (2032, 5709, 12521, 12582, 4073, 3003, 9876, 3366): After cooking for thirty days, a mixture of *Chia I* (Gold Fluid) and quicksilver is placed in a yellow earthen jar, which is then sealed with Six-one Mud and strongly heated for sixty hours. Thereupon the medicine is obtained. The swallowing of a pea-size quantity of the medicine is enough to make a *Hsien* out of any person. Silver is obtained by sprinkling a knife-bladeful of this medicine onto a catty of quicksilver. When a catty of the medicine is placed over a fire and fanned, red gold is obtained, which will flow and is called *Tau Chiu* (10618, 2032) (Medicine Gold). Swords besmeared with this medicine have the power of checking enemies at a distance of ten thousand miles. By eating and drinking out of vessels made of this medicine, one will attain immortality. The medicine may be exposed to the sun and moon to obtain a liquid which is also an elixir. When a mixture of the Gold Fluid and Yellow Earth is strongly heated in a jar made of Six-one Mud, it is entirely changed into serviceable yellow gold.

81. When the latter is again heated *Tau* is obtained, a pea-size dose of which is potent enough to make one a *Ti Hsien* (Earthy Spirit, an Immortal of the Earth) in celebrated mountains and great rivers. Silver is obtained when a knife-bladeful of this medicine is sprinkled onto quicksilver. When an ounce of this silver is mixed with a catty of lead the entire mass is changed into silver. He who desires to get the classic on the Gold Fluid and the magic chant must throw eight ounces of gold into an eastward flowing river and must take an oath by smearing his lips with blood. No success will come

to him who obtains the secrets in an irregular way. Even to those who are professedly the most credulous, only the medicine should be given but not the classic which deals with its making. The indiscreet giving of the classic will bring misfortune both to the giver and to the recipient. For the gods watch over us closely without our knowledge.

82. *Pao-p'u-tzû* says: True it is that the nine medicines are the best of *Hsien* medicines. Yet the materials for their compounding are quite numerous. They are easily procurable only in large cities which have good facilities for communication, but are not to be obtained at other places. Furthermore, in the compounding of the medicines, the fires should be tended for tens of days and nights with industrious application and close adjustment, which is a great difficulty. The compounding of the Gold Fluid is much easier. There the only thing which is difficult is to get the gold. One pound in the old measure is equivalent to two in our contemporary measure. Such a quantity of gold would cost only some three hundred thousand cash. The other auxiliary materials are easy to procure. In the compounding, no fire is required. All that needs to be done is to have the mixture in a *Hua Ch'ih* (Flower Pond) for the necessary number of days. A total expenditure of four hundred thousand cash will make an amount large enough to transform eight persons into *Hsien*. Just as no wine is formed by the fermentation of small quantities of rice, so small quantities of materials will not be able to interact to give the medicine.

83. *Pao-p'u-tzû* says: Again there is the *Êrh Huang Chiu* (3343, 5124, 2032) (Pool of Yellow Gold) which, although not as good as Yellow Gold, is yet by far better than other medicines. Gold may be refined by the use of pig's skin and hide fat, or by treatment with the bark of the *Ch'u* herb, or by having it pulled out into sheets, or by transforming it all at once into a fluid. Again *Hsiung Huang* and *Tz'û Huang* may be used to treat the gold to yield something stretchable like skin. All these are but methods of the *Ti Hsien* (Immortal of the Earth).

84. Both silver and large pearls of the oyster can be made into water, which is a medicine that will not keep and will bring immortality only through frequent ingestion. So it is not as good as the Gold Fluid.

85. *Pao-p'u-tzû* says: In compounding the Gold Fluid and the Nine Medicines, it is necessary not only to spend money but also to carry out the work in celebrated mountains in complete isolation from

the work-a-day world. That is why few persons are successful in it. The printed word is sure to spread. Since such secrets should be guarded from the mass, so books on the *Tao* should never deal with the Gold Medicine.

86. In compounding the medicine the chief thing to be guarded against is the ridicule of the disbeliever. For such derision is sure to prevent the success of the compounding. According to the words of *Ch'eng Chiu*, he who attempts the compounding of this medicine must make offerings to the gods, from among whom *T'ai I* (Supreme Monad), *Yüan Chün*, *Lao Chün* (6783, 3269), and *Hsüan Nü* (4790, 8419) will come to watch over the operations. If the compounder should let stupid people of the world know of his doings by not working in a secluded place, the gods would withhold their blessings, whereupon the evil *Ch'i* (ethereal essence) would enter to spoil the medicine. In order to be successful the compounder must work in a famous mountain retreat in isolation from the mass. He should practice dieting, refraining from the five stimulant foods, namely, *Ts'ung* (12021) (leeks), *Suan* (10381) (garlic), *Chiu* (2279) (scallions), *Liao Hao* (7067, 3871) (smartweed), and *Ch'ieh* (1525) (mustard), and from raw fish, for a hundred days before beginning to work and continued until the medicine is done.

87. *Ch'eng Chiu* says that, according to what he heard from *Lao Chün*, the attempted preparations of the Gold Fluid and the Divine Medicine should never be made in small mountains, where there are no real gods but spirits of trees and stones, aged things of ten thousand years and bloodthirsty demons. These are devils who work not for the good but for the evil of man. They attempt to lead seekers of the *Tao* astray into temptation. The seekers should protect themselves and their retainers against these devils who may do harm to their medicines. In preparing good medicines, medical men of today guard against the sight of chickens, dogs, children, and women, lest the efficacy of their medicines be destroyed by the evil sight of these things. Likewise, dyers guard their goods from the sight of the evil-eyed, lest the beautiful tints be spoiled. What wonder then that the great medicines of the gods should be closely guarded? That is the reason why seekers of the *Tao* since ancient times do their compounding not in ordinary but in famous mountains.

88. According to the *Hsüan Ching* (4449, 2122) (Book of Immortals), the mountains fit for profound meditation and the compounding of medicines are as follows: *Hua Shan* (5005, 9663) (*Hua* Mountain), *T'ai Shan* (10596, 9663), *Hu Shan* (3979, 9663), *H'eng*

*Shan* (3019, 9663), *Sung Shan* (10458, 9663), *Shao Shih Shan* (9746, 9974, 9663), *Ch'ang Shan* (450, 9663), *T'ai Pai Shan* (10573, 8556, 9663), *Chung Nam Shan* (2894, 8128, 9663), *Nü Chi Shan* (8419, 837, 9663), *Ti Fei Shan* (10956, 3497, 9663), *Wang Wu Shan* (12493, 12737, 9663), *Pao Tu Shan* (8709, 12065, 9663), *Au Ch'iu Shan* (44, 2310, 9663), *Ch'ien Shan* (1739, 9663), *Ch'ing Ch'ung Shan* (2184, 763, 9663), *O Mei Shan* (8430, 7714, 9663), *Sui Shan* (10392, 9663), *Fün T'ai Shan* (13812, 10577, 9663), *Lo Fu Shan* (7291, 3646, 9663), *Yang Chia Shan* (12883, 1154, 9663), *Huang Chiu Shan* (5124, 2032, 9663), *Pieh Yen Shan* (9154, 11826, 9663), *Ta T'ien T'ai Shan* (10470, 11208, 10583, 9663), *Hsiao T'ien T'ai Shan* (4294, 11208, 10583, 9663), *Kai Chu Shan* (5784, 2616, 9663), *Kuo Ts'ung Shan* (6288, 11596, 9663). In these mountains there are true gods and perhaps *Ti Hsien* (Immortals of the Earth). On them grows the *Chih Ts'ao* (1788, 11634) (Herb of Longevity). These mountains are good, not only for compounding medicines, but also as refuges from military and other dangers. Those who have attained the *Tao* will be helped to success by the gods in their attempts at compounding the medicines.

89. Besides the mountains before-mentioned, there are large islands which are next in order as places good for the preparation of the medicines, namely, *Tung W'ang Chou* (12248, 12667, 2445), *Tau Chou* (10641, 2445), and *Chu Yü* (2006, 13523) in the district of *Hui Chi* (5184, 884), *Yang Lü Chou* (12842, 7320, 2445), *T'ai Kwang Chou* (10306, 6380, 2445), and *Yü Chou* (13535, 2445) in the district of *Hsi Chou* (4748, 2444).

90. The famous mountains of the central part of the country are inaccessible. The accessible ones are *Ho Shan*, *Au Ch'ang Shan* (44,450, 9663), and *T'ai Pai Shan* which are in the district of *Au Yang* (44, 12883), and *Ssu Wang Shan* (10291, 12509, 9663), *Ta T'ien T'ai Shan*, *Hsiao T'ien T'ai Shan*, *Kai Chu Shan*, and *Kuo Ts'ung Shan* which are in the district of *Hui Chi*.

91. *Pao-p'u-tz'u* says: Although I come from a family of high officials, I have no ability to manage affairs of state. Yet I could have attained fame and high official rank if I had followed the footsteps of my kinsmen who, although far less accomplished than I, have risen high in officialdom. For the sake of writing and compounding the Divine Medicines for the attainment of immortality in far-away mountains, I have left behind me my people and worldly honors. People of the world look askance on my abandonment of officialdom and on my isolation from the mass to take up the labor of farming. Some even say that I am out of my mind. But it should

be remembered that the *Tao* and the affairs of the world are incompatible. How could I seek for the *Tao* without abandoning worldly affairs? When sure of his convictions, one acts accordingly with determination, unaffected by praise or by blame, by encouragement or by dissuasion from others. I write of my intentions so as to make them known to men of the same mind of the future. Men of determination who come after me will have to make sacrifices similar to mine.

92. The *Hsiao Shên Tou Fang* (4294, 9819, 10618, 3435) (Formula of the Lesser Divine Medicine) is as follows: Three catties of Real *Tao* and six catties of white honey are mixed and cooked in the sun until the mass can be made into pills. Within a year after consuming a dose of some ten pills of the size of sesame seeds, gray hair will turn black, fallen teeth will be replaced by new ones, and robustness will spread all over one's appearance. Frequent swallowing of the pills will bring rejuvenation and immortality.

93. The *Hsiao Tou Fa* (4294, 10618, 3396) (Method of the Lesser Medicine): One catty of *Tao*, after proper grinding and sieving, is thoroughly mixed with three quarts of bitter wine and two quarts of lacquer. The intimate mixture is heated over a gentle fire until it can be made into pills. The swallowing, daily for thirty days, of three pills of this medicine of the size of sesame seeds will cure the hundred sicknesses and dispel the three demons (one in the brain, one in the heart, and one in the abdomen; they cause the diseases in people). He who continues swallowing the medicine for a hundred days will have strong bones and sinews. He who does it for a thousand days will have his name engrossed on the list of the immortals and will last as long as heaven and earth. Form and complexion change irregularly. The sun and the moon become full by turns. He will not cast any shadow in the sun, for he will give off a special light.

94. The *Hsiao Êrh Huang Chin Fa* (4294, 3343, 5124, 2032, 3396) (Method of the Lesser Food of Yellow Gold): Refined gold is placed in clear wine and boiled until, when squeezed in the hand, it comes through between the fingers like mud. If the mixture does not boil, or if it does not come through between the fingers, the gold should be cut into smaller pieces and then boiled again with wine. He who swallows one shot-size pill of the medicine, or two small ones of half that size, daily for thirty days will be cared for by the gods and fairies. Silver may be used instead of gold in the preparation of the medicine. He who eats these two medicines will attain buoyancy of movement if he lives in a stone chamber in a famous mountain, and



he will be an immortal of the earth if he stays among the mass. This secret should not be divulged without discretion.

95. The *Liang-i-tzŭ Êrh Hsiao Huang Chin Fa* (7010, 5455, 12317, 3343, 4297, 5124, 2032, 3366) (Method of the Food of Reduced Yellow Gold of *Liang-i-tzŭ*): Three catties of hog's skin and adhering fat, one quart of clear bitter wine, and five ounces of yellow gold are heated in a vessel in an earthen oven. The gold will make a hundred entrances and a hundred exits from the fat. So will the wine. A dose of one catty of the medicine will bring immortality; one-half catty, two thousand years of life; and five liangs (ounces), twelve hundred years of life. There is no limit to the quantity of the medicine to be eaten, but propitious days should be chosen for its eating. The secret should not be divulged to others, else the medicine cannot be prepared successfully.

## ON THE YELLOW AND THE WHITE

THE SIXTEENTH OF THE INNER CHAPTERS OF *Pao-p'u-tzū*

## TRANSLATION

1. *Pao-p'u-tzū* says: *The Shên Hsien Ching* (9819, 4449, 2122) (Book of Spiritual Beings, Book of Deities and Immortals) dealing with *Huang P'ai* (5124, 8556) (The Yellow and the White) comprises twenty-five volumes of over a thousand sections. The Yellow is gold and the White is silver. Unwilling to mention them outright, the ancients spoke of these substances enigmatically so as to keep the valuable *Tao* in secrecy. Sometimes they entitled their writings *K'eng Hsien* (6001, 4564), which also means gold. Most of the writings are difficult to comprehend, while only a very small part of them is definitely understandable. Common people seem to think that the *Tao* is merely fictitious. Such misgivings are the same thing as disbelief in *Shên Hsien*.

2. Sometime ago, as a disciple of *Ch'eng Chün*, I received the *Chiu Tan Chün* (2263, 10618, 2122) (Book of Nine Medicines), the *Chiu Yin I Ching* (2032, 13252, 5509, 2122) (Book of Gold and Silver Fluid), and the *Huang P'ai Chung Ching* (5124, 8556, 2875, 2122) (Middle Book of the Yellow and the White) in five volumes.

3. *Ch'eng Chün* said that he and *Tso Chün* (11753, 3269) had attempted the compounding with success in *T'ung Shau* (12285, 9063) (Copper Mountain) on the *Lu Chiang* (7396, 1208) (Lu River). The diligence and hardships sustained from dieting, purification, and abstinences are no different from those incidental to the compounding of *Chiu Tan* and *Shên Hsien Yao* (9819, 4449, 12058) (Divine Medicine, Medicine of Spiritual Beings).

4. Most people ridicule me for my liking for things unorthodox. They take me to be queer for attempting to understand the incomprehensible. But why should I do so? Am I writing on these things just for the sake of leaving some works behind me when I am gone? But that is unnecessary, for my Outer Chapters and miscellaneous writings in two hundred volumes are quite enough to speak my mind to posterity. Moreover, in the Inner Chapters there are no rhetorical flourishes but mere plain outspoken words. I am also aware of the fact that the treatment of such matters will be looked upon by people of the world as being far-fetched. It is not comparable in the winning of popular appreciation to a treatment of the tangible affairs of the vulgar world. The reason why I do not refrain from writing on the subject, knowing that it will not be accorded proper reception by the

world, is that I am sure of good results and of the truthfulness of my teachers.

5. On account of the poor facilities for communication in the land, and of my poverty, misfortune, and lack of means, I have not secured the necessary medicines for the compounding. Yet here I am telling people that I know how to make gold and silver while I myself remain poverty-stricken. Is this not like the case of a man who sells medicines for curing lameness while he himself cannot walk? How can people be expected to be convinced? However, such arguments are not infallible, and we may grant exceptions in certain cases. I work hard at weaving in black and white simply for the sake of interesting curious and truth-loving scholars of the future in the study of the *Tao*.

6. The art of transformation is indeed omnipotent. People's persons are ordinarily observable, yet there are means for their concealment. Ghosts and spirits are not usually to be seen, yet they may be caused to appear. Many are those who cannot execute such performances.

7. Water and fire, which are in the sky, may be gotten by means of the *Yang Shui* (12883, 10416) (a light-concentrator of a copper alloy). *Ch'ien* (1733) (lead), which is white, can be reddened into *Tau* (red, redness, medicine). *Tau*, which is red, can be whitened into *Ch'ien*. Clouds, rain, frost, and snow, which are ethereal-essences of the sky, can be exactly duplicated from medicines.

8. The flying, the running, and the crawling beings are all of definite forms. Yet all of a sudden they may discard their original forms and be changed into other things. Man is the noblest of all creations; yet cases are not a few wherein he is transformed into a crane, a stone, a tiger, a monkey, a turtle, or even into sand. As to the formation of abysses from high mountains and the making of peaks out of deep valleys—such are but changes of the great earth. Transformation is inherent in the nature of heaven and earth. Why then should we think that gold and silver cannot be made from other things? For, are the fire obtained by the *Yang Shui* and the water gotten from the *Fang Chu* (3435, 2571) (a shelled creature) any different from ordinary fire and water? Dragons formed from snakes and grease made from *Mao Ts'ou* (7689, —) (a kind of vegetable growth) are no different from natural dragons and grease. The causes of all these lie in the responsive inspiration and incorporation of the spirit of creation. One cannot know the ends of such transformations unless he has thoroughly comprehended the reason and

nature of things. Nor can he tell of the phenomena unless he can trace matters to their beginnings and ends.

9. Narrow-minded and ignorant people take the profound to be uncouth, and relegate marvels to the realm of fiction. To these people, anything that has not been spoken of by *Chou Kung* (2450, 6568) or Confucius, or is not to be found in the Classics, is untrue. Is this not narrow-mindedness and ignorance?

10. People of the world think that the *Tao* does not exist just because *Liu Hsiang* (7270, 4283) did not succeed in attaining it. One may as well maintain, because of a crop failure from drought or from flood, that no harvest is possible from the cultivation of cereals.

11. Magistrate *Wu Ta Wên* (12748, 10470, 12633) of *Ch'ing Tu* (762, 12050), a learned and cultivated man, related that as disciple of *Li Kên* (6884, 5974), the *Tao-shih* (Seeker of the Way, Man of the Art), he saw him heating a mixture of *Ch'ien* (lead) and *Hsi* (tin). To this was added a big pea-size quantity of medicine. Upon stirring with an iron ladle and cooling, silver was obtained. Having gotten the secret formula, *Wu Ta Wên* attempted the compounding himself. However, being an official in active service, he could not perform the one hundred day dieting and purification necessary for his success—and so ended in failure. And so he exclaimed that this world was not worth living in!

12. *Huan Chün Shou* (5075, 3209, 9663) relates the following: *Ch'eng H'ei* (757, 12528) of the *Han* dynasty had a liking for the art of the Yellow and White. He married a lady from a *Tao-shih* family. Once *H'ei* was commanded to serve his sovereign as a retainer on a trip. However he lacked appropriate attire for the occasion and was therefore deeply grieved. Thereupon his wife came to his help by uttering the incantation, "Pray send forth two measures of silk." Forthwith appeared the desired fabric.

13. One day *H'ei* was attempting the compounding of the medicine according to the *Chên Ch'ung Huang Pao* (630, 2875, 5269, 8720) (The Great Treasure in the Pillow-Chest), a formula-book of *Huai-san-tz'ü* (5034, 8128, 12317), and was without success when his wife approached him and found him fanning a fire under a pot of quicksilver. She said, "Let me try my hand at it." With these words she sprinkled into the pot a small quantity of some medicine from a wallet. After a short while, silver was obtained. Highly astounded *H'ei* demanded of his wife why hadn't she enlightened him on the *Tao*. She replied that the *Tao* was to be attained only by those who are especially blessed. Failing in his attempt to extract the desired information

from his wife at the price of luxurious food and clothing, he tried by the advice of a friend to force her to yield the secret under the whip. Still the obdurate wife held her own, declaring that the *Tao* was to be revealed only to the appropriate persons. If they were the proper persons, the *Tao* would be revealed to them by the accomplished even if they were absolute strangers. If they were not of the right kind, they would not obtain the secrets of the *Tao* from the accomplished even by inflicting the penalty of piecemeal dissection of his body. But *Wei* kept on with his coercion until his wife ran about in madness with her body covered with mud and finally died.

14. As an instance from recent times we may consider the case of *Hua Ling Sui* (5005, 7199, 10271), a talented, learned, and well-informed scholar who had been skeptical about things not found in the classics. However he once came across a *Tao-shih* who professed to have knowledge of the method of the Yellow and the White. He asked the *Tao-shih* to make good his words by deeds, which were as follows: *Ch'ien* (lead) was treated in an iron vessel with a certain powdered medicine and silver was obtained. The silver was further treated with some other medicine and gold was made. *Hua* also learned from the *Tao-shih* the art of penetrating-sight. After less than a hundred days practice he was able while lying in bed to have a very clear view of the skies and the surroundings of his house as if there had been no intervening roof and walls. He was able to hold conversation with his dead concubine as if she were alive. He heard the deities, to whom he had paid homage, returning courtesy to him when his bed seemed to be astir with some noise. And so *Hua* exclaimed that there was no limit to the possibilities of things in this world. Things not recorded in the classics should not be arbitrarily dismissed as untrue. It was natural for *Hua* who had not learnt of the Art to be astonished by such things.

15. The conditions for compounding the Yellow and the White are similar to those for compounding the *Shih Tao* (Divine Medicine). More than a hundred days of dieting and purification are required. The formula-books should be thoroughly understood and then the suitable formulas should be chosen for execution. The compounding is beyond the vulgar, the uncleanly, and the untalented who aspire to magical proficiency. The methods should be learnt directly from the accomplished. The compounding should be done in clean places in mountainous recesses so as to keep vulgar fools in ignorance. *Liu Hsiang* tried the compounding in the palace with the help of courtiers. In that case the conditions of dieting, purification, and isolation were not fulfilled. How then could he be successful?

16. According to the *Huan Tan Hsin Ch'uan* (5075, 10681, 4574, 3183): During his premiership *Shih Hsin Chien* (9893, 4562, 1671) was supplied with officials, attendants, and slaves to facilitate his attempt at gold-making. He met with no success. The failure was ascribed to his own inability. Having no use for more money, the Empress did not care much about the compounding at first. But she became eager for it when told of its power of life extension. And so she made him a *Lang* (an official rank), allowed him to live in the north palace, and treated him as a special delegate. How could the divine medicine be prepared in a palace by persons so numerous, vulgar, and improper!

17. Even ordinary dyers at work avoid the sight of people lest their dyeings be spoiled. How much more fastidious must we be while performing the art of the Yellow and the White!

18. In doing things, be they small or great, it is necessary to get at the essentials. Otherwise, even such trivial things as the making of simple food can not be carried out with success—not to speak of greater things.

19. Once I queried *Ch'ang Ch'ün* saying, "*Lao Ch'ün* has put forth the maxim that no high value ought to be placed on precious things which are difficult to obtain. Now in time of peace and plenty gold is allowed to waste in the mountains and jades in the valleys. Why then should sages of old so value gold and silver as to leave behind them formulas for their making?" To this *Ch'ang Ch'ün* replied, "*Lao Ch'ün* was referring on the one hand to those who in their desperate effort to obtain gold to gratify their pleasure of appreciation and wasteful decoration and even to attain longevity would scan sands, break stones, tear down mountains, dry up deep waters, defy long distances and precipices and drowning, and go to other excesses to the detriment of people's useful work, and on the other hand to those profiteering businessmen who in their hot pursuit of wealth for the indulgence of their senses would do away with the virtues of faithfulness and fair play and risk their lives over waters and precipices. It is another story with the *Ch'iu Jen* (Men of Truth, Men Proficient in the Art, Sages). For they make gold with the purpose, not of getting rich, but of becoming *Hsien* by eating it. Therefore it is written in the Book, 'Gold can be made wherewith people can be raised above this worldly life.' Silver may be eaten for similar ends but is not as effective as gold."

20. Then I asked further, "Why should we not eat the gold and silver which are already in existence instead of taking the trouble to make them? What are made will not be real gold and silver but just make-believes."

21. Said *Ch'eng Ch'iu* in reply, "The gold and silver which are found in the world are suitable for the purpose. But *Tao-shih* are all poor; witness the adage that *Hsien* are never stout and *Tao-shih* never rich. *Tao-shih* usually go in groups of five or ten, counting the teacher and his disciples. Poor as they are, how can they be expected to get the necessary gold and silver? Furthermore they cannot cover the great distances to gather the gold and silver which occur in nature. The only thing left for them to do is to make the metals themselves.

22. "In that they are the essences of the medicines, the gold and silver made are superior to those found in nature.

23. "Says the *Hsien Ching* (Book of Immortals); The refined spirit of *Tau* changes into gold. This is the theory of the formation of gold from *Tau*. This is why gold is usually to be found underneath where *Tau* occurs.

24. "The gold obtained by successful compounding is uniform inside and out. It may be put through a hundred workings without suffering any change. Therefore it was written in the formulas for its making that it may be made into nails. That shows its strength. Such results come of responsive infusion of the *Tao* of nature. Why should such deeds be called make-believes?

25. "Make-believes should be like the besmearing of iron with *Tai'ng Ch'ing* whereby the metal takes on a reddish sheen simulating copper, and the action of egg-white on silver to obtain a yellow coloring resembling gold. In all these cases there are merely external changes but no internal transmutations.

26. "The fungus *Chih* (1788) (Plant of Longevity) is a natural growth. But according to the *Hsien Ching* it may be cultivated by means of the five stones and the five plants. The resulting plant will be exactly like that found in nature in the power of giving long life when eaten. The case is similar to the making of gold. The *Ch'ên* (656) (shellfish, clam) resulting from the transformation of the *Chih* (1870) (the ringed pheasant) and the *Ko* (6058) (a frog, also bivalves of various kinds) from fowls are no different from those found in nature.

27. "Therefore the *Hsien Ching* says, 'When the flowing pearl is going through the nine turns the father does not speak to the son. They come into harmonious relations when the Yellow and the White are obtained.' And, 'Those *Tao-shih* are great who attain the state of *Hsien* through the eating of the gold obtained from *Chu Sâ* (2544, 9620) (Red Sand). They are the middle class who attain immortality by eating the *Chih* and by proper direction of the movement of the

*Chi* (ethereal essence) in their bodies. They are the inferiors who attain long lives of a thousand years or less through eating vegetable and plant matter.' Again, 'It is in the nature of things that gold and silver can be made. It is within the ability of people to learn to attain immortality.'"

28. The *Yü T'ieh Chi* (13630, 11122, 923) (The Jade Tablet Records) says, "All the people in this wide, wide world are potentialities for making into immortals. Failure comes from hesitation. The gold obtained by the condensation of silver may be made into nails."

29. The *P'ung Chu Ching* (12285, 2533, 2122) (The Copper Pillar Book) says, "*Tau Sha* can be made into gold. *Ho Chi* (3936, 574) (River Chariot) can be made into silver. The making can be done readily and the resulting substances are real. Once an adept in the Art a person will be able to become a *Hsien*."

30. *Huang-shan-tz'u* (5124, 9663, 12317) says, "There is gold in nature. But that I can make too. Two Yellow and one Red, an unmistakable certainty."

31. Say the inscriptions on the Tortoise Shells, "My life is within my own control and not heaven's. The gold obtained from the Returned Medicine will bring about a long life of thousands upon thousands of years."

32. Certainly the ancients cannot be telling us untruths when they agree so well.

33. *Jung Yen* (a red or black salt?) and *Lu Yen* (niter or potash?) which are such cheap things in time of peace are now unobtainable at any price whatever. *Chiang Li* (1264, 6870) and *Shih Tau* (9064, 10629) cannot be obtained even at a price of thousands of cash per pound. Under such conditions those who know the methods are just as badly off as those who do not. What a deplorable situation!

34. Those who know the methods are usually too poor to get the means of compounding. Rich people do not know the processes. They may not believe in the Art if they happen to know of it. Granting a fair degree of faith, they will not usually part with any portion of their great accumulation of gold and silver to buy the necessary medicines for the compounding—for such action would be like releasing birds already in the cage in chase of those flying at large. Even if they are sure of profit in the enterprise, the hardships to be endured in dieting and in purification of the body will still be too much for them.

35. It is not wise to make attempts at compounding without learning the methods directly from famous teachers. Ordinary



medical recipes are obviously simple. Yet secrecy is thrown over the efficacious recipes which are in common use. In those formulas there appear such names of substances as *Hou Kung Yu Nü*, *Pi Tsé Chih Chiao*, *Fêng Chün Ni Wan*, *Mu Kwei Tzû*, *Chün Shang Chih*, *Fei Chün Ken*, *Fu Lung Kan*, *Pai Ma Han*, *Fu Yün Tzû*, *Lung Tzû Tan I*, *Yeh Kuang Ku*, *Pai Hua Li*, and *Tung Tsou Tsui*. The substances referred to are commonplaces which nevertheless cannot be identified without knowledge of the code concerned. Similar considerations obtain even to a much more intensified degree in the Art of the Yellow and the White.

36. Those who are adepts in the Art keep it a secret not merely because of its high value. Once the *Tao* is attained, immediately there comes immortality which is the highest achievement of the *Tao*. That is why it was so highly esteemed by the ancients.

37. The medicines mentioned in the formula-books may be common medicines under different disguise. For instance, *Hô Shang Chai Nü* (3936, 9729, —, 8419) (Maiden on the River) (Mercury?) has no reference to a woman, nor *Ling Yang Tzû Ming* (7228, 12883, 12317, 7946) to a man, nor *Yü Yü Liang* (13618, 13615, 7016) (Remnants of the Rations of Emperor Yü) to rice, nor *Yao Chiang* (12907, 1210) (Fluid of Emperor Yao) to water.

38. People usually misinterpret formulas, mistaking *Lung Tan* (7479, 10629) (Dragon's Gall), *Hu Chang* (4920, 421) (Tiger's Palms), *Chi T'o* (810, 11441) (Chicken's Head), *Ya Ché* (12826, —) (Duck's Feet), *Ma T'i* (7576, 11016) (Horse's Hoofs), *Ch'üan Hsüeh* (3192, 4847) (Dog's Blood), *Shu W'ei* (10072, 12001) (Rat's Tail), and *Niu Hsi* (8346, 4140) (Ox's Knees) for animal substances, mistaking *Ch'üeh Pei* (3250, 8782) (Broken Cup), *Fu P'au* (3723, 8850) (Inverted Basin), *Fu Li* (3739, —) (Axes), *Tu Chi* (10470, 928) (Big Lance), *Kwei Chien* (6430, 1617) (Ghost's Arrows), and *T'ien Ku* (11208, 6148) (Sky Hooks) for iron and earthenware, and misinterpreting *Hu Wang Shih Ché* (4030, 12493, 9896, 542) (Delegate from the King of the Tartars), *I Ku Hsin Fu* (5355, 6209, 4574, 3749) (Bride-leaning-on-the-mother-in-law), *Yeh Wên Jên* (12989, 12633, 5624) (Rural Literati), *Shou T'ien Kung* (10012, 11236, 6568) (Old Man in Charge of a Field), *Tai Wên Yü* (10567, 12633, 13638), and *Hsü Ch'ang Ch'ing* (4748, 450, 2198) as the names of persons. Even common plants are sometimes not recognizable. Who can be expected to understand the mysterious formulas? It is not surprising that *Liu Hsiang* did not succeed in obtaining gold. When the essence of the Art is apprehended, no great talent will be needed but mere

common people will be successful in making the medicine. *Liu Hsiang* was no mere common person; he failed simply because he did not know how to decipher the code of names.

39. Some concise and effective formulas are given below for the benefit of fellow aspirants of the future. Five pounds or more of *Wu Tu Hsiang Huang* (12744, 12050, 4699, 5124), which is red as a cock's comb, lustrous, and free from admixed stone, is powdered, mixed with *Niu Tan* (8346, 10629) (Ox's Gall) and heated to dryness. The bottom of a one-bushel red-earthen pot is covered alternately, first with a three-tenths inch layer of powdered *Jung Yen* and *Shih Tan* (Stone Gall), then a half-inch layer of the powdered *Hsiang Huang*, and then another layer of *Jung Yen* and *Shih Tan*, and so on until all of the material has been exhausted. On top of this a two-inch layer of date-stone-sized pieces of burning charcoal is placed. Another pot is then inverted over it. The two pots are covered and sealed with mud over the entire outside, until the mud is three inches thick, to insure freedom from leakage. After drying in the shade for a month, the sealed vessels are heated with horse manure for three days and nights. After cooling, the vessels are opened, and the copper is pounded out which will flow like molten copper and iron. The copper is then cast into hollow cylinders, into which *Tau Sha Shui* (10018, 9020, 10128) (Medicine Sand Water) is put. After heating with horse manure for thirty day, gold is obtained. The gold is cast into hollow cylinders into which *Tau Sha* is put. After heating with horse manure for thirty days, the contents are taken out. Upon powdering a mixture of two parts of this with one of raw *Tau Sha* (Red Sand, Medicine Sand, Cinnabar)—mercury is quicksilver—coagulation immediately occurs into gold which is lustrous and beautifully colored and is fit for making nails.

40. Method of Making *Tau Sha Shui*. To a pound of *Tau Sha* in a raw bamboo pipe, two ounces of *Shih Tan* and two of *Hsiao Shih* (4297, 9964) (niter?) are added. The ends are then covered and sealed with *Ku H'au* (6234, 12490) (Bone Pills). When the sealings have become dry, the sealed pipe is placed in good bitter wine and buried three feet below the surface of the earth. In thirty days time a red water of bitter taste is obtained.

41. According to the *Tso Huang Chin Fa* (11741, 5124, 2032, 3366) (Method of Gold Making) received by *Chin Lo Hsien Sheng* (2032, 7343, 4440, 9865) from *Ch'ing-lin-tz'u* (2184, 7157, 12317), tin sheets, each measuring six inches square by one and two-tenths inches thick, are covered with a one-tenth inch layer of a mud-like mixture

of *Ch'ih Yen* (Red Salt) and *Hui Ch'ih* (5155, 1789) (potash-water, lime-water), ten pounds of tin to every four of *Ch'ih Yen*. They are then placed in a red-earthen pot and properly sealed. After heating for thirty days with horse manure, all the tin becomes ash-like and interspersed with bean-like pieces which are the yellow gold. The gold may also be obtained by ten refinings by the action of burning charcoal. Twenty ounces of gold are obtained from every twenty pounds of tin used. Only the earthen pots of *Ch'ang Sha* (450, 9624), *Kuei Yang* (6435, 12883), *Yu Chang* (13678, 300), and *Nau Hoi* (8128, 3767) are effective for the compounding. Such pots are abundant in those places since they are made there for use in cooking.

42. Method of Making *Ch'ih Yen* (Red Salt). One pound each of *Han Shui Shih* (3825, 10128, 9964) (Cold Water Stone), *Han Yu Li* (3825, 13617, 6879), and *Pai Fau* (White Alum) are prepared. These, together with one pound of *Hau Yen* (3825, 13112) (Cold Salt), are heated in an iron vessel by means of charcoal, when reduction to a red color occurs. The material is ready to use.

43. The Method of Gold Making as taught to *Lu Li Hsien Shêng* (—, 6870, 4440, 9865) by *Chi-ch'iu-tzû* is as follows: Two measures of *Fau Shih Shui* (Alum Water) are placed in an iron vessel and heated to boiling with charcoal. Some mercury is then added and stirred thoroughly until it has undergone six or seven boilings. Upon pouring the material on the ground, silver is obtained.

44. One measure of *Tau Sha Shui*, one of *Tsêng Ch'ing Shui* (11735, 2184, 10128), and two of *Hsiung Huang Shui* (Male Yellow Water, arsenic sulfide water?) are gently heated to boiling in a *Li* (—) vessel. After thorough stirring and further heating to boiling, some of the silver obtained above is added. Heating is continued until the mixture has undergone six or seven boilings. Upon pouring on the ground, the substance *Shang Sê Tzû Mo Chia* (9729, 9602, 12329, 7974, 2032) (Best Color Purple Mill Gold) is obtained.

45. Method of Making *Hsiung Huang Shui*. A mixture of one pound of *Hsiung Huang* and two ounces of *Hsiao Shih* is placed in a bamboo pipe. The ends are covered, sealed with *Ch'i Ku Wan* (1023, 6234, 12490) (Lacquer Bone Pills), and placed in good strong vinegar (or in good bitter wine according to some versions). After burial, two feet below the surface of the earth, for thirty days, *Hsiung Huang Shui* is obtained.

46. *Tsêng Ch'ing Shui* and *Fau Shih Shui* are made in the same manner, the only difference being in the contents of the bamboo pipe.

47. **The Children's Method of Making Gold.** A large iron cylinder, one foot and two inches both in diameter and in height, and a small iron cylinder, six inches in diameter, are used. One pound of good powdered *Ch'ih Shih Chih* (talc?), one of *Hsiao Shih* (niter?), one of *Yü Ma* (13812, 8007) (Mica?), one-half of *Liu Huang* (Sulfur), four ounces of *K'ung Ch'ing* (6595, 2184) (a blue copper compound?), and one of *Ning Shui Shih* (8339, 10128, 9064) (a mica like mineral) are intimately ground together and passed through fine-meshed sieves. The paste obtained by mixing with vinegar is used to make a lining two-tenths of an inch thick on the inside of the small cylinder.

48. A mixture of one pound of mercury, one-half of *Tau Sha*, and one-half of *Liang Fei* (7017, 3459) is stirred thoroughly until the mercury has disappeared. It is then placed in the small cylinder, overlaid with *Yü Ma*, and covered with an iron lid. The *Liang Fei* is obtained as follows: To ten pounds of *Ch'ien* (lead) heated in an open iron pot over a furnace three ounces of mercury are added. The portion which comes out during the early stages of the operation is scooped off with an iron ladle and is called *Liang Fei*.

49. Molten lead is introduced into the large iron cylinder on a stove. The small cylinder with its contents is then placed in the large cylinder, its top one half-inch below that of the large one. Heat is applied to keep the lead molten. Strong heating is continued for three days and nights, when *Tzū Fên* (12329, 3519) (Purple Powder) will be obtained.

50. Silver is obtained by heating together mercury and *Tzū Fên* until they have attained very close relations and then pouring the material into water.

51. **Method of *Hsü-Ch'ing-tzū*.** In this method an iron vessel nine inches long and five inches in diameter is used. Its insides are lined with a paste made of a mixture of three pounds of ground *Hsiung Huang* and an equal quantity of the soil of earthworms and ants until the inside diameter of the vessel becomes three inches and the indented opening four inches. Two measures of *Tau Sha Shui* are added. The vessel with its contents is then placed over a fire of horse manure until exceedingly dry.

52. The dried material is next placed in a copper vessel, tightly covered with a copper lid built over with yellow sand and earthworm-soil to prevent leakage, and this is placed in a furnace containing a three-inch layer of charcoal until its mouth becomes reddened. Upon cooling all of the *Hsiung Huang* is found to have adhered to the copper vessel. This process is repeated with the remaining dry material

until it is exhausted. It will then be found that three pounds of the spirit of *Hsiung Huang* has separated and adhered to the vessel.

53. The substance thus obtained may be mixed with an equal quantity of yellow sand to be made into furnaces of various sizes for use in gold making. One of these furnaces is heated to redness in a charcoal fire. Mercury is added. When the mercury begins to stir, lead is poured in. Yellowness is then observed to start and spread from all sides toward the middle. Upon pouring on the ground, gold is obtained. The usefulness of the furnaces will be exhausted after they have served for the making of one thousand and five hundred pounds of medicine.

54. Upon treatment with *Ma Ching* (8089, 2157) wood and *Ch'ih Hsi Chiu* (1967, 10070, 2260) (a kind of alcoholic liquor) for a hundred days, the gold softens and becomes kneadable. The eating of one pound of this medicine in pills of the size of small beans, one pill at a time, three times a day, will kill off all the three worms and drive away all the hundred diseases. If the eater be a blind man, he will see; if a deaf man, he will hear; and if an old person, he will be rejuvenated to the state of thirty years of age. The eater will not be scorched by fire and will be invulnerable to all evils, poisons, bleak winds, and excessive heat and dampness.

55. The ingestion of three pounds will enable a person to walk on the surface of water. The hundred spirits of the mountains and waters will come to wait on him. He will live as long as heaven and earth.

56. By rubbing the eyes with a pill boiled in *Chu Hsueh* (2611, 4847) (Blood-like Sap of the *Chu* Plant) and *Chu Ts'oo* (Red Plant), one will be able to see ghosts and things under the ground and to write in the dark.

57. When a pill that is painted with the blood of a white goat is thrown into water, fishes and dragons will come forth to be caught.

58. A pill painted with the blood of a black goat, when hung over the gateway of a village, will protect the entire village from epidemics. If it is smeared on the foreheads of cattle, sheep, or any of the six domestic animals, they will be protected against diseases and against tigers and leopards.

59. When a pill painted with tiger's spleen and snake's fat is dropped into an enemy's camp at the beginning of a month, the hostile forces will be thrown into confusion, fighting among themselves.

60. A pill is painted with an ox's blood. Throw it into a well, and the water will boil. Throw it into a flowing stream, and the water will reverse its course for a distance of a hundred steps.

61. When a pill that has been painted with a white dog's blood is put in a dark place in a community temple, the ghosts of the temple will come forth ready to serve.

62. Let a pill be painted with hare's blood. Put it in a dark place and fairies numbering sixty or seventy will be at one's service.

63. On putting a pill painted with *Li Yü Tsa* (6883, 13510, (10629) (the carp's gall) into water, the water will go asunder making a gap of ten feet for breathing space. The carrying of such a pill will prevent one's clothes from being wetted in the rain.

64. By swallowing a pill that has been boiled with *Tz'ü Hsien* (12329, 4541) one will be free from hunger for a hundred days.

65. By carrying in one's hair a pill that has been boiled with *Tz'ü Shih* (12406, 9964) one will be invulnerable in fighting against outlaws. All missiles directed at him will be reversed.

66. Compound *Liu Ting* (7276, 11253), *Liu Jen* (7276, 5610), and *Shang T'u* (9729, 12099) into a pill. When it is placed between the nose and the upper lip one's person will vanish from view. Spit a pill at a fire in a northerly direction and the fire will die out. Throw a pill at a tree in a westerly direction at the *Sshü Yu* (9816, 13398) hours on *K'eng Hsü* days and the tree will wither on the very day. With cautious steps one may come up to tigers, wolves, snakes, and venomous snakes to kill them immediately by throwing a pill at each.

67. Inks prepared from such pills will penetrate stone, gold, and wood. The indentations will be too deep to be erased.

68. A person who has been dead for not more than a day may be revived by washing a pill down his throat and spraying his face with water of *Yüeh Chien Shung* (13768, 1592, 9729).

69. By putting in his fingernail a pill that has been painted with wolf's and crane's blood, one can bring about changes in things by pointing his fingers at them and at the same time uttering verbal orders. The movement of mountains and trees may be apparent to everybody when as a matter of fact no motion occurs.

70. As in the case of the making of the nine medicines, services of worship should be properly performed to *T'ai I* (Supreme Monad), *Hsüan Nü*, and *Lao-tz'ü* in the making of the Yellow and the White. There should be constant burning of the five incenses. When gold is successfully compounded, three pounds of it should first be thrown into deep water and ten pounds of it in a marketplace before any of it is used for other purposes.

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## CHAPTER IV. ON THE GOLD MEDICINE

1. Thousands of books agree that *Huan Tan* (Returned Medicine) and *Chia I* (Gold Fluid) are the means of becoming *Haicu*.
- 2, 3. The general ignorance of the art.
4. The pretentiousness of the ignorant.
5. How *Pao-p'u-tzū* received knowledge of the art—from *Ch'ing Chūn* who received it from *Pao-p'u-tzū's* great uncle, *Hsien Kung*, who received it from *Tao Yüan-Fang* who received it from a spiritual being.
6. *Chia Tan* (Gold Medicine) compared with medicines of less efficacy. Gold Fluid and Returned Medicine recommended by *Jao-tzū*.
7. The effect of the two medicines, a result of deriving strength from an external substance.
8. For the few who believe in the *Tao*, practical directions for the practice of the art are given.
9. The improved state of mind which comes from learning the art.
10. The futility of working with poor materials.
11. More depends upon the degree of working than upon the particular recipe.
12. Even a minor medicine is far superior to vegetable substances. Vegetable substances, unlike *Tan Shu*, turn to ashes when they are burned.
13. Many do not even know that mercury comes out of *Tan Shu*.
14. The *Ch'ên Jen* of antiquity transmitted a sure method of attaining immortality.
15. *Pao-p'u-tzū* has always attached a high value to the truth and to unusual information.
16. The present writing is for the truly appreciative ones of later times.
17. People of the world fritter away their time and energy.
18. Wealthy people also are superficial.
19. The prize is worth the trial.
20. Popular judgement of the *Tao* cannot be trusted.
21. *Huang Ti* gained immortality by means of the medicine. Vegetable medicines and deep breathing confer long life, but *Shü's Tan* confers immortality.
22. *Huang Ti* transmitted the book to *Hsüan-tzū*, giving him advice on the pursuit of the *Tao*.

23. Conditions which ought to be observed in preparing the medicine. Vegetable materials are not suitable.
24. The nine preparations are unknown to unfortunate millions.
25. Certain ceremonies of worship are also requisite.
26. The first medicine, *Tan Hua*. Directions for its preparation. It confers immortality in seven days and converts quicksilver into gold.
27. The second medicine, *Shên Tan* or *Shên Fu*, confers immortality in a hundred days and has other magical powers.
28. The third medicine, *Shên Tan*, confers immortality in a hundred days and has other magical powers.
29. The fourth medicine, *Huan Tan*, confers immortality in a hundred days, converts quicksilver to gold, and has other magical powers.
30. The fifth medicine, *Êrh Tan*, confers immortality in thirty days and has other magical powers.
31. The sixth medicine, *Lien Tan*, confers immortality in ten days and converts quicksilver into gold.
32. The seventh medicine, *Jau Tan*, confers immortality in a hundred days, restores the reproductive faculty, and converts lead (?) into gold.
33. The eighth medicine, *Fu Tan*, confers immortality on the day that it is eaten, and wards off evil.
34. The ninth medicine, *Hau Tan*, confers immortality in a hundred days and has other magical powers.
35. Any one of the nine medicines is sufficient to make the eater a *Hsien*.
36. There is also the *T'ai Ch'ing Shên Tan* which originated with *Yüan Chün*, teacher of *Lao-tzŭ*. The last three chapters of the *T'ai Ch'ing Kuan T'ien Ching* treat of the medicine.
37. Even *Yüan Chün* acquired his great powers by following the *Tao* and by eating the medicine.
38. Warning against disclosing the secrets of the *Tao*.
39. When the medicine has been made, a sacrificial offering of a hundred catties should be made.
40. Directions for making the offering.
41. *Shên Tan* is alone necessary for immortality.
42. *Hsien Yeh Yü Chün* succeeded in making the *T'ai Ch'ing Tan* and became an immortal by means of it.
43. The *T'ai Ch'ing Tan* is more difficult to prepare than the Nine Furnace-pot Medicine. Its special powers, and the method of its preparation.
44. The more "turns," the more powerful the medicine. The



word which is here translated "turns" evidently signifies some repeatable process, like sublimation or distillation, by which the medicine is rendered purer and more potent.

45. The medicine of the ninth turn, sublimed with *Chu Êrk* by the heat of the sun, yields a Returned Medicine which will raise the user to the skies in broad daylight.

46. The efficacy depends upon the number of the turns.

47. *Chiu Kuang Tan*. Method of preparation. Five turns of five different colors.

48. *Ch'ing Tan*, the Blue Medicine, raises the dead.

49. Magical power of the Black Medicine.

50. Magical Power of the Yellow Medicine.

51. The materials needful for the preparation of the medicine by the method of the *Wu Ling Tan Ching* are enumerated. The medicine has the power to bring about immortality but is not as efficacious as those made according to the already described Supreme Clear Method and Nine Furnace-pot Method.

52. The *Min Shan* method of *Chang Kai Ta* described. The medicine restores sight, hair, teeth, etc., and by repeated eating confers immortality.

53. *Wu-ch'ing-tzã's* medicine; its preparation.

54. *Hsien-wên-tzã's* medicine; its preparation and magical effects. One attains the *Tao* by eating it regularly for three consecutive years.

55. The *Li Ch'ing Tan*; its preparation and effects; its use in conjunction with the Red Herb.

56. The *Ch'ü Fu Tan*, made from *Tau* fishes, imparts certain magical powers.

57. Preparation of the medicine according to *Ch'ih-sung-tzã*. It imparts redness to the features and hair, and confers immortality.

58. Preparation of *Shih Hsien Shêng's* medicine; it contains animal ingredients and confers long life.

59. Preparation of the medicine of *K'ang-fêng-tzã*; it contains animal ingredients and confers long life.

60. *Ts'ü-wên-tzã's* medicine; its preparation described. It extends life and confers immortality.

61. The method of *Liu Yüan*. One tenth of a quart of the medicine enables one to live a thousand years, habitual drinking of it brings immortality.

62. Description of *Lo-ch'ang-tzã's* procedure. The medicine makes a *Hsien* in three years.

63. *Li Wen's* preparation described; it makes a *Hsien* in a year.
64. *Yiu-tzu's* preparation described; it confers long life.
65. Preparation of the *Tai I Chao P'o Tan*; it revives the dead.
66. *Ts'ai Nü Tan*, made from *Tan* and animal products, gives the user the services of two fairies.
67. *Chi-eh'iu-tzu's* preparation described; it confers long life.
68. *Mo-tzu's* preparation described; it confers immortality.
69. Method of preparing *Chang Tzû Ho Tan*, a medicine which brings long life.
70. Preparation of the elixir of *Ch'i Li*.
71. *Ch'i Li* medicine converts lead into silver and *Hsiung Huang* into gold.
72. *Yü Kwei Tan*; its preparation and effects.
73. Preparation of *Chou Hou Tan*; it confers immortality and converts copper into gold.
74. Preparation of *Li Kung's* medicine; it will enable a man to last as long as the sky and the earth.
75. Preparation of *Liu Shêng's* medicine; it imparts long life and restores youth.
76. Preparation of *Wang Chün's* medicine; it prevents ageing and decay of the body.
77. Preparation of *Ch'ên Shêng's* medicine; it protects from hunger and confers long life.
78. Preparation of the medicine of *Han Chung Chung*; it prolongs life, improves the eyesight, etc.
79. *Chin I* (Gold Fluid) is as efficacious as the nine medicines. *Jao-tzu* transmitted the secret of it to *Yüan Chün*. The process, which occupies one hundred days, should be carried out in private. The effects of the medicine in making *Hsien*. Desirability of abstinence from cereals.
80. A medicine prepared from Gold Fluid and quicksilver makes a *Hsien* out of any person. It converts mercury into silver, and has other marvelous properties. By eating and drinking out of vessels made of this medicine, one will attain immortality. Gold Fluid converts yellow earth into serviceable yellow gold.
81. This gold, again heated, yields a medicine which will make one an earthly immortal and will convert mercury into silver, and this silver will further convert lead into silver. Method of procuring the classic on the Gold Fluid. The classic must not be given indiscreetly.
82. The nine medicines are best but the materials are not easy to

procure and the process is difficult. The compounding of the Gold Fluid is much easier. A total expenditure of 400,000 cash will make a quantity of it large enough to transform eight persons into *Haicu*. Large amounts of material are necessary for successful operation.

83. There is also the *Êrh Huang Chin* (Food of Yellow Gold) which is not as good as Yellow Gold but is far better than other medicines. Several methods of refining gold.

84. An inferior medicine, which brings immortality only through frequent ingestion, may be made from silver and large pearls of the oyster.

85. Not only money but isolation in a celebrated mountain is necessary for success in compounding the Gold Fluid and the nine medicines. The secret must not be printed in books on the *Tao*.

86. The compounder of the medicine must guard against ridicule, must make offerings to the gods, must work in a secluded place in a famous mountain, and should diet, refraining from stimulant food and raw fish, from one hundred days before beginning the work until the medicine is done.

87. The seeker should not work in a small mountain, but in a famous one, and should guard against devils, chickens, dogs, children, and women.

88. A list of twenty-seven mountains recommended by the Book of the Immortals.

89. A list of six large islands which are next in order as places good for the preparation of the medicine.

90. Eight accessible mountains in the central part of the country.

91. *Pao-p'u-tzû* explains his position in seeking the *Tao* and in writing about it.

92. Formula of the Lesser Divine Medicine which brings rejuvenation and immortality.

93. Method of the Lesser Medicine which will cure the hundred sicknesses and dispel the three demons, confer immortality and impart magical properties.

94. Method of the Lesser Food of Yellow Gold. The medicine, made from gold (or silver) and wine confers magical powers and makes a man an immortal of the earth.

95. Method of the Food of Reduced Yellow Gold of *Liung-i-tzû*. The medicine, made from hog's skin and fat, bitter wine, and gold, confers longevity and immortality. The secret should not be divulged, else the medicine cannot be prepared successfully.

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## CHAPTER XVI. ON THE YELLOW AND THE WHITE.

1. The writings on the art of transmutation. They are difficult to understand and are not believed by the common people.
2. *Pao-p'ü-tzū* received three books from *Chêng Chün*.
3. *Chêng Chün* claimed that he had accomplished a successful transmutation with *Tao Chün*. The same diligence and hardships are necessary as in the compounding of the Gold Medicine.
4. The author explains his position in writing on these matters. In the Inner Chapters there are no rhetorical flourishes but mere plain outspoken words. He is sure of good results and of the truthfulness of his teachers.
5. Although he has not made gold and silver himself, he writes simply for the sake of interesting truth-loving scholars of the future in the study of the *Tao*.
6. Strange things can be accomplished, but there are many who cannot accomplish them.
7. Several strange things. Lead, which is white, can be reddened into *Tau*, and *Tau*, which is red, can be whitened into lead, etc.
8. Transformations are common in nature—why not into gold and silver? But they are difficult to understand unless matters are traced to their beginnings and ends.
9. Narrow-minded and ignorant people are incredulous.
10. The fact that *Liu Hsiang* did not attain the *Tao* does not prove that it is unattainable.
11. *W'ü Yu W'ü* reported that *Lü K'ou* converted a mixture of lead and tin into silver but was unable himself to repeat the process with success because he could not fulfil the conditions.
12. The wife of *Ch'eng W'ei* by an incantation summoned forth two measures of silk.
13. A story from the *Chên Chung Hung Pao* (The Great Treasure in the Pillow-Chest) of *Huai-nan-tzū* (a work which is not now known to exist). The wife of *W'ei* converted mercury into silver, but suffered severe punishment and finally death rather than reveal the secret to her husband whom she considered unworthy.
14. *Hua Ling Sū* in recent times witnessed the conversion of lead into silver and of the silver into gold. From a *Tao-shih* he learned the art of penetrating-sight.
15. The conditions for compounding the Yellow and the White are similar to those for compounding the *Shên Tau*. *Liu Hsiang* was unable to accomplish it in a palace.

16. *Shih Hsia Chien* was of course unable to carry out the operation successfully in a palace surrounded by attendants and slaves.

17. The seeker must be more fastidious than ordinary dyers who avoid the sight of people lest their dyeings be spoiled.

18. The seeker must get at the essentials.

19. Report of the author's conversation with *Chêng Chün*. The *Chên Jen* make gold for the purpose of becoming *Hsien* by eating it. Silver may be eaten for the same purpose but is not as good as gold.

20. The author asks him why natural gold and silver may not be eaten for the same purpose, and suggests that the gold and silver which are made may be make-believes.

21. *Chêng Chün* replies that ordinary gold and silver are suitable but *Tao-shih* are poor and have no choice except to make the metals for themselves.

22. The superiority of the gold and silver which are made.

23. Theory of the formation of gold from *Tau*.

24. The gold obtained by successful compounding is uniform throughout; it may be worked without change and may be made into nails. Why should it be called make-believe?

25. Examples of make-believe: reddening of iron by means of a copper salt, tarnishing of silver by means of egg-white to give it the appearance of gold—merely external changes.

26. Like the making of gold is the cultivation of the fungus, *Chih*, etc. The cultivated plant is exactly like that found in nature.

27. A quotation from the Book of Immortals. Three classes of *Hsien*, the highest is attained by eating gold made from *Chu Sha* (Red Sand). The making of gold and silver and the attaining of immortality are natural processes.

28. A quotation from the Jade Tablet Records in confirmation of these opinions.

29. Quotation from the Copper Pillar Book. Materials for making gold and silver, the authenticity of the products.

30. Quotation from *Huang-shau-tzū*.

31. Quotation from the Tortoise Shell Inscriptions.

32. The unanimity of the ancients indicates their truthfulness.

33. The present prices of reagents are deplorably high.

34. Rich people are unwilling to risk their wealth on the process and to undergo the hardships which are necessary.

35. It is unwise to make attempts without learning the methods first from famous teachers. Ordinary medical recipes are difficult because of the secret names. Examples. The art of the Yellow and the White is much more difficult for the same reason.

36. Immortality is the highest achievement of the *Tao*.
37. Common medicines are designated in the formula-books by unfamiliar names. Examples.
38. Further examples, names which are easily misunderstood or readily misinterpreted. *Liu Hsiang* failed because he did not know how to decipher the code of names.
39. Description of apparatus and process for procuring copper, for converting this into gold, and for converting *Tau Sha* into gold.
40. Method of making *Tau Sha Shui*.
41. Method, derived from *Ch'ing-liu-tz'u*, of converting tin into gold, a method which possibly yields stannic sulfide or "mosaic gold." Process described in considerable detail.
42. Method of making *Ch'ih Yen*.
43. *Chi-ch'iu-tz'u*'s method of preparing silver from mercury.
44. Preparation of Best Color Purple Mill Gold from this silver.
45. Method of making *Hsiung Huang Shui*.
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54. Kneadable gold. The effect of the pills after one pound has been taken.
55. Effect of the ingestion of three pounds.
- 56-65. Magical effects of various preparations of the pill.
66. Preparation of another pill which confers invisibility and has other magical powers.
67. Indelible ink.
68. Reviving the dead.
69. Magical control over natural objects, which control however is only apparent.
70. In making the Yellow and the White, services of worship are necessary (*c. f.* IV, 86). The five incenses should be burned constantly. When the gold is successfully compounded, three pounds of it should first be thrown into deep water (*c. f.* IV, 22) and ten pounds of it in a marketplace (*c. f.* IV, 40) before any of it is used for other purposes.

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# On the Philosophers' Stone

From A.E. Waite's *Collectanea Chemica*, London, 1893.

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## **CHAPTER I. The Introduction.**

Because many have written of the Philosopher's Stone without any knowledge of the art; and the few books extant, written by our learned predecessors and true masters hereupon, are either lost or concealed in the collections of such (however despised) as are lovers and seekers of natural secrets, we have taken a resolution to communicate our knowledge in this matter, to the intent that those who are convinced the Philosophical Work is no fiction, but grounded in the possibility of Nature, may be faithfully directed in their studies, and have an undoubted criterion to distinguish between such authors as are genuine sons of science and those who are spurious, as writing by hearsay only.

We shall not on this occasion give a summary of their names who are undoubted masters in the art, but shall take occasion to introduce them, as it may be necessary, in the following chapters; and as their sense is often concealed under a studied ambiguity of expression, we shall, out of the gift which the Almighty hath dispensed to us, declare plainly, and without any reserve, the first matter of the Philosopher's Stone, the manner of proceeding through the whole process, both in the Vegetable and Metallic Tinctures, beginning with the Vegetable process first, as the most easy and simple, yet well worthy the attention of all ingenious persons, particularly the practical chemists and preparers of medicines.



## CHAPTER II.

### Of the Vegetable Tincture, or the Process called the Lesser Circulation.

Very few of the true philosophers have touched upon this subject, for it seemed trifling in respect to the great work, as the process in metals is generally termed; but there is a modern publication in English, a small thin duodecimo, without any author's name, having for its title: *Aphorismi, seu Circulus majus et Circulus minus*, wherein the whole process is plainly laid down.

This book is written by an undoubted master in the art; and no treatise, ancient or modern, is so explicit in the directions for conducting the great work. The directions are very short, but much to the purpose, provided the reader has an idea what part of the work is alluded to. The author, agreeable to his title, delivers his doctrine by way of aphorisms. But to return from this digression.

We proposed in this chapter to lay open the vegetable process, as a clue to the more important work in the mineral kingdom. A certain person, who is now living, and advertises balsam of honey, tincture of sage, etc, has turned his studies this way; and from his great abilities as a professed physician and botanist, has convinced all unprejudiced persons that noble tinctures may be extracted from vegetables. We hope this gentleman will not despise our free communication, both to him and the public, if we show the insufficiency of his method, though it is ingenious, while we establish the rationale of ours on the never-failing ground of truth and philosophy.

He observes, with a precision which can only result from numerous trials, that different herbs impart their tinctures in such proportions of alcohol as he has found out. It is allowed that the volatile spirit and balsamic sulphur are thus extracted; but there are the essential, or fixed, salt and sulphur of the herb yet left in the process. These require another management to extract, which he is either ignorant of, or is so disingenuous as to conceal from the public; but that so noble a secret may lie open to all for a general advantage, here follows a plain account of the vegetable work.

Take any herb which is potent in medicine, and either extract the tincture with spirit of wine, or distil in the common way; reserve the distilled water, or tincture, when separated from the feces, for use. Then take the feces, or *Caput Mortuum*, and calcine it to a calx. Grind this to powder.

That done, take the water, or tincture, and mix them together; distil again, and calcine, forcing the moisture over by a retort, in a wary process, calcining and cohobating the spirit on the salt till it attains a perfect whiteness and oily nature, like the finest alkali, commonly called Flemish.

As your salt requires it in the process, have in readiness more of the extracted tincture, or distilled spirit, that you may not work it, viz., the salt, too dry; and yet proceed cautiously, not adding too much of the moisture, so that the dealbating, or whitening, may keep visibly heightening at every repetition of the process. Frequent experiments may enable you to push it on to a redness, but a fine yellow is the best of all; for the process tends, in its perfection at this period, to a state of dryness, and must be

managed with a strong fire. By following these directions, you have here the two tinctures in the Vegetable Kingdom, answering to the white and red tinctures in the mineral.

### CHAPTER III.

#### **Of the Uses of the Vegetable Tinctures, with some general remarks on their great efficacy in medicine.**

You have, by carefully following our directions above, procured the tinctures, white or yellow, in the Vegetable Kingdom. The yellow is more efficacious if the work is well performed; either of them, by being exposed in the air, will soon run into a thick, essential oil, smelling very strong of the plant, and the virtues of any quantity may be concentrated by often repeating the circulation. But you have no need of this, unless for curiosity, there being in your tinctures a real permanent power to extract the essential virtues of any herb you may require on immersion only, where the essential salt and volatile spirit, together with the sulphureous oil, are all conjoined, floating on the top of your tincture, and the terrestrial feces precipitated to the bottom; not as in distillation, or extraction of the tincture with alcohol, while the stalk and texture of the plant are entire; no, this Vegetable Tincture devours the whole substance of the plant, and precipitates only the earthy particles acquired in its vegetation, which no degree of calcination could push to an alkali, without its essential salt.

Such is the virtue of our Vegetable Tincture; and if the operation be never so often repeated with different herbs, it loses nothing of its virtue, or quantity or quality, casting up the virtues of whatever herb is immersed, and precipitating the earth as before when both are easily separated and the medicine preserved for use.

Let a medicine, thus prepared, be examined, and the principles by which it is extracted, with the general methods of preparation; if the distilled water for instance, of any aromatical or balsamic herb, be took, common experience will convince us that nothing but its volatile parts come over the head; but take the Caput Mortuum, and it will calcine after this process, and afford an alkali, which proves itself to be an essential salt by its pungency, and will, in the air, run to an oil, which is its essential sulphur. If you take the tincture extracted with alcohol, it is the same, only the more resinous parts of some herbs may enrich the extract, and the volatile sulphur giving the color and scent, be retained, which escapes in distillation; but the potent virtue or soul of the herb, if we may be allowed the expression, goes to the dunghill. It is the same if the expressed juice of the herb is used; and if taken in powder, or substance, as it is sometimes prescribed, but little of its virtue, beyond its nourishing quality, can be communicated to the patient, except as a bitter or a vermifuge, in which cases, perhaps, it is best by way of infusion.

Let none despise the operation above laid down, because it is not to be found in the ordinary books of chemistry; but consider the possibility of Nature, who brings about wonderful effects by the most simple causes: neither let any imagine this process so easy as to perform it without some trials, patiently attending to her operations and endeavoring to account for any deficiency in the course of his work. For this reason it will be proper that the artist forms to himself an idea what the intention is to procure, how far Nature has prepared his matter to work upon, in what state she has left it, and how far it may be exalted above the ordinary point of virtue, which it could attain in the crude air, and this by the Philosophic Art assisting Nature, as a handmaid, with an administration of due heat, which is nutritive and not corrosive.

A recapitulation of the foregoing process, with some remarks on the different stages, will be sufficient here to explain our meaning above, and prepare the reader for what follows concerning the metallic tincture, or Stone of the Philosophers.

The virtues of herbs and simples are confessedly great and manifold; among these, some are poisonous and narcotic, yet of great use in medicine; none of them but want some preparation or correction. Now the common ways of doing this are defective; neither preserving the virtue entire, nor furnishing any menstruum capable of doing it with expedition and certainty. Alcohol, as was before observed, will extract a tincture and distillation a spirit. We reject neither of these methods in our work, as they are useful to decompose the subject; but we are not content with a part of its virtues.

To speak philosophically, we would have its soul, which is in its Essential Salt, and its spirit, which is in the Inflammable Sulphur. The body in which these resided we are not concerned for; it is mere earth, and must return from whence it came: whereas the soul and spirit are paradisiacal, if the artist can free them from their earthy prison without loss; but this can only be done by death. Understand us aright.

Philosophically speaking, no more is meant than decomposition of the subject into its first principles, as the uniting them more permanently with an increase of virtue is most emphatically called a resurrection and regeneration. Now this decomposing is to be done with judgment, so as not to corrode or destroy, but divide the matter into its integral parts. At this period of the work the artist will consider what is further intended, keeping Nature in view, who, if she is properly assisted in her operations, produces from the dissolution of any subject something more excellent, as in a grain of corn, or any vegetable seed, which by cultivation may be pushed to a surprising produce; but then it must die first, as our Blessed Saviour very emphatically observes: and let this saying dwell upon the artist's imagination, that he may know what he generally intends; for the whole philosophical work, both in vegetables and minerals, is only a mortifying of the subject, and reviving it again to a more excellent life.

Now if the intention in the foregoing process was to increase simply any vegetable in its kind, the destruction and revivification must follow the ordinary course of vegetation by the medium of seed; and Nature can only be assisted by fertilizing the soil, together with a proper distribution of heat and moisture. Yet there are not wanting authors, and particularly Paracelsus, who boldly describe processes wherein the vital quality of the seed has been destroyed by calcination, and yet brought to life again at the pleasure of an artist. Such reveries are a scandal to philosophy, and a snare to the superficial reader, who is generally more struck with impossibilities, roundly asserted, than the modesty of true artists. These confess their operations are within the bounds of Nature, whose limits they cannot surpass.

The reader, then, will consider that our intention here is not to increase the seminal quality, but to concenter, in a little compass, the medicinal virtues of a herb. Nature is desirous of this in all her productions, but can only rise to such a point of perfection, in her ordinary course, through the crudity of the air and fixing power of the elements. Now if we take the vegetables at that point of perfection to which she has pushed them, and farther assist her in decomposing, purifying, uniting, and reviving the subject, we obtain, what she could not otherwise produce, a real permanent tincture, the quintessence, as it is called, or such a harmonious mixture of the four elementary

qualities as constitutes a fifth, from thenceforth indissoluble, and not to be debased with any impurity.

But the virtue of this Vegetable Tincture is capable of improvement ad infinitum, in its own kind, by adding more of its spirit or extracted tincture, and repeating the circulation, which is every time more speedily finished, as there is a magnetical quality in the fixed salt, and essential oil, which assimilates to itself all the real virtues of what is added, only rejecting the feculent, earthy qualities; so that in a grain of the tincture much virtue may be concentrated, not at all corrosive or ardent, but friendly to the animal life, and most powerful as a medicine for disorders which the herb is appropriated to cure. Nay, something of this nature was still sought for by the distillers of ardent spirits, when phlegm has been drawn away from the volatile sulphur, till it becomes proof spirit, as it is termed, which will burn dry, a plain indication that it contained nothing essential in it from the subject out of which it was extracted: for that which is essential cannot be destroyed by the fire, but is reddened to an alkaline salt, having in its center an Incombustible Sulphur, which, on exposing to the air, manifests itself both to the sight and touch. Now, if this Salt and Sulphur are purified, and the distilled spirit, or extracted tincture, added, Nature finds a subject wherein she can carry her operations to the highest limit, if an artist furnishes her with proper vessels, and a degree of heat suitable to her intentions.

## **CHAPTER IV. Of the Metallic Tincture.**

When we undertook a description of the vegetable process, it was chiefly with a view to familiarize the reader to a general idea of the Philosophic Work in metals, as both proceed upon the same principles, only the mercuries of metals are more difficult to extract, and stronger degrees of heat are required, as well as more of the artist's time and patience; neither can he succeed in the operation without frequent trials, and a constant consideration within his mind as to what is within the possibility of Nature.

For this purpose it is necessary to know the composition of metals, that he may know how to decompose and reduce them to their first principles, which is treated of very mysteriously by the philosophers, and purposely concealed, as the right key to unlock all the secrets of Nature. We shall be more explicit on this head, for the time draws near when, as Sendivogius has observed, the confection of the Stone will be discovered as plainly as the making of cheese from rennet. But we warn the reader not to imitate Midas in the fable, by seeking the noble tincture in metals out of covetousness; for the true wise men seek only a medicine for human infirmities, and esteem gold but as it furnishes them with the means of independence and the exercise of universal beneficence. They communicate their talents, without vain glory or ostentation, to such as are worthy searchers of Nature, but concealing their names as much as possible, while living, as well as their knowledge of the mystery from the world.

We shall herein follow their example, and yet write more plainly of the Metallic Process than any of them has hitherto done, knowing that the providence of the Most High will effectually guard this Arcanum from falling into the hands of covetous gold seekers and knavish pretenders to the Art of Transmutation; because the first sort of men will, from their impatience, soon leave the simplicity of Nature for processes of more subtlety invented by the latter, and adapted to such avaricious views as the other have formed, who, judging of things by their own griping dispositions, know not the noble liberality of Nature, but imagine some gold must be advanced before she will replenish their heaps. This is well foreseen by those smoke sellers, who receive what they can catch, as if they were her proper agents; and, having no conscience to put a stop to their imposition, the deception is kept up till all vanishes in smoke.

Let it be observed, then, that all who have written on the art, from undoubted principles, assert that the genuine process is not expensive; time and fuel, with manual labour, being all allowed for. Besides, the matter to be wrought upon is easy to procure by the consent of all. A small quantity of gold and silver is, indeed, necessary when the stone is made, as a medium for its tinging either in the white or red tinctures, which such pretenders have urged from books of philosophers as a plausible pretence to rob the avaricious both of their time and money; but their pretences are so gross that none can be sufferers in this respect, if they have not justly deserved it.

The reader may then rest assured that this process is not expensive, and reject all authors or practitioners who advance anything contrary to this established verity, remembering the simplicity of Nature in her operations, observing her frugal method

in the production, and consummate wisdom in the dissolution of things; always endeavoring at something perfect in a new production. And because we are here proposing to help her in a metallic process, as before in the vegetable, let us consider a little how she forms the metals, in what state she has left them, and what need there is of the artist's skill to assist her in pushing them to that degree of perfection they are capable of attaining.

All true philosophers agree that the First Matter of metals is a moist vapor, raised by the action of the central fire in the bowels of the earth, which, circulating through its pores, meets with the crude air, and is coagulated by it into an unctuous water, adhering to the earth, which serves it for a receptacle, where it is joined to a sulphur more or less pure, and a salt more or less fixing, which it attracts from the air, and, receiving a certain degree of concoction from the central and solar heat, is formed into stones and rocks, minerals, and metals. These were all formed of the same moist vapor originally, but are thus varied from the different impregnations of the sperm, the quality of salt and sulphur with which it is fixed, and the purity of the earth which serves it for a matrix; for whatever portion of this moist vapor is taking along its impurities, is soon deprived of heat, both solar and central, and the grosser parts, forming a mucilaginous substance, furnish the matter of common rocks and stones. But when this moist vapor is sublimed, very slowly, through a fine earth, not partaking of a sulphureous unctuously, pebbles are formed; for the sperm of these beautiful, variegated stones, with marbles, alabasters, etc., separates this depurated vapor, both for their first formation and continual growth. Gems are in like manner formed of this moist vapor when it meets with pure salt water, with which it is fixed in a cold place. But if it is sublimed leisurely through places which are hot and pure, where the fatness of sulphur adheres to it, this vapor, which the philosophers call their Mercury, is joined to that fatness and becomes an unctuous matter, which coming afterwards to other places, cleansed by the afore-named vapors, where the earth is subtle, pure, and moist, fills the pores of it, and so gold is made.

But if the unctuous matter comes into places cold and impure, lead, or Saturn, is produced; if the earth be cold and pure, mixed with sulphur, the result is copper. Silver also is formed of this vapor, where it abounds in purity, but mixed with a lesser degree of sulphur and not sufficiently concocted. In tin, or Jupiter, as it is called, it abounds, but in less purity. In Mars, or iron, it is in a lesser proportion impure, and mixed with an adjust sulphur.

Hence it appears that the First Matter of metals is one thing, and not many, homogeneous, but altered by the diversity of places and sulphurs with which it is combined. The philosophers frequently describe this matter.

Sendivogius calls it heavenly water, not wetting the hands; not vulgar, but almost like rain water. When Hermes calls it a bird without wings, figuring thereby its vaporous nature, is it well described. When he calls the sun its father and the moon its mother, he signifies that it is produced by the action of heat upon moisture. When he says the wind carries it in its belly, he only means that the air is its receptacle. When he affirms that which is inferior is like that which is superior, he teaches that the same vapor on the surface of the earth furnishes the matter of rain and dew, wherewith all things are nourished in the vegetable and animal kingdoms. This now is what the philosophers call their Mercury and affirm it to be found in all things, as it is in fact. This makes

some suppose it to be in the human body, others in the dunghill, which has often bewildered such as are fond of philosophical subtleties, and fly from one thing to another, without any fixed theory about what they would seek, expecting to find in the Vegetable or Animal Kingdoms the utmost perfection of the Mineral. To this mistake of theirs, without doubt, the philosophers have contributed with an intention of hiding their First Matter from the unworthy; in which they were, perhaps, more cautious than is necessary, for Sendivogius declares that occasionally, in discourse, he had intimated the art plainly word by word to some who accounted themselves very accurate philosophers; but they conceived such subtle notions, far beyond the simplicity of Nature, that they could not, to any purpose, understand his meaning. Wherefore, he professes little fear of its being discovered but to those who have it according to the good pleasure and providence of the Most High.

This benevolent disposition has induced him to declare more openly the First Matter, and fix the artist in his search of it to the mineral kingdom; for, quoting Albertus Magnus, who wrote that, in his time, grains of gold were found betwixt the teeth of a dead man in his grave, he observes that Albertus could not account for this miracle, but judged it to be by reason of the mineral virtue in man, being confirmed by that saying of Morien: "And this matter, O King, is extracted from thee." But this is erroneous, for Morien understood those things philosophically, the mineral virtue residing in its own kingdom, distinct from the animal. It is true, indeed, in the animal kingdom mercury, or humidity, is as the matter, and sulphur, or marrow in the bones, as the virtue; but the animal is not mineral, and vice versa. If the virtue of the animal sulphur were not in man, the blood, or mercury, could not be coagulated into flesh and bones; so if there were not a vegetable sulphur in the vegetable kingdom, it could not coagulate water, or the vegetable mercury, into herbs, etc. The same is to be understood in the mineral kingdom.

These three kingdoms do not, indeed, differ in their virtue, nor the three sulphurs, as every sulphur has a power to coagulate its own mercury; and every mercury has a power of being coagulated by its own proper sulphur, and by no other which is a stranger to it.

Now the reason why gold was found betwixt the teeth of a dead man is this: because in his lifetime mercury had been administered to him, either by unction, turbid, or some other way; and it is the nature of this metal to ascend to the mouth, forming itself an outlet there, to be evacuated with the spittle. If, then, in the time of such treatment, the sick man died, the mercury, not finding an egress, remained in his mouth between his teeth, and the carcass becoming a natural matrix to ripen the mercury, it was shut up for a long time, till it was congealed into gold by its own proper sulphur, being purified by the corrosive phlegm of the man's body; but this would never have happened if mineral mercury had not been administered to him.



## CHAPTER V. Of the Second Matter, or Seed in Metals.

All philosophers affirm, with one consent, that metals have a seed by which they are increased, and that this seminal quality is the same in all of them; but it is perfectly ripened in gold only, where the bond of union is so fixed that it is most difficult to decompose the subject, and procure it for the Philosophical Work. But some, who were adepts in the art, have by painful processes taken gold for their male, and the mercury, which they knew how to extract from the less compacted metals, for a female: not as an easier process, but to find out the possibility of making the stone this way; and have succeeded, giving this method more openly to conceal the true confection, which is most easy and simple. We shall, therefore, set before the reader a landmark, to keep him from tripping on this difficulty, by considering what is the seed wherein the metals are increased, that the artist may be no longer at a loss where to seek for it, keeping in view the writings of our learned predecessors on this subject.

The seed of metals is what the Sons of Wisdom have called their mercury, to distinguish it from quicksilver, which it nearly resembles, being the radical moisture of metals. This, when judiciously extracted, without corrosives, or fluxing, contains in it a seminal quality whose perfect ripeness is only in gold; in the other metals it is crude, like fruits which are yet green, not being sufficiently digested by the heat of the sun and action of the elements. We observed that the radical moisture contains the seed, which is true: yet it is not the seed, but the sperm only, in which the vital principle floats, being invisible to the eye. But the mind perceives it, and in a true artist, as a central point of condensed air, wherein Nature, according to the will of God, has included the first principles of life in everything, as well animal and vegetable as mineral; for in animals the sperm may be seen, but not the included principle of impregnation: this is a centered point, to which the sperm serves only as a vehicle, till, by the action and ferment of the matrix, the point wherein Nature has included a vital principle expands itself, and then it is perceivable in the rudiments of an animal. So in any seculent fruit (as, for instance, in an apple), the pulp or sperm is much more in proportion than the seed included; and even that which appears to be seed is only a finer concoction of sperm, including the vital stamina; as also in a grain of wheat the flour is only the sperm, the point of vegetation is an included air, which is kept by its sperm from the extremes of cold and heat, till it finds a proper matrix, where the husk being softened with moisture, and warmed by the heat, the surrounding sperm putrefies, making the seed, or centered air, to expand and to burst the husk carrying along in its motion a milky substance, assimilated to itself from the putrefied sperm. This the condensing quality of the air includes in a film and hardens into a germ, all according to the purpose of Nature.

"If this whole process of Nature, most wonderful in her operations, was not constantly repeated before our eyes, the simple process of vegetation would be equally problematical with that of the philosophers; yet how can the metals increase, nay, how can anything be multiplied without seed? The true artists never pretend to multiply metals without it, and can it be denied that Nature still follows her first appointment? She always fructifies the seed when it is put into a proper matrix. Does not she obey an ingenious artist, who knows her operations, with her possibilities, and attempts

nothing beyond them? A husbandman meliorates his ground with compost, burns the weeds, and makes use of other operations. He steeps his seed in various preparations, only taking care not to destroy its vital principle; indeed, it never comes into his head to roast it, or to boil it, in which he shows more knowledge of Nature than some would-be philosophers do. Nature, like a liberal mother, rewards him with a more plentiful harvest, in proportion as he has meliorated her seed and furnished a more suitable matrix for its increase.

"The intelligent gardener goes farther; he knows how to shorten the process of vegetation, or retard it. He gathers roses, cuts salads, and pulls green peas in winter. Are the curious inclined to admire plants and fruit of other climates? He can produce them in his stoves to perfection. Nature follows his directions unconstrained, always willing to obtain her end, viz., the perfection of her offspring.

"Open your eyes here, yet studious searchers of Nature! Is she so liberal in her perishing productions, how much more in those which are permanent, and can subsist in the fire? Attend, then, to her operations; if you procure the metallic seed, and ripen that by art which she is many ages in perfecting, it cannot fail but she will regard you with an increase proportioned to the excellency of your subject.

"The reader will be apt to exclaim here: "Very fine! All this is well; but how shall the seed of metals be procured, and whence comes it that so few know how to gather it?" To this it is answered that the philosophers have hitherto industriously kept that a profound secret; some out of selfish disposition, though otherwise good men. Others, who wished only for worthy persons to whom they might impart it, could not write of it openly, because covetousness and vanity have been governing principles in the world: and, being wise men, they knew that it was not the will of the most High to inflame and cherish such odious tempers, the genuine offspring of pride and self-love, but to banish them out of the earth, wherefore they have been withheld hitherto. But we, finding no restraint on our mind in that respect, shall declare what we know: and the rather because we judge the time is come to demolish the golden calf, so long had in veneration by all ranks of men, insomuch that worth is estimated by the money a man possesses; and such is the inequality of possessions that mankind are almost reducible to the rich, who are rioting in extravagance, and the poor, who are in extreme want, smarting under the iron hand of oppression. Now the measure of inequality among the rich hastens to its limit, and the cry of the poor is come before the Lord: "Who will give them to eat till they shall be satisfied?"

Hereafter the rich shall see the vanity of their possessions when compared with the treasures communicated by this secret; for the riches it bestows are a blessing from God, and not the squeezing of oppression. Besides, its chief excellence consists in making a medicine capable of healing all diseases to which the human body is liable, and prolonging life to the utmost limits ordained by the Creator of all things.

There want not other reasons for the manifestation of the process; for skepticism has gone hand in hand with luxury and oppression, insomuch that the fundamental truths of all revealed religion are disputed. These were always held in veneration by the possessors of this art, as may be seen from what they have left upon record in their books: and, indeed, the first principles of revealed religion are demonstrated from the whole process, for the seed of metals is shown in corruption, and raised in

incorruption; it is sown a natural body, and raised a spiritual body; it is known to partake of the curse which came upon the earth for man's sake, having in its composition a deadly poison, which can only be separated by regeneration in water and fire; it can, when it is thoroughly purified and exalted, immediately tinge imperfect metals and raise them to a state of perfection, being in this respect a lively emblem of that seed of the woman, the Serpent Bruiser, who, through His sufferings and death, hath entered into glory, having thenceforth power and authority to redeem, purify, and glorify all those who come unto Him as a mediator between God and mankind.

Such being our motives, we can no longer be silent concerning the seed of metals, but declare that it is contained in the ores of metals, as wheat is in the grain; and the sottish folly of alchemists has hindered them from adverting to this, so that they have always sought it in the vulgar metals, which are factitious and not a natural production, therein acting as foolishly as if a man should sow bread and expect corn from it, or from an egg which is boiled hope to produce a chicken. Nay, though the philosophers have said many times the vulgar metals are dead, not excepting gold, which passes the fire, they could never imagine a thing so simple as that the seed of metals was contained in their ores, where alone it ought to be expected; so bewildered is human ingenuity, when it leaves the beaten track of truth and Nature, to entangle itself in a multiplicity of fine-spun inventions.

The searcher of Nature will rejoice greatly in this discovery, as grounded in reason and sound philosophy, but to fools it would be in vain, should even wisdom herself cry out in the streets. Wherefore, leaving such persons to hug themselves in their own imaginary importance, we shall go on to observe that the ores of metals are our First Matter, or sperm, wherein the seed is contained, and the key of this art consists in a right dissolution of the ores into a water, which the philosophers call their mercury, or water of life, and an earthy substance, which they have denominated their sulphur.

The first is called their woman, wife, Luna, and other names, signifying that it is the feminine quality in their seed; and the other they have designated their man, husband, Sol, etc., to point out its masculine quality.

In the separation and due conjunction of these with heat, and careful management, there is generated a noble offspring, which they have for its excellency called the quintessence or a subject wherein the four elements are so completely harmonized as to produce a fifth subsisting in the fire, without waste of substance, or diminution of its virtue, wherefore they have given it the titles of Salamander, Phoenix, and Son of the Sun.

## CHAPTER VI. Of the Dissolution and Extraction of the Seed in Metals.

The true Sons of Science have always accounted the dissolution of metals as the master key to this art, and have been particular in giving directions concerning it, only keeping their readers in the dark as to the subject, whether ores, or factitious metals, were to be chosen: nay, when they say most to the purpose, then they make mention of metals rather than the ores, with an intention to perplex those whom they thought unworthy of the art.

Thus the author of the "Philosophical Duet," or a dialogue between the stone, gold, and mercury, says:

"By the omnipotent God, and on the salvation of my soul, I here declare to you earnest seekers, in pity to your earnest searching, the whole Philosophical Work, which is only taken from one subject and perfected in one thing. For we take this copper, and destroy it crude and gross body; we draw out its pure spirit, and after we have purified the earthy parts, we join them together, thus making a Medicine of a Poison.

It is remarkable that he avoids mentioning the ore, but calls his subject copper, which is what they call a metal of the vulgar, being indeed factitious, and not fit for the confection of our Stone, having lost its seminal quality in the fire; but in other respects it is the plainest discovery extant, and is accounted to be so by Sendivogius.

Yet the reader is not to suppose that the ore of copper is to be chosen in consequence of that assertion, as preferable to others. No, the mercury, which is the metallic seed, is attainable from all, and is easier to be extracted from lead, which is confirmed by the true adepts, advising us to seek for the noble child where it lies in a despised form, shut up under the seal of Saturn; and, indeed, let it be supposed, for an illustration of this subject, that any one would propose to make malt, he may effect his purpose in the other grains, but barley is generally chosen, because its germ is made to sprout by a less tedious process, which is to all intents and purposes what we want in the extraction of our mercury: neither are the proceeding different in both cases, if regard is had to the fixity of ores, and the ease with which barley gives forth its seminal virtue from the slight cohesion of its parts.

Let the artist remark how a maltster manages his grain by wetting, to loosen the cohesion of its parts, and leaves the rest to Nature, knowing that she will soon furnish the necessary heat for his purpose, if he does not suffer it to escape by mismanagement in his laying of his heap too thin, or raising the fermentation too high by a contrary proceeding, as it is well known actual fire may be kindled from the fermentation of vegetable juices when crude; and ripe corn, under such treatment, would soon be fit for nothing but hogs, or the dunghill. Now the intention is to raise such a fermentation only as will draw out the vegetable mercury without spoiling it, either for the earth, if it was cast there to fructify, or the kiln, if it is to be fixed at that precise point, by exhaling the Adventitious moisture, and thus preserving the whole strength of its seminal quality for the purposes of brewing, or making malt spirits.

Suppose, then, an artist would extract a mineral mercury from the ores, and chooses an ore for his subject. He can only assist Nature in the process by stirring up a central heat, which she includes in everything not already putrefied, as a root of its life, in which it is increased. The medium by which this central heat is put in motion is known to be putrefaction; but the ores of every kind are found to resist putrefaction in all known processes extant. They may, indeed, when they have been fluxed in the fire, contract a rust from the air, which is a gradual decomposition of their substance, but this is only the natural decay of a dead body, not the putrefaction of its sperm for the purposes of propagation; and we are sensible from the heat of furnaces which is required to flux the ores, and the slowness of their decay when deprived of their seminal qualities, by fluxation, that a heat which would destroy the seed in vegetables may be necessary in the first stages of putrefaction for the ores, as they will bear a red fire without being fluxed or losing anything but their sulphureous and arsenical impurities; in short, a matter in itself as much extraneous to the seed of metals, as the chaff to the wheat; wherefore, a careful separation of these by roasting, or otherwise, is deservedly reckoned among the first operations for the putrefaction of ores, and the rather because that which has been calcined, by having its pores opened, is rendered attractive, both of the air and other menstrooms proper for its decomposition.

Let the artist, therefore, by fire and manual operation, separate the impure qualities from his subject, pounding, washing, and calcining, till no more blackness is communicated to his menstruum, for which pure rain water is sufficient. It will be seen on every repetition of this process, that what fouls the water is extraneous and the ore yet exists in its individual metallic nature, except it is fluxed by a too intense heat, in which case it is no longer fit for our purpose; therefore fresh ore is to be used.

The matter being thus prepared, its central fire will be awakened, if it is treated properly, according to the process for extracting quicksilver from its ores, by keeping it in a close heat, which is continued without admission of the crude air, till the radical moisture is elevated in the form of a vapor, and again condensed into a metallic water, analogous to quicksilver.

This is the true mercury of the Philosophers, and fit for all their operations in the Hermetic Art.

## CHAPTER VII.

### Of the Separation and Further Treatment of our Philosophical Seed.

The Putrefaction of our subject being thus completed, it exists under two forms; the moisture which was extracted, and the residuum, being our Philosophical Earth. The water contains its seminal virtue, and the earth is a proper receptacle, wherein it may fructify. Let the water, then, be separated and kept for use; calcine the earth, for an impurity adheres to it which can only be taken away by fire, and that, too, of the strongest degree; for here there is no danger of destroying the seminal quality, and our earth must be highly purified before it can ripen the seed. This is what Sendivogius means when he says: Burn the sulphur till it becomes Sulphur incombustible. Many lose in the preparation what is of most use in the art; for our mercury is corrected (healed) by the sulphur, else it would be of no use. Let, therefore, the earthy part be well calcined, and return the mercury on the calcined earth; afterwards draw it off by distillation; then calcine, cohere, and distill, repeating the process till the mercury is well corrected by the sulphur, and the sulphur is purified to a whiteness, and goes on to red, a sign of its complete purification, where you have the Philosophical Male and Female ready for conjunction. This must now be managed with judgment, as the noble child may be yet strangled in the birth; but all things are easy to an ingenious artist, who knows the proportion of mixture required and accommodates his operations to the intention of Nature, for which purpose we shall faithfully conduct him according to our ability.

**CHAPTER VIII.**  
**Of the Union or Mystical Marriage in the Philosophical Process.**

The seed and its earth being thus prepared, nothing remains but a judicious conjunction of them together; for it too much moisture prevails, the philosophical egg may burst before it can go through the heat necessary for its hatching. To speak without a figure. Our subject must now be enclosed in a small glass vial, made strong enough to bear a due heat, which is to be raised gradually to the highest degree: the best form for this vessel being that of an oil flask, with a long neck; but these are much too thin in substance for this operation. In such a vessel the mixture is to be sealed hermetically, and digested so long till it is fixed into a dry concretion; but, if, as we observed, the moisture should predominate, there is great danger of the vessel bursting, with a vapor which cannot be centered by the fixing quality in the matter. The intention is, nevertheless, to fix our subject in the heat, and so render its future destruction impossible.

On the other hand, if the dry, fixing quality of the sulphur exceeds so as not to suffer an alternate resolution of its substance into vapors, and a re-manifestation of its fixing quality, by causing the whole to subside in the bottom of the vessel till the matter again liquefies and sublimes (which Ripley has well described), there is danger of the whole vitrifying; and thus you shall have only glass instead of the noble tincture. To avoid these two extremes it is very proper that the purified earth be reduced by manual operation to an impalpable fineness, and then its corrected mercury must be added, incorporating both together till the earth will imbibe no more. This operation will require time, with some degree of the artist's patience; for however the humidity may seem disproportionate, on letting it rest awhile, a dryness on the surface of your matter will show that it is capable of imbibing more, so that the operation is to be repeated till it is fully saturated, which may be known from its bearing the air without any remarkable change of surface from dry to humid; or, on the contrary, if so, the conjunction is well made, which is farther confirmed if a small portion be spread upon a thin plate of iron, heated till it flows gently like wax, casting forth the moisture with heat and again absorbing it when cold, so as to return to the former consistence; but if a clamminess ensues it is a sign you have exceeded in the quantity of humidity, which must be extracted by distilling again and repeating the process till it is right.

Your sulphur and mercury being thus united, put them into a glass vial, before described, in such a quantity as to take up one-third of its contents, leaving two-thirds, including the neck, for the circulation of your matter.

Secure the neck of your vial with a temporary luting at the first, and give a gentle heat, observing whether it sublimes and fixes alternately. If it easily sublimes and shows a disposition, at intervals, to subside at the bottom of the vessel, all is well conducted hitherto; for the moisture will first be predominant, which the sulphur can only perfectly absorb as the heat is increased for the perfect ripening of our Paradisiacal Fruit. Therefore, if it manifests a too early disposition for fixing, add more of the corrected mercury till Luna rises resplendent in her season; she will give place to the Sun in his turn. This would be the language of an adept on this occasion, only suggesting that the female quality in our prepared seed is first active, while the

male is passive, and that it is afterwards passive while the male is active, such being the case in all vegetation; for every germ which is the first rudiments of a herb or tree, is predominant in moisture, and then only becomes fixed when it is fully concocted in the seed.



**CHAPTER IX.**  
**Of the Further Treatment and Ripening of our Seed.**

This is deservedly called the Great Work of the Philosophers; and the artist having done his part hitherto, must seal up his glass hermetically, an operation which every maker of barometers knows how to perform.

The glass is then to be put into a furnace with a proper nest contrived for its reception, so as to give a continual heat from the first to the fourth degree, and to afford the artist an opportunity, from time to time, of inspecting every change which his matter assumes during the process, without danger of damping the heat and putting a stop to its perfect circulation. A heat of the first degree is sufficient at the first, for some months, in which method much time may be lost by a young practitioner, till he knows how to handle his matter from experience; but then he is not so liable to be disappointed with the bursting of his vessel or the matter vitrifying.

Thus you have arrived at the desired seed-time in our Philosophical Work, which, though it may appear in the artist's power to ripen, depends no less on the Divine blessing than the harvest, which a painful husbandman has not the presumption to expect otherwise than from God's beneficence.

There are many requisites to entitle anyone to the possession of our philosophical harvest, and the true laborers in it have sought for such persons to whom they might communicate it, by evident testimony of the senses, after which they account the confection of our Stone an easy process, manageable by women and children; but without such a communication, there is a necessity that those who would undertake it are endowed by Nature with an ingenious mind, patient to observe and accurate to investigate her ordinary appearances which, from their commonness, are less noticed than such phenomena as are more curious though of less importance; yet these for the most part employ the precious time of those egregious triflers, the modern virtuosi. These smatterers in discovery of a shell or butterfly differently streaked from those of the same kind: and all the while water, air, earth, fire, with their continual changes and resolutions into one another, by the medium of our atmosphere, through the efficacy of the central and solar heat, are unstudied by these would-be philosophers; so that a sensible rustic has more real knowledge, in this respect, than a collector of natural rarities, and makes a much wiser use of the experiences he has acquired.

**CHAPTER X.**  
**Of the Further Process to the Ripening of our Noble Seed.**

Supposing such dispositions in the artist as have been previously laid down, and the work well performed hitherto, for his direction herein we shall describe the changes which our subject undergoes during the second part of the process, commonly called the Great Work of the Philosophers.

Our vessel being warily heated at the first for fear of its cracking, an ebullition of the contained matter is brought on, so that the moisture is alternately circulated in white fumes above, and condensed below, which may continue for a month or two, nay longer, increasing the heat gradually to another degree, as your matter discovers a disposition for fixing, by the vapor continuing at longer intervals condensed, and rising in a lesser quantity, of an ash color, or other dark shades, which it will assume as a medium to perfect blackness, the first desirable stage in our harvest. Other colors may be exhibited in this part of the work without danger, if they pass transiently; but if a faint redness, like that of the corn poppy, continues, the matter is in danger of vitrifying, either from an impatient urging of the fire, or the moisture not being sufficiently predominant. An ingenious artist can remedy this by opening his vessel and adding more of the corrected mercury, sealing it up as before; but a novice would do much better to prevent it by governing his fire according to the appearances of his matter, with judgment and patience, increasing it if the moisture manifests its predominancy too long, and slacking if the dry prevails, till such time as the vapors become dark; and after they have continued for some time at rest, a pellicle or film on the matter shows its disposition for fixing, retaining the vapor captive for some time, till it breaks through at different places on its surface (much like the bituminous substance of coal in a soldering fire), with darker clouds, but quickly dissipated, and growing less in quantity, till the whole substance resembles molten pitch, or the aforesaid bituminous substance, bubbling less and less, resting in one entire black substance at the bottom of your glass. This is called the blackness of black, the head of the crow, etc., and is esteemed a desirable stage in our philosophical generation, being the perfect putrefaction of our seed, which will ere long show its vital principle by a glorious manifestation of Seminal Virtue.

**CHAPTER XI**  
**A Further Description of the Process.**

When the putrefaction of our seed has been thus completed, the fire may be increased till glorious colors appear, which the Sons of Art have called Cauda Pavonis, or the Peacock's Tail. These colors come and go, as heat is administered approaching to the third degree, till all is of a beautiful green, and as it ripens assumes a perfect whiteness, which is the White Tincture, transmuting the inferior metals into silver, and very powerful as a medicine. But as the artist well knows it is capable of a higher concoction, he goes on increasing his fire till it assumes a yellow, then an orange or citron color; and then boldly gives a heat of the fourth degree, till it acquires a redness like blood taken from a sound person, which is a manifest sign of its thorough concoction and fitness for the uses intended.

## **CHAPTER XII.** **Of the Stone and its Uses.**

Having thus completed the operation, let the vessel cool, and on opening it you will perceive your matter to be fixed into a ponderous mass, thoroughly of a scarlet color, which is easily reducible to powder by scraping, or otherwise, and in being heated in the fire flows like wax, without smoking, flaming, or loss of substance, returning when cold to its former fixity, heavier than gold, bulk for bulk, yet easy to be dissolved in any liquid, in which a few grains being taken its operation most wonderfully pervades the human body, to the extirpation of all disorders, prolonging life by its use to its utmost period; and hence it has obtained the appellation of "Panacea,"

or a Universal Remedy. Therefore, be thankful to the Most High for the possession of such an inestimable jewel, and account the possession of it not as the result of your own ingenuity, but a gift bestowed, of God's mere bounty, for the relief of human infirmities, in which your neighbor ought to share jointly with you, without any grudging or sinister views, according to the charge delivered to the Apostles: Freely have you received, freely communicate, remembering at the same time not to cast your pearls before swine; in a word, to withhold the manifestations of Nature you are enabled to exhibit, by the possession of our Stone, from the vicious and unworthy.

### **CHAPTER XIII.** **Of the Transmutation.**

It is much to be lamented that the seekers of natural knowledge in this art propose, principally, the Science of Transmutation as their ultimate view, and overlooking the chief excellency of our Stone as a medicine.

Notwithstanding this grovelling spirit, we shall commit the issue to His Providence, and declare the Transmutation (which, indeed, the philosophers do) openly, after which we shall describe the further circulation of our Stone for an increase of its virtues, and then make an end of our treatise.

When the artist would transmute any metal- for instance, lead- let a quantity be melted in a clean crucible, to which let a few grains of gold in filings be cast; and when the whole is melted, let him have in readiness a little of the powder, which will easily scrape off from his "stone," the quantity inconsiderable, and cast it on the metal while in fusion.

Immediately there will arise a thick fume, which carries off with it the impurities contained in the lead, with a crackling noise, and leaves the substance of the lead transmuted into most pure gold, without any kind of sophistication; the small quantity of gold added, previous to projection, serves only as a medium to facilitate the transmutation, and the quantity of your tincture is best ascertained by experience, as its virtue is proportioned to the number of circulations you have given after the first has been completed.

For instance: when you have finished the stone, dissolve it in our mercury again, wherein you have previously dissolved a few grains of pure gold. This operation is done without trouble, both substances readily liquefying. Put it into your vessel, as before, and go through the process. There is no danger in the management, but breaking your vessel; and every time it is thus treated its virtues are increased, in a ratio of ten to one hundred, a thousand, ten thousand, etc., both in medicinal and transmuting qualities; so that a small quantity may suffice for the purposes of an artist during the remaining term of his life.

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# THE AURORA OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.

BY THEOPHRASTUS PARACELSUS.

WHICH HE OTHERWISE CALLS HIS MONARCHIA.<sup>1</sup>

## CHAPTER I.

### CONCERNING THE ORIGIN OF THE PHILOSOPHERS' STONE.

ADAM was the first inventor of arts, because he had knowledge of all things as well after the Fall as before<sup>2</sup>. Thence he predicted the world's destruction by water. From this cause, too, it came about that his successors erected two tables of stone, on which they engraved all natural arts in hieroglyphical characters, in order that their posterity might also become acquainted with this prediction, that so it might be heeded, and provision made in the time of danger. Subsequently, Noah found one of these tables under Mount Araroth, after the Deluge. In this table were described the courses of the upper firmament and of the lower globe, and also of the planets. At length this universal knowledge was divided into several parts, and lessened in its vigour and power. By means of this separation, one man became an astronomer, another a magician, another a cabalist, and a fourth an alchemist. Abraham, that Vulcanic Tubalcain, a consummate astrologer and arithmetician, carried the Art out of the land of Canaan into Egypt, whereupon the Egyptians rose to so great a height and dignity that this wisdom was derived from them by other nations. The patriarch Jacob painted, as it were, the sheep with various colours; and this was done by magic: for in the theology of the Chaldeans, Hebrews, Persians, and Egyptians, they held these arts to be the highest philosophy, to be learnt by their chief nobles and priests. So it was in the time of Moses, when both the priests and also the physicians were chosen from among the Magi – the priests for the judgment of what related to health, especially in the knowledge of leprosy. Moses, likewise, was instructed in the Egyptian schools, at the cost and care of Pharaoh's daughter, so that he excelled in all the wisdom and learning of that people. Thus, too, was it with Daniel, who in his youthful days imbibed the learning of the Chaldeans, so that he became a cabalist. Witness his divine predictions and his exposition of those words, "Mene, Mene, Tecelphares". These words can be understood by the prophetic and cabalistic Art. This cabalistic Art was perfectly familiar to, and in constant use by, Moses and the Prophets. The Prophet Elias foretold many things by his cabalistic numbers. So did the Wise Men of old, by this natural and mystical Art, learn to know God rightly. They abode in His laws, and walked in His statutes with great firmness. It is also evident in the Book of Samuel, that the Berelists did not follow the devil's part, but became, by Divine permission, partakers of visions and veritable apparitions, whereof we shall treat more at large in the Book of Supercelestial Things<sup>3</sup>. This gift is granted by the Lord God to those priests who walk in the Divine precepts. It was a custom among the Persians never to admit any one as king unless he were a Wise Man, pre-eminent in reality as well as in name. This is clear from the customary name of their kings; for they were called Wise Men. Such were those Wise Men and Persian Magi who came from the East to seek out the Lord Jesus, and are called natural priests. The Egyptians, also, having obtained this magic and philosophy from the Chaldeans and Persians, desired that their priests should learn the same wisdom; and they became so fruitful and successful therein that all the neighbouring countries admired them. For this reason Hermes was so truly named Trismegistus, because he was a king, a priest, a prophet, a magician, and a sophist of natural things. Such another was Zoroaster.

## CHAPTER II.

WHEREIN IS DECLARED THAT THE GREEKS DREW A LARGE PART

OF THEIR LEARNING FROM THE EGYPTIANS; AND HOW

IT CAME FROM THEM TO US.

When a son of Noah possessed the third part of the world after the Flood, this Art broke into Chaldaea and Persia, and thence spread into Egypt. The Art having been found out by the superstitious and idolatrous Greeks, some of them who were wiser than the rest betook themselves to the Chaldeans and Egyptians, so that they might draw the same wisdom from their schools. Since, however, the theological study of the law of Moses did not satisfy them, they trusted to their own peculiar genius, and fell away from the right foundation of those natural secrets and arts. This is evident from their fabulous conceptions, and from their errors respecting the doctrine of Moses. It was the custom of the Egyptians to put forward the traditions of that surpassing wisdom only in enigmatical figures and abstruse histories and terms. This was afterwards followed by Homer with marvellous poetical skill; and Pythagoras was also acquainted with it, seeing that he comprised in his writings many things out of the law of Moses and the Old Testament. In like manner, Hippocrates, Thales of Miletus, Anaxagoras, Democritus, and others, did not scruple to fix their minds on the same subject. And yet none of them were practised in the true Astrology, Geometry, Arithmetic, or Medicine, because their pride prevented this, since they would not admit disciples belonging to other nations than their own. Even when they had got some insight from the Chaldeans and Egyptians, they became more arrogant still than they were before by Nature, and without any diffidence propounded the subject substantially indeed, but mixed with subtle fictions or falsehoods; and then they attempted to elaborate a certain kind of philosophy which descended from them to the Latins. These in their turn, being educated herewith, adorned it with their own doctrines, and by these the philosophy was spread over Europe. Many academies were founded for the propagation of their dogmas and rules, so that the young might be instructed; and this system flourishes with the Germans, and other nations, right down to the present day.



## CHAPTER III.

### WHAT WAS TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOLS OF THE EGYPTIANS.

The Chaldeans, Persians, and Egyptians had all of them the same knowledge of the secrets of Nature, and also the same religion. It was only the names that differed. The Chaldeans and Persians called their doctrine Sophia and Magic<sup>4</sup>; and the Egyptians, because of the sacrifice, called their wisdom priestcraft. The magic of the Persians, and the theology of the Egyptians, were both of them taught in the schools of old. Though there were many schools and learned men in Arabia, Africa, and Greece, such as Albumazar, Abenzagel, Geber, Rhasis, and Avicenna among the Arabians; and among the Greeks, Machaon, Podalirius, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Plato, Aristotle, and Rhodanus; still there were different opinions amongst them as to the wisdom of the Egyptian on points wherein they themselves differed, and whereupon they disagreed with it. For this reason Pythagoras could not be called a wise man, because the Egyptian priestcraft and wisdom were not perfectly taught, although he received therefrom many mysteries and arcana; and that Anaxagoras had received a great many as well, is clear from his discussions on the subject of Sol and its Stone, which he left behind him after his death. Yet he differed in many respects from the Egyptians. Even they would not be called wise men or Magi; but, following Pythagoras, they assumed the name of philosophy: yet they gathered no more than a few gleams like shadows from the magic of the Persians and the Egyptians. But Moses, Abraham, Solomon, Adam, and the wise men that came from the East to Christ, were true Magi, divine sophists and cabalists. Of this art and wisdom the Greeks knew very little or nothing at all; and therefore we shall leave this philosophical wisdom of the Greeks as being a mere speculation, utterly distinct and separate from other true arts and sciences.

## CHAPTER IV.

### WHAT MAGI THE CHALDEANS, PERSIANS, AND EGYPTIANS WERE.

Many persons have endeavoured to investigate and make use of the secret magic of these wise men; but it has not yet been accomplished. Many even of our own age exalt Trithemius, others Bacon and Agrippa, for magic and the cabala<sup>5</sup> – two things apparently quite distinct – not knowing why they do so. Magic, indeed, is an art and faculty whereby the elementary bodies, their fruits, properties, virtues, and hidden operations are comprehended. But the cabala, by a subtle understanding of the Scriptures, seems to trace out the way to God for men, to shew them how they may act with Him, and prophesy from Him; for the cabala is full of divine mysteries, even as Magic is full of natural secrets. It teaches of and foretells from the nature of things to come as well as of things present, since its operation consists in knowing the inner constitution of all creatures, of celestial as well as terrestrial bodies: what is latent within them; what are their occult virtues; for what they were originally designed, and with what properties they are endowed. These and the like subjects are the bonds wherewith things celestial are bound up with things of the earth, as may sometimes be seen in their operation even with the bodily eyes. Such a conjunction of celestial influences, whereby the heavenly virtues acted upon inferior bodies, was formerly called by the Magi a Gamahea<sup>6</sup>, or the marriage of the celestial powers and properties with elementary bodies. Hence ensued the excellent commixtures of all bodies, celestial and terrestrial, namely, of the sun and planets, likewise vegetables, minerals, and animals.

The devil attempted with his whole force and endeavour to darken this light; nor was he wholly frustrated in his hopes, for he deprived all Greece of it, and, in place thereof, introduced among that people human speculations and simple blasphemies against God and against His Son. Magic, it is true, had its origin in the Divine Ternary and arose from the Trinity of God. For God marked all His creatures with this Ternary and engraved its hieroglyph on them with His own finger. Nothing in the nature of things can be assigned or produced that lacks this magistry of the Divine Ternary, or that does not even ocularly prove it. The creature teaches us to understand and see the Creator Himself, as St. Paul testifies to the Romans. This covenant of the Divine Ternary, diffused throughout the whole substance of things, is indissoluble. By this, also, we have the secrets of all Nature from the four elements. For the Ternary, with the magical Quaternary, produces a perfect Septenary, endowed with many arcana and demonstrated by things which are known. When the Quaternary rests in the Ternary, then arises the Light of the World on the horizon of eternity, and by the assistance of God gives us the whole bond. Here also it refers to the virtues and operations of all creatures, and to their use, since they are stamped and marked with their arcana, signs, characters, and figures, so that there is left in them scarcely the smallest occult point which is not made clear on examination. Then when the Quaternary and the Ternary mount to the Denary is accomplished their retrogression or reduction to unity. Herein is comprised all the occult wisdom of things which God has made plainly manifest to men, both by His word and by the creatures of His hands, so that they may have a true knowledge of them. This shall be made more clear in another place.

## CHAPTER V.

### CONCERNING THE CHIEF AND SUPREME ESSENCE OF THINGS.

The Magi in their wisdom asserted that all creatures might be brought to one unified substance, which substance they affirm may, by purifications and purgations, attain to so high a degree of subtlety, such divine nature and occult property, as to work wonderful results. For they considered that by returning to the earth, and by a supreme magical separation, a certain perfect substance would come forth, which is at length, by many industrious and prolonged preparations, exalted and raised up above the range of vegetable substances into mineral, above mineral into metallic, and above perfect metallic substances into a perpetual and divine Quintessence<sup>7</sup>, including in itself the essence of all celestial and terrestrial creatures. The Arabs and Greeks, by the occult characters and hieroglyphic descriptions of the Persians and the Egyptians, attained to secret and abstruse mysteries. When these were obtained and partially understood they saw with their own eyes, in the course of experimenting, many wonderful and strange effects. But since the supercelestial operations lay more deeply hidden than their capacity could penetrate, they did not call this a supercelestial arcanum according to the institution of the Magi, but the arcanum of the Philosophers' Stone according to the counsel and judgment of Pythagoras. Whoever obtained this Stone overshadowed it with various enigmatical figures, deceptive resemblances, comparisons, and fictitious titles, so that its matter might remain occult. Very little or no knowledge of it therefore can be had from them.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CONCERNING THE DIFFERENT ERRORS AS TO ITS DISCOVERY AND KNOWLEDGE.

The philosophers have prefixed most occult names to this matter of the Stone, grounded on mere similitudes. Arnold, observing this, says in his "Rosary" that the greatest difficulty is to find out the material of this Stone; for they have called it vegetable, animal, and mineral, but not according to the literal sense, which is well known to such wise men as have had experience of divine secrets and the miracles of this same Stone. For example, Raymond Lully's "Lunaria" may be cited. This gives flowers of admirable virtues familiar to the philosophers themselves; but it was not the intention of those philosophers that you should think they meant thereby any projection upon metals, or that any such preparations should be made; but the abstruse mind of the philosophers had another intention. In like manner, they called their matter by the name of Martagon, to which they applied an occult alchemical operation; when, notwithstanding that name, it denotes nothing more than a hidden similitude. Moreover, no small error has arisen in the liquid of vegetables, with which a good many have sought to coagulate Mercury<sup>8</sup>, and afterwards to convert it with fixatory waters into Luna, since they supposed that he who in this way could coagulate it without the aid of metals would succeed in becoming the chief master. Now, although the liquids of some vegetables do effect this, yet the result is due merely to the resin, fat, and earthy sulphur with which they abound. This attracts to itself the moisture of the Mercury which rises with the substance in the process of coagulation, but without any advantage resulting. I am well assured that no thick and external Sulphur in vegetables is adapted for a perfect projection in Alchemy, as some have found out to their cost. Certain persons have, it is true, coagulated Mercury with the white and milky juice of tittinal, on account of the intense heat which exists therein; and they have called that liquid "Lac Virginis"; yet this is a false basis. The same may be asserted concerning the juice of celandine, although it colours just as though it were endowed with gold. Hence people conceived a vain idea. At a certain fixed time they rooted up this vegetable, from which they sought for a soul or quintessence, wherefrom they might make a coagulating and transmuting tincture. But hence arose nothing save a foolish error.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CONCERNING THE ERRORS OF THOSE WHO SEEK THE STONE IN VEGETABLES.

Some alchemists have pressed a juice out of celandine, boiled it to thickness, and put it in the sun, so that it might coagulate into a hard mass, which, being afterwards pounded into a fine black powder, should turn Mercury by projection into Sol. This they also found to be in vain. Others mixed Sal Ammoniac with this powder; others the Colcothar of Vitriol, supposing that they would thus arrive at their desired result. They brought it by their solutions into a yellow water, so that the Sal Ammoniac allowed an entrance of the tincture into the substance of the Mercury. Yet again nothing was accomplished. There are some again who, instead of the abovementioned substances, take the juices of persicaria, bufonaria, dracunculus, the leaves of willow, tithymal, cataputia, flammula, and the like, and shut them up in a glass vessel with Mercury for some days, keeping them in ashes. Thus it comes about that the Mercury is turned into ashes, but deceptively and without any result. These people were misled by the vain rumours of the vulgar, who give it out that he who is able to coagulate Mercury without metals has the entire Magistery, as we have said before. Many, too, have extracted salts, oils, and sulphurs artificially out of vegetables, but quite in vain. Out of such salts, oils, and sulphurs no coagulation of Mercury, or perfect projection, or tincture, can be made. But when the philosophers compare their matter to a certain golden tree of seven boughs, they mean that such matter includes all the seven metals in its sperm, and that in it these lie hidden. On this account they called their matter vegetable, because, as in the case of natural trees, they also in their time produce various flowers. So, too, the matter of the Stone shews most beautiful colours in the production of its flowers. The comparison, also, is apt, because a certain matter rises out of the philosophical earth, as if it were a thicket of branches and sprouts: like a sponge growing on the earth. They say, therefore, that the fruit of their tree tends towards heaven. So, then, they put forth that the whole thing hinged upon natural vegetables, though not as to its matter, because their stone contains within itself a body, soul, and spirit, as vegetables do.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CONCERNING THOSE WHO HAVE SOUGHT THE STONE IN ANIMALS.

They have also, by a name based only on resemblances, called this matter *Lac Virginis*, and the Blessed Blood of Rosy Colour, which, nevertheless, suits only the prophets and sons of God. Hence the sophists<sup>9</sup> gathered that this philosophical matter was in the blood of animals or of man. Sometimes, too, because they are nourished by vegetables, others have sought it in hairs, in salt of urine, in rebis; others in hens' eggs, in milk, and in the calx of egg shells, with all of which they thought they would be able to fix Mercury. Some have extracted salt out of foetid urine, supposing that to be the matter of the Stone. Some persons, again, have considered the little stones found in rebis to be the matter. Others have macerated the membranes of eggs in a sharp lixivium, with which they also mixed calcined egg shells as white as snow. To these they have attributed the arcanum of fixation for the transmutation of Mercury. Others, comparing the white of the egg to silver and the yolk to gold, have chosen it for their matter, mixing with it common salt, sal ammoniac, and burnt tartar. These they shut up in a glass vessel, and purified in a *Balneum Maris* until the white matter became as red as blood. This, again, they distilled into a most offensive liquid, utterly useless for the purpose they had in view. Others have purified the white and yolk of eggs; from which has been generated a basilisk. This they burnt to a deep red powder, and sought to tinge with it, as they learnt from the treatise of Cardinal Gilbert. Many, again, have macerated the galls of oxen, mixed with common salt, and distilled this into a liquid, with which they moistened the cementary powders, supposing that, by means of this Magistry, they would tinge their metals. This they called by the name of "a part with a part", and thence came – just nothing. Others have attempted to transmute tutia by the addition of dragon's blood and other substances, and also to change copper and electrum into gold. Others, according to the Venetian Art, as they call it, take twenty lizard-like animals, more or less, shut them up in a vessel, and make them mad with hunger, so that they may devour one another until only one of them survives. This one is then fed with filings of copper or of electrum. They suppose that this animal, simply by the digestion of his stomach, will bring about the desired transmutation. Finally, they burn this animal into a red powder, which they thought must be gold; but they were deceived. Others, again, having burned the fishes called truitas (? trouts), have sometimes, upon melting them, found some gold in them; but there is no other reason for it than this: Those fish sometimes in rivers and streams meet with certain small scales and sparks of gold, which they eat. It is seldom, however, that such deceivers are found, and then chiefly in the courts of princes. The matter of the philosophers is not to be sought in animals: this I announce to all. Still, it is evident that the philosophers called their Stone animal, because in their final operations the virtue of this most excellent fiery mystery caused an obscure liquid to exude drop by drop from the matter in their vessels. Hence they predicted that, in the last times, there should come a most pure man upon the earth, by whom the redemption of the world should be brought about; and that this man should send forth bloody drops of a red colour, by means of which he should redeem the world from sin. In the same way, after its own kind, the blood of their Stone freed the leprous metals from their infirmities and contagion. On these grounds, therefore, they supposed they were justified in saying that their Stone was animal. Concerning this mystery Mercurius speaks as follows to King Calid: –

"This mystery it is permitted only to the prophets of God to know. Hence it comes to pass that this Stone is called animal, because in its blood a soul lies hid. It is likewise composed of body, spirit, and soul. For the same reason they called it their microcosm, because it has the likeness of all things in the world, and thence they termed it animal, as Plato named the great world an animal".

## CHAPTER IX.

### CONCERNING THOSE WHO HAVE SOUGHT THE STONE IN MINERALS.

Hereto are added the many ignorant men who suppose the stone to be three-fold, and to be hidden in a triple genus, namely, vegetable, animal, and mineral. Hence it is that they have sought for it in minerals. Now, this is far from the opinion of the philosophers. They affirm that their stone is uniformly vegetable, animal, and mineral. Now, here note that Nature has distributed its mineral sperm into various kinds, as, for instance, into sulphurs, salts, boraxes, nitres, ammoniacs, alums, arsenics, atraments, vitriols, tutias, haematites, orpiments, realgars, magnesias, cinnabar, antimony, talc, cachymia, marcasites, etc. In all these Nature has not yet attained to our matter; although in some of the species named it displays itself in a wonderful aspect for the transmutation of imperfect metals that are to be brought to perfection. Truly, long experience and practice with fire shew many and various permutations in the matter of minerals, not only from one colour to another, but from one essence to another, and from imperfection to perfection. And, although Nature has, by means of prepared minerals, reached some perfection, yet philosophers will not have it that the matter of the philosophic stone proceeds out of any of the minerals, although they say that their stone is universal. Hence, then, the sophists take occasion to persecute Mercury himself with various torments, as with sublimations, coagulations, mercurial waters, aquafortis, and the like. All these erroneous ways should be avoided, together with other sophisticated preparations of minerals, and the purgations and fixations of spirits and metals. Wherefore all the preparations of the stone, as of Geber, Albertus Magnus, and the rest, are sophisticated. Their purgations, cementations, sublimations, distillations, rectifications, circulations, putrefactions, conjunctions, solutions, ascensions, coagulations, calcinations, and incinerations are utterly profitless, both in the tripod, in the athanor, in the reverberatory furnace, in the melting furnace, the accidioneum, in dung, ashes, sand, or what not; and also in the cucurbite, the pelican, retort, phial, fixatory, and the rest. The same opinion must be passed on the sublimation of Mercury by mineral spirits, for the white and the red, as by vitriol, saltpetre, alum, crocuses, etc., concerning all which subjects that sophist, John de Rupescissa, romances in his treatise on the White and Red Philosophic Stone. Taken altogether, these are merely deceitful dreams. Avoid also the particular sophistry of Geber; for example, his sevenfold sublimations or mortifications, and also the revivifications of Mercury, with his preparations of salts of urine, or salts made by a sepulchre, all which things are untrustworthy. Some others have endeavoured to fix Mercury with: the sulphurs of minerals and metals, but have been greatly deceived. It is true I have seen Mercury by this Art, and by such fixations, brought into a metallic body resembling and counterfeiting good silver in all respects; but when brought to the test it has shewn itself to be false.



## CHAPTER X.

### CONCERNING THOSE WHO HAVE SOUGHT THE STONE AND ALSO PARTICULARS IN MINERALS.

Some sophists have tried to squeeze out a fixed oil from Mercury seven times sublimed and as often dissolved by means of aquafortis. In this way they attempt to bring imperfect metals to perfection: but they have been obliged to relinquish their vain endeavour. Some have purged vitriol seven times by calcination, solution, and coagulation, with the addition of two parts of sal ammoniac, and by sublimation, so that it might be resolved into a white water, to which they have added a third part of quicksilver, that it might be coagulated by water. Then afterwards they have sublimated the Mercury several times from the vitriol and sal ammoniac, so that it became a stone. This stone they affirmed, being conceived of the vitriol, to be the Red Sulphur of the philosophers, with which they have, by means of solutions and coagulations, made some progress in attaining the stone; but in projection it has all come to nothing. Others have coagulated Mercury by water of alum into a hard mass like alum itself; and this they have fruitlessly fixed with fixatory waters. The sophists propose to themselves very many ways of fixing Mercury, but to no purpose, for therein nothing perfect or constant can be had. It is therefore in vain to add minerals thereto by sophisticated processes, since by all of them he is stirred up to greater malice, is rendered more lively, and rather brought to greater impurity than to any kind of perfection. So, then, the philosophers' matter is not to be sought from thence. Mercury is somewhat imperfect; and to bring it to perfection will be very difficult, nay, impossible for any sophist. There is nothing therein that can be stirred up or compelled to perfection. Some have taken arsenic several times sublimated, and frequently dissolved with oil of tartar and coagulated. This they have pretended to fix, and by it to turn copper into silver. This, however, is merely a sophisticated whitening, for arsenic cannot be fixed<sup>10</sup> unless the operator be an Artist, and knows well its tingeing spirit. Truly in this respect all the philosophers have slept, vainly attempting to accomplish anything thereby. Whoever, therefore, is ignorant as to this spirit, cannot have any hopes of fixing it, or of giving it that power which would make it capable of the virtue of transmutation. So, then, I give notice to all that the whitening of which I have just now spoken is grounded on a false basis, and that by it the copper is deceitfully whitened, but not changed.

Now the sophists have mixed this counterfeit Venus with twice its weight of Luna, and sold it to the goldsmiths and mint-masters, until at last they have transmuted themselves into false coiners – not only those who sold, but those who bought it. Some sophists instead of white arsenic take red, and this has turned out false art; because, however it is prepared, it proves to be nothing but whiteness.

Some, again, have gone further and dealt with common sulphur, which, being so yellow, they have boiled in vinegar, lixivium, or sharpest wines, for a day and a night, until it became white. Then afterwards they sublimated it from common salt and the calx of eggs, repeating the process several times; yet, still, though white, it has been always combustible. Nevertheless, with this they have endeavoured to fix Mercury and to turn it into gold; but in vain. From this, however, comes the most excellent and beautiful cinnabar that I have ever seen. This they propose to fix with the oil of sulphur by cementation and fixation. It does, indeed, give something of an

appearance, but still falls short of the desired object. Others have reduced common sulphur to the form of a hepar, boiling it in vinegar with the addition of linseed oil, or laterine oil, or olive oil. They then pour it into a marble mortar, and make it into the form of a hepar, which they have first distilled into a citrine oil with a gentle fire. But they have found to their loss that they could not do anything in the way of transmuting Luna to Sol as they supposed they would be able. As there is an infinite number of metals, so also there is much variety in the preparation of them: I shall not make further mention of these in this place, because each a mould require a special treatise. Beware also of sophisticated oils of vitriol and antimony. Likewise be on your guard against the oils of the metals, perfect or imperfect, as Sol or Luna; because although the operation of these is most potent in the nature of things, yet the true process is known, even at this day, to very few persons. Abstain also from the sophisticated preparations of common mercury, arsenic, sulphur, and the like, by sublimation, descension, fixation by vinegar, saltpetre, tartar, vitriol, sal ammoniac, according to the formulas prescribed in the books of the sophists. Likewise avoid the sophisticated tinctures taken from marcasites and crocus of Mars, and also of that sophistication called by the name of "a part with a part", and of fixed Luna and similar trifles. Although they have some superficial appearance of truth, as the fixation of Luna by little labour and industry, still the progress of the preparation is worthless and weak. Being therefore moved with compassion towards the well meaning operators in this art, I have determined to lay open the whole foundation of philosophy in three separate arcana, namely, in one explained by arsenic, in a second by vitriol, and in a third by antimony; by means of which I will teach the true projection upon Mercury and upon the imperfect metals.

## CHAPTER XI.

### CONCERNING THE TRUE AND PERFECT SPECIAL ARCANUM OF ARSENIC FOR THE WHITE TINCTURE.

Some persons have written that arsenic is compounded of Mercury and, Sulphur, others of earth and water; but most writers say that it is of the nature of Sulphur. But, however that may be, its nature is such that it transmutes red copper into white. It may also be brought to such a perfect state of preparation as to be able to tinge. But this is not done in the way pointed out by such evil sophists as Geber in "The Sum of Perfection", Albertus Magnus, Aristotle the chemist in "The Book of the Perfect Magistry", Rhasis and Polydorus; for those writers, however many they be, are either themselves in error, or else they write falsely out of sheer envy, and put forth receipts whilst not ignorant of the truth. Arsenic contains within itself three natural spirits. The first is volatile, combustible, corrosive, and penetrating all metals. This spirit whitens Venus and after some days renders it spongy. But this artifice relates only to those who practise the caustic art. The second spirit is crystalline and sweet. The third is a tingeing spirit separated from the others before mentioned. True philosophers seek for these three natural properties in arsenic with a view to the perfect projection of the wise men<sup>11</sup>. But those barbers who practise surgery seek after that sweet and crystalline nature separated from the tingeing spirit for use in the cure of wounds, buboes, carbuncles, anthrax, and other similar ulcers which are not curable save by gentle means. As for that tingeing spirit, however, unless the pure be separated from the impure in it, the fixed from the volatile, and the secret tincture from the combustible, it will not in any way succeed according to your wish for projection on Mercury, Venus, or any other imperfect metal. All philosophers have hidden this arcanum as a most excellent mystery. This tingeing spirit, separated from the other two as above, you must join to the spirit of Luna, and digest them together for the space of thirty-two days, or until they have assumed a new body. After it has, on the fortieth natural day, been kindled into flame by the heat of the sun, the spirit appears in a bright whiteness, and is endued with a perfect tingeing arcanum. Then it is at length fit for projection, namely, one part of it upon sixteen parts of an imperfect body, according to the sharpness of the preparation. From thence appears shining and most excellent Luna, as though it had been dug from the bowels of the earth.

## CHAPTER XII.

### GENERAL INSTRUCTION CONCERNING THE ARCANUM OF VITRIOL AND THE RED TINCTURE TO BE EXTRACTED FROM IT.<sup>12</sup>

Vitriol is a very noble mineral among the rest, and was held always in highest estimation by philosophers, because the Most High God has adorned it with wonderful gifts. They have veiled its arcanum in enigmatical figures like the following: "Thou shalt go to the inner parts of the earth, and by rectification thou shalt find the occult stone, a true medicine". By the earth they understood the Vitriol itself; and by the inner parts of the earth its sweetness and redness, because in the occult part of the Vitriol lies hid a subtle, noble, and most fragrant juice, and a pure oil. The method of its production is not to be approached by calcination or by distillation. For it must not be deprived on any account of its green colour. If it were, it would at the same time lose its arcanum and its power. Indeed, it should be observed at this point that minerals, and also vegetables and other like things which shew greenness without, contain within themselves an oil red like blood, which is their arcanum. Hence it is clear that the distillations of the druggists are useless, vain, foolish, and of no value, because these people do not know how to extract the bloodlike redness from vegetables. Nature herself is wise, and turns all the waters of vegetables to a lemon colour, and after that into an oil which is very red like blood. The reason why this is so slowly accomplished arises from the too great haste of the ignorant operators who distil it, which causes the greenness to be consumed. They have not learnt to strengthen Nature with their own powers, which is the mode whereby that noble green colour ought to be rectified into redness of itself. An example of this is white wine digesting itself into a lemon colour; and in process of time the green colour of the grape is of itself turned into the red which underlies the coerulean. The greenness therefore of the vegetables and minerals being lost by the incapacity of the operators, the essence also and spirit of the oil and of the balsam, which is noblest among arcana, will also perish.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### SPECIAL INSTRUCTION CONCERNING THE PROCESS OF VITRIOL FOR THE RED TINCTURE.

Vitriol contains within itself many muddy and viscous imperfections. Therefore its greenness<sup>13</sup> must be often extracted with water, and rectified until it puts off all the impurities of earth. When all these rectifications are finished, take care above all that the matter shall not be exposed to the sun, for this turns its greenness pale, and at the same time absorbs the arcanum. Let it be kept covered up in a warm stove so that no dust may defile it. Afterwards let it be digested in a closed glass vessel for the space of several months, or until different colours and deep redness shew themselves. Still you must not suppose that by this process the redness is sufficiently fixed. It must, in addition, be cleansed from the interior and accidental defilements of the earth, in the following manner: – It must be rectified with acetum until the earthy defilement is altogether removed, and the dregs are taken away. This is now the true and best rectification of its tincture, from which the blessed oil is to be extracted. From this tincture, which is carefully enclosed in a glass vessel, an alembic afterwards placed on it and luted so that no spirit may escape, the spirit of this oil must be extracted by distillation over a mild and slow fire. This oil is much pleasanter and sweeter than any aromatic balsam of the drugsellers, being entirely free from all acidity<sup>14</sup>. There will subside in the bottom of the cucurbite some very white earth, shining and glittering like snow. This keep, and protect from all dust. This same earth is altogether separated from its redness.

Thereupon follows the greatest arcanum, that is to say, the Supercelestial Marriage of the Soul, consummately prepared and washed by the blood of the lamb, with its own splendid, shining, and purified body. This is the true supercelestial marriage by which life is prolonged to the last and predestined day. In this way, then, the soul and spirit of the Vitriol, which are its blood, are joined with its purified body, that they may be for eternity inseparable. Take, therefore, this our foliated earth in a glass phial. Into it pour gradually its own oil. The body will receive and embrace its soul; since the body is affected with extreme desire for the soul, and the soul is most perfectly delighted with the embrace of the body. Place this conjunction in a furnace of arcana, and keep it there for forty days. When these have expired you will have a most absolute oil of wondrous perfection, in which Mercury and any other of the imperfect metals are turned into gold.

Now let us turn our attention to its multiplication. Take the corporal Mercury, in the proportion of two parts; pour it over three parts, equal in weight, of the aforesaid oil, and let them remain together for forty days. By this proportion of weight and this order the multiplication becomes infinite.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### CONCERNING THE SECRETS AND ARCANA OF ANTIMONY, FOR THE RED TINCTURE, WITH A VIEW TO TRANSMUTATION.

Antimony is the true bath of gold. Philosophers call it the examiner and the stilanx. Poets say that in this bath Vulcan washed Phoebus, and purified him from all dirt and imperfection. It is produced from the purest and noblest Mercury and Sulphur, under the genus of vitriol, in metallic form and brightness. Some philosophers call it the White Lead of the Wise Men, or simply the Lead. Take, therefore, of Antimony, the very best of its kind, as much as you will. Dissolve this in its own aquafortis, and throw it into cold water, adding a little of the crocus of Mars, so that it may sink to the bottom of the vessel as a sediment, for otherwise it does not throw off its dregs. After it has been dissolved in this way it will have acquired supreme beauty. Let it be placed in a glass vessel, closely fastened on all sides with a very thick lute, or else in a stone boccia, and mix with it some calcined tutia, sublimated to the perfect degree of fire. It must be carefully guarded from liquefying, because with too great heat it breaks the glass. From one pound of this Antimony a sublimation is made, perfected for a space of two days. Place this sublimated substance in a phial that it may touch the water with its third part, in a luted vessel, so that the spirit may not escape. Let it be suspended over the tripod of arcana, and let the work be urged on at first with a slow fire equal to the sun's heat at midsummer. Then at length on the tenth day let it be gradually increased. For with too great heat the glass vessels are broken, and sometimes even the furnace goes to pieces. While the vapour is ascending different colours appear. Let the fire be moderated until a red matter is seen. Afterwards dissolve in very sharp Acetum, and throw away the dregs. Let the Acetum be abstracted and let it be again dissolved in common distilled water. This again must be abstracted, and the sediment distilled with a very strong fire in a glass vessel closely shut. The whole body of the Antimony will ascend as a very red oil, like the colour of a ruby, and will flow into the receiver, drop by drop, with a most fragrant smell and a very sweet taste<sup>15</sup>. This is the supreme arcanum of the philosophers in Antimony, which they account most highly among the arcana of oils. Then, lastly, let the oil of Sol be made in the following way: – Take of the purest Sol as much as you will, and dissolve it in rectified spirit of wine. Let the spirit be abstracted several times, and an equal number of times let it be dissolved again. Let the last solution be kept with the spirit of wine, and circulated for a month. Afterwards let the volatile gold and the spirit of wine be distilled three or four times by means of an alembic, so that it may flow down into the receiver and be brought to its supreme essence. To half an ounce of this dissolved gold let one ounce of the Oil of Antimony be added. This oil embraces it in the heat of the bath, so that it does not easily let it go, even if the spirit of wine be extracted. In this way you will have the supreme mystery and arcanum of Nature, to which scarcely any equal can be assigned in the nature of things. Let these two oils in combination be shut up together in a phial after the manner described, hung on a tripod for a philosophical month, and warmed with a very gentle fire; although, if the fire be regulated in dire proportion this operation is concluded in thirty-one days, and brought to perfection. By this, Mercury and any other imperfect metals acquire the perfection of gold.

## CHAPTER XV.

### CONCERNING THE PROJECTION TO BE MADE BY THE MYSTERY AND ARCANUM OF ANTIMONY.

No precise weight can be assigned in this work of projection, though the tincture itself may be extracted from a certain subject, in a defined proportion, and with fitting appliances. For instance, that Medicine tinges sometimes thirty, forty, occasionally even sixty, eighty, or a hundred parts of the imperfect metal. So, then, the whole business hinges chiefly on the purification of the Medicine and the industry of the operator, and, next, on the greater; or lesser cleanliness and purity of the imperfect body taken in hand. For instance, one Venus is more pure than another; and hence it happens that no one fixed weight can be specified in projection. This alone is worth noting, that if the operator happens to have taken too much of the tincture, he can correct this mistake by adding more of the imperfect metal. But if there be too much of the subject, so that the powers of the tincture are weakened, this error is easily remedied by a cineritium, or by cementations, or by ablutions in crude Antimony. There is nothing at this stage which need delay the operator; only let him put before himself a fact which has been passed over by the philosophers, and by some studiously veiled, namely, that in projections there must be a revivification, that is to say, an animation of imperfect bodies – nay, so to speak, a spiritualisation; concerning which some have said that their metals are no common ones, since they live and have a soul.

#### ANIMATION IS PRODUCED IN THE FOLLOWING WAY.

Take of Venus, wrought into small plates, as much as you will, ten, twenty, or forty pounds. Let these be incrustated with a pulse made of arsenic and calcined tartar, and calcined in their own vessel for twenty-four hours. Then at length let the Venus be pulverised, washed, and thoroughly purified. Let the calcination with abluition be repeated three or four times. In this way it is purged and purified from its thick greenness and from its own impure sulphur. You will have to be on your guard against calcinations made with common sulphur. For whatever is good in the metal is spoiled thereby, and what is bad becomes worse. To ten marks of this purged Venus add one of pure Luna. But in order that the work of the Medicine may be accelerated by projection, and may more easily penetrate the imperfect body, and drive out all portions which are opposed to the nature of Luna, this is accomplished by means of a perfect ferment. For the work is defiled by means of an impure Sulphur, so that a cloud is stretched out over the surface of the transmuted substance, or the metal is mixed with the loppings of the Sulphur and may be cast away therewith. But if a projection of a red stone is to be made, with a view to a red transmutation, it must first fall on gold, afterwards on silver, or on some other metal thoroughly purified, as we have directed above. From thence arises the most perfect gold.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### CONCERNING THE UNIVERSAL MATTER OF THE PHILOSOPHERS' STONE.

After the mortification of vegetables, they are transmuted, by the concurrence of two minerals, such as Sulphur and Salt, into a mineral nature, so that at length they themselves become perfect minerals. So it is that in the mineral burrows and caves of the earth, vegetables are found which, in the long succession of time, and by the continuous heat of sulphur, put off the vegetable nature and assume that of the mineral. This happens, for the most part, where the appropriate nutriment is taken away from vegetables of this kind, so that they are afterwards compelled to derive their nourishment from the sulphur and salts of the earth, until what was before vegetable passes over into a perfect mineral. From this mineral state, too, sometimes a perfect metallic essence arises, and this happens by the progress of one degree into another.

But let us return to the Philosophers' Stone. The matter of this, as certain writers have mentioned, is above all else difficult to discover and abstruse to understand. The method and most certain rule for finding out this, as well as other subjects – what they embrace or are able to effect – is a careful examination of the root and seed by which they come to our knowledge. For this, before all things else, a consideration of principles is absolutely necessary; and also of the manner in which Nature proceeds from imperfection to the end of perfection. Now, for this consideration it is well to have it thoroughly understood from the first that all things created by Nature consist of three primal elements, namely, natural Mercury, Sulphur, and Salt in combination, so that in some substances they are volatile, in others fixed. Wherever corporal Salt is mixed with spiritual Mercury and animated Sulphur into one body, then Nature begins to work, in those subterranean places which serve for her vessels, by means of a separating fire. By this the thick and impure Sulphur is separated from the pure, the earth is segregated from the Salt, and the clouds from the Mercury, while those purer parts are preserved, which Nature again welds together into a pure geogamic body. This operation is esteemed by the Magi as a mixture and conjunction by the uniting of three constituents, body, soul, and spirit. When this union is completed there results from it a pure Mercury. Now if this, when flowing down through its subterranean passages and veins, meets with a chaotic Sulphur, the Mercury is coagulated by it according to the condition of the Sulphur. It is, however, still volatile, so that scarcely in a hundred years is it transformed into a metal. Hence arose the vulgar idea that Mercury and Sulphur are the matter of the metals, as is certainly reported by miners. It is not, however, common Mercury and common Sulphur which are the matter of the metals, but the Mercury and the Sulphur of the philosophers are incorporated and inborn in perfect metals, and in the forms of them, so that they never fly from the fire, nor are they depraved by the force of the corruption caused by the elements. It is true that by the dissolution of this natural mixture our Mercury is subdued, as all the philosophers say. Under this form of words our Mercury comes to be drawn from perfect bodies and from the forces of the earthly planets. This is what Hermes asserts in the following terms: "The Sun and the Moon are the roots of this Art". The Son of Hamuel says that the Stone of the philosophers is water coagulated, namely, in Sol and Luna. From this it is clearer than the sun that the material of the Stone is nothing else but Sol and Luna. This is confirmed by the fact that like produces like. We know that there are only two Stones, the white and the red. There are also two matters of the



Stone, Sol and Luna, formed together in a proper marriage, both natural and artificial. Now, as we see that the man or the woman, without the seed of both, cannot generate, in the same way our man, Sol, and his wife, Luna, cannot conceive or do an thing in the way of generation, without the seed and sperm of both. Hence the philosophers gathered that a third thing was necessary, namely, the animated seed of both, the man and the woman, without which they judged that the whole of their work was fruitless and in vain. Such a sperm is Mercury, which, by the natural conjunction of both bodies Sol and Luna, receives their nature into itself in union. Then at length, and not before, the work is fit for congress, ingress, and generation; by the masculine and feminine power and virtue. Hence the philosophers have said that this same Mercury is composed of body, spirit, and soul, and that it has assumed the nature and property of all elements. Therefore, with their most powerful genius and intellect, they asserted their Stone to be animal. They even called it their Adam, who carries his own invisible Eve hidden in his body, from that moment in which they were united by the power of the Supreme God, the Maker of all creatures. For this reason it may be said that the Mercury of the Philosophers is none other than their most abstruse, compounded Mercury, and not the common Mercury. So then they have wisely said to the sages that there is in Mercury whatever wise men seek. Almadir, the philosopher, says: "We extract our Mercury from one perfect body and two perfect natural conditions incorporated together, which indeed puts forth externally its perfection, whereby it is able to resist the fire, so that its internal imperfection may be protected by the external perfections". By this passage of the sagacious philosopher is understood the Adamic matter, the limbus of the microcosm<sup>16</sup>, and the homogeneous, unique matter of the philosophers. The sayings of these men, which we have before mentioned, are simply golden, and ever to be held in the highest esteem, because they contain nothing superfluous or without force. Summarily, then, the matter of the Philosophers' Stone is none other than a fiery and perfect Mercury extracted by Nature and Art; that is, the artificially prepared and true hermaphrodite Adam, and the microcosm: That wisest of the philosophers, Mercurius, making the same statement, called the Stone an orphan. Our Mercury, therefore, is the same which contains in itself all the perfections, force, and virtues of the Sun, which also runs through all the streets and houses of all the planets, and in its own rebirth has acquired the force of things above and things below; to the marriage of which it is to be compared, as is clear from the whiteness and the redness combined in it.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### CONCERNING THE PREPARATION OF THE MATTER FOR THE PHILOSOPHIC STONE.

What Nature principally requires is that its own philosophic man should be brought into a mercurial substance, so that it may be born into the philosophic Stone. Moreover, it should be remarked that those common preparations of Geber, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Rupescissa, Polydorus, and such men, are nothing more than some particular solutions, sublimations, and calcinations, having no reference to our universal substance, which needs only the most secret fire of the philosophers. Let the fire and Azoth therefore suffice for you. From the fact that the philosophers make mention of certain preparations, such as putrefaction, distillation, sublimation, calcination, coagulation, dealbation, rubification, ceration, fixation, and the like, you should understand that in their universal substance, Nature herself fulfils all the operations in the matter spoken of, and not the operator, only in a philosophical vessel, and with a similar fire, but not common fire. The white and the red spring from one root without any intermediary. It is dissolved by itself, it copulates by itself, grows white, grows red, is made crocus-coloured and black by itself, marries itself and conceives in itself. It is therefore to be decocted, to be baked, to be fused; it ascends, and it descends. All these operations are a single operation and produced by the fire alone. Still, some philosophers, nevertheless, have, by a highly graduated essence of wine, dissolved the body of Sol, and rendered it volatile, so that it should ascend through an alembic, thinking that this is the true volatile matter of the philosophers, though it is not so. And although it be no contemptible arcanum to reduce this perfect metallic body into a volatile, spiritual substance, yet they are wrong in their separation of the elements. This process of the monks, such as Lully, Richard of England, Rupescissa, and the rest, is erroneous. By this process they thought that they were going to separate gold after this fashion into a subtle, spiritual, and elementary power, each by itself, and afterwards by circulation and rectification to combine them again in one – but in vain. For although one element may, in a certain sense, be separated from another, yet, nevertheless, every element separated in this way can again be separated into another element, but these elements cannot afterwards by circulation in a pelican, or by distillation, be again brought back into one; but they always remain a certain volatile matter, and aurum potable, as they themselves call it. The reason why they could not compass their intention is that Nature refuses to be in this way dragged asunder and separated by man's disjunctions, as by earthly glasses and instruments. She alone knows her own operations and the weights of the elements, the separations, rectifications, and copulations of which she brings about without the aid of any operator or manual artifice, provided only the matter be contained in the secret fire and in its proper occult vessel. The separation of the elements, therefore, is impossible by man. It may appear to take place, but it is not true, whatever may be said by Raymond Lully, and of that famous English golden work which he is falsely supposed to have accomplished. Nature herself has within herself the proper separator, who again joins together what he has put asunder, without the aid of man. She knows best the proportion of every element, which man does not know, however misreading writers romance in their frivolous and false recipes about this volatile gold.

This is the opinion of the philosophers, that when they have put their matter into the more secret fire, and when with a moderated philosophical heat it is cherished on every side, beginning to pass into corruption, it grows black. This operation they term putrefaction, and they call the blackness by the name of the Crow's Head. The ascent and descent thereof they term distillation, ascension, and descension. The exsiccation they call coagulation; and the dealbation they call calcination; while because it becomes fluid and soft in the heat they make mention of ceration. When it ceases to ascend and remains liquid at the bottom, they say fixation is present.

In this manner it is the terms of philosophical operations are to be understood, and not otherwise.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### CONCERNING INSTRUMENTS AND THE PHILOSOPHIC VESSEL.

Sham philosophers have misunderstood the occult and secret philosophic vessel, and worse is that which is said by Aristoteles the Alchemist (not the famous Greek Academic Philosopher), giving it out that the matter is to be decocted in a triple vessel. Worst of all is that which is said by another, namely, that the matter in its first separation and first degree requires a metallic vessel; in its second degree of coagulation and dealbation of its earth a glass vessel; and in the third degree, for fixation, an earthen vessel. Nevertheless, hereby the philosophers understand one vessel alone in all the operations up to the perfection of the red stone. Since, then, our matter is our root for the white and the red, necessarily our vessel must be so fashioned that the matter in it may be governed by the heavenly bodies. For invisible celestial influences and the impressions of the stars are in the very first degree necessary for the work: Otherwise it would be impossible for the Oriental, Chaldean, and Egyptian stone to be realised. By this Anaxagoras knew the powers of the whole firmament, and foretold that a great stone would descend from heaven to earth, which actually happened after his death. To the Cabalists our vessel is perfectly well known, because it must be made according to a truly geometrical proportion and measure, and from a definite quadrature of the circle, so that the spirit and the soul of our matter, separated from their body, may be able to raise this vessel with themselves in proportion to the altitude of heaven. If the vessel be wider, narrower, higher, or lower than is fitting, and than the dominating operating spirit and soul desire, the heat of our secret philosophic fire (which is, indeed, very severe), will violently excite the matter and urge it on to excessive operation, so that the vessel is shivered into a thousand pieces, with imminent danger to the body and even the life of the operator. On the other hand, if it be of greater capacity than is required in due proportion for the heat to have effect on the matter, the work will be wasted and thrown away. So, then, our philosophic vessel must be made with the greatest care. What the material of the vessel should be is understood only by those who, in the first solution of our fixed and perfected matter have brought that matter to its own primal quintessence. Enough has been said on this point.

The operator must also very accurately note what, in its first solution, the matter sends forth and rejects from itself.

The method of describing the form of the vessel is difficult. It should be such as Nature requires, and it must be sought out and investigated from every possible source, so that, from the height of the philosophic heaven, elevated above the philosophic earth, it may be able to operate on the fruit of its own earthly body. It should have this form, too, in order that the separation and purification of the elements, when the fire drives one from the other, may be able to be accomplished, and that each may have power to occupy the place to which it adheres; and also that the sun and the other planets may exercise their operations around the elemental earth, while their course in their circuit is neither hindered nor agitated with too swift a motion. In all these particulars which have been mentioned it must have a proper proportion of rotundity and of height.

The instruments for the first purification of mineral bodies are fusing-vessels, bellows, tongs, capels, cupels, tests, cementatory vessels, cineritiums, cucurbites, bocias for aquafortis and aqua regia; and also the appliances which are required for projection at the climax of the work.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### CONCERNING THE SECRET FIRE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.

This is a well-known sententious saying of the philosophers, "Let fire and Azoc suffice thee". Fire alone is the whole work and the entire art. Moreover, they who build their fire and keep their vessel in that heat are in error. In vain some have attempted it with the heat of horse dung. By the coal fire, without a medium, they have sublimated their matter, but they have not dissolved it. Others have got their heat from lamps, asserting that this is the secret fire of the philosophers for making their Stone. Some have placed it in a bath, first of all in heaps of ants' eggs; others in juniper ashes. Some have sought the fire in quicklime, in tartar, vitriol, nitre, etc. Others, again, have sought it in boiling water. Thomas Aquinas speaks falsely of this fire, saying that God and the angels cannot do without this fire, but use it daily. What blasphemy is this! Is it not a manifest lie that God is not able to do without the elemental heat of boiling water? All the heats excited by those means which have been mentioned are utterly useless for our work. Take care not to be misled by Arnold de Villa Nova, who has written on the subject of the coal fire, for in this matter he will deceive you.

Almadir says that the invisible rays of our fire of themselves suffice. Another cites, as an illustration, that the heavenly heat by its reflections tends to the coagulation and perfection of Mercury, just as by its continual motion it tends to the generation of metals. Again, says this same authority, "Make a fire, vaporous, digesting, as for cooking, continuous, but not volatile or boiling, enclosed, shut off from the air, not burning, but altering and penetrating. Now, in truth, I have mentioned every mode of fire and of exciting heat. If you are a true philosopher you will understand". This is what he says.

Salmanazar remarks: "Ours is a corrosive fire, which brings over our vessel an air like a cloud, in which cloud the rays of this fire are hidden. If this dew of chaos and this moisture of the cloud fail, a mistake has been committed". Again, Almadir says, that unless the fire has warmed our sun with its moisture, by the excrement of the mountain, with a moderate ascent, we shall not be partakers either of the Red or the White Stone.

All these matters shew quite openly to us the occult fire of the wise men. Finally, this is the matter of our fire, namely, that it be kindled by the quiet spirit of sensible fire, which drives upwards, as it were, the heated chaos from the opposite quarter, and above our philosophic matter. This heat, glowing above our vessel, must urge it to the motion of a perfect generation, temperately but continuously, without intermission.

## CHAPTER XX.

### CONCERNING THE FERMENT OF THE PHILOSOPHERS, AND THE WEIGHT.

Philosophers have laboured greatly in the art of ferments and of fermentations, which seems important above all others. With reference thereto some have made a vow to God and to the philosophers that they would never divulge its arcanum by similitudes or by parables.

Nevertheless, Hermes, the father of all philosophers, in the "Book of the Seven Treatises", most clearly discloses the secret of ferments, saying that they consist only of their own paste; and more at length he says that the ferment whitens the confection, hinders combustion, altogether retards the flux of the tincture, consoles bodies, and amplifies unions. He says, also, that this is the key and the end of the work, concluding that the ferment is nothing but paste, as that of the sun is nothing but sun, and that of the moon nothing but moon. Others affirm that the ferment is the soul, and if this be not rightly prepared from the magistry, it effects nothing. Some zealots of this Art seek the Art in common sulphur, arsenic, tutia, auripigment, vitriol, etc., but in vain; since the substance which is sought is the same as that from which it has to be drawn forth. It should be remarked, therefore, that fermentations of this kind do not succeed according to the wishes of the zealots in the way they desire, but, as is clear from what has been said above, simply in the way of natural successes.

But, to come at length to the weight; this must be noted in two ways. The first is natural, the second artificial. The natural attains its result in the earth by Nature and concordance. Of this, Arnold says: If more or less earth than Nature requires be added, the soul is suffocated, and no result is perceived, nor any fixation. It is the same with the water. If more or less of this be taken it will bring a corresponding loss. A superfluity renders the matter unduly moist, and a deficiency makes it too dry and too hard. If there be over much air present, it is too strongly impressed on the tincture; if there be too little, the body will turn out pallid. In the same way, if the fire be too strong, the matter is burnt up; if it be too slack, it has not the power of drying, nor of dissolving or heating the other elements. In these things elemental heat consists.

Artificial weight is quite occult. It is comprised in the magical art of ponderations. Between the spirit, soul, and body, say the philosophers, weight consists of Sulphur as the director of the work; for the soul strongly desires Sulphur, and necessarily observes it by reason of its weight.

You can understand it thus: Our matter is united to a red fixed Sulphur, to which a third part of the regimen has been entrusted, even to the ultimate degree, so that it may perfect to infinity the operation of the Stone, may remain therewith together with its fire, and may consist of a weight equal to the matter itself, in and through all, without variation of any degree. Therefore, after the matter has been adapted and mixed in its proportionate weight, it should be closely shut up with its seal in the vessel of the philosophers, and committed to the secret fire. In this the Philosophic Sun will rise and surge up, and will illuminate all things that have been looking for his light, expecting it with highest hope.

In these few words we will conclude the arcanum of the Stone, an arcanum which is in no way maimed or defective, for which we give God undying thanks. Now have we opened to you our treasure, which is not to be paid for by the riches of the whole world.

HERE ENDS THE AURORA OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.



## NOTES

1 The work under this title is cited occasionally in other writings of Paracelsus, but is not included in the great folio published at Geneva in 1688. It was first issued at Basle in 1575, and was accompanied with copious annotations in Latin by the editor, Gerard Dorne. This personage was a very persevering collector of the literary remains of Paracelsus, but is not altogether free from the suspicion of having elaborated his original. The Aurora is by some regarded as an instance in point; though no doubt in the main it is a genuine work of the Sage of Hohenheim, yet in some respects it does seem to approximate somewhat closely to previous schools of Alchemy, which can scarcely be regarded as representing the actual standpoint of Paracelsus.

2 He who created man the same also created science. What has man in any place without labour? When the mandate went forth: Thou shalt live by the sweat of thy brow, there was, as it were, a new creation. When God uttered His fiat the world was made. Art, however, was not then made, nor was the light of Nature. But when Adam was expelled from Paradise, God created for him the light of Nature when He bade him live by the work of his hands. In like manner, He created for Eve her special light when He said to her: In sorrow shalt thou bring forth children. Thus, and there, were these beings made human and earthy that were before like angelicals. ... Thus, by the word were creatures made, and by this same word was also made the light which was necessary to man. ... Hence the interior man followed from the second creation, after the expulsion from Paradise. ... Before the Fall, that cognition which was requisite to man had not begun to develop in him. He received it from the angel when he was cast out of Paradise. ... Man was made complete in the order of the body, but not in the order of the arts. – *De Caducis*, Par. III.

3 No work precisely corresponding to this title is extant among the writings of Paracelsus. The subjects to which reference is made are discussed in the *Philosophia Sagax*.

4 Before all things it is necessary to have a right understanding of the nature of Celestial Magic. It originates from divine virtue. There is that magic which Moses practised, and there is the maleficent magic of the sorcerers. There are, then, different kinds of Magi. So also there is what is called the Magic of Nature; there is the Celestial Magus; there is the Magus of Faith, that is, one whose faith makes him whole. There is, lastly, the Magus of Perdition. – *Philosophia Sagax*, Lib. II., c. 6.

5 Learn, therefore, Astronomic Magic, which otherwise I call cabalistic. – *De Pestilitate*, Tract I. This art, formerly called cabalistic, was in the beginning named caballa, and afterwards caballia. It is a species of magic. It was also, but falsely, called Gabanala, by one whose knowledge of the subject was profound. It was of an unknown Ethnic origin, and it passed subsequently to the Chaldaeans and Hebrews, by both of whom it was corrupted. – *Philosophia Sagax*, Lib. I., s. v. *Probatio in Scientiam Nectromantricam*.

6 The object which received the influence and exhibited the sign thereof appears to have been termed Gamaheu, Gamahey etc. But the name was chiefly given to certain stones on which various and wonderful images and figures of men and animals have been found naturally depicted, being no work of man, but the result of the providence and counsel of God. – *De Imaginibus*, c. 7 and c. 13. It is possible, magically, for a man to project his influence into these stones and some other substances. – *Ibid.*, c. 13. But they also have their own inherent virtue, which is indicated by the shape and the special nature of the impression. – *Ibid.*, c. 7. There was also an artificial Gamaheus invented and prepared by the Magi, and this seems to have been more powerful. – *De Carduo Angelico*.

7 Man was regarded by Paracelsus as himself in a special manner the true Quintessence. After God had created all the elements, stars, and every other created thing, and had disposed them according to His will, He proceeded, lastly, to the forming of man. He extracted the essence out of the four elements into one mass; He extracted also the essence of wisdom, art, and reason out of the stars, and this twofold essence He congested into one mass: which mass Scripture calls the slime of the earth. From that mass two bodies were made – the sidereal and the elementary. These, according to the light of Nature, are called the *quintum esse*. The mass was extracted, and therein the firmament and the elements were condensed. What was extracted from the four after this manner constituted a fifth. The Quintessence is the nucleus and the place of the essences and properties of all things in the universal world. All nature came into the hand of God – all potency, all property, all essence of the superior and inferior globe. All these had God joined in His hand, and from these He formed man according to His image. – *Philosophia Sagax*, Lib. I., c. 2.

8 All created things proceed from the coagulated, and after coagulation must go on to resolution. From resolution proceed all procreated things. – *De Tartaro* (fragment). All bodies of minerals are coagulated by salt. – *De Natraralibus Aquis*, Lib. III., Tract 2.

9 So acute is the potency of calcined blood, that if it be poured slowly on iron it produces in the first place a whiteness thereon, and then generates rust. – *Scholia in Libros de Tartaro*. In Lib. II., Tract II.

10 One recipe for the fixation of arsenic is as follows: – Take equal parts of arsenic and nitre. Place these in a tigillum, set upon coals so that they may begin to boil and to evaporate. Continue till ebullition and evaporation cease, and the substances shall have settled to the bottom of the vessel like fat melting in a frying-pan; then, for the space of an hour and a half (the longer the better), set it apart to settle. Subsequently pour the compound upon marble, and it will acquire a gold colour. In a damp place it will assume the consistency of a fatty fluid. – *De Naturalibus Rebus*, c. 9. Again: The fixation of arsenic is performed by salt of urine, after which it is converted by itself into an oil. – *Chirurgia Minor*, Lib. II.

11 Concerning the kinds of arsenic, it is to be noted that there are those which flow forth from their proper mineral or metal, and are called native arsenics. Next there are arsenics out of metals after their kind. Then there are those made by Art through transmutation. White or crystalline arsenic is the best for medicine Yellow and red arsenic are utilised by chemists for investigating the transmutation of metals, in which arsenic has a special efficacy. – *De Naturalibus Rebus*, c. 9.

12 The arcanum of vitriol is the oil of vitriol. Thus: after the aquosity has been removed in coction from vitriol, the spirit is elicited by the application of greater heat. The vitriol then comes over pure in the form of water. This water is combined with the *caput mortuum* left by the process, and on again separating in a *balneum maris*, the phlegmatic part passes off, and the oil, or the arcanum of vitriol, remains at the bottom of the vessel. – *Ibid*.

13 So long as the viridity or greenness of vitriol subsists therein, it is of a soft quality and substance. But if it be excocted so that it is deprived of its moisture, it is thereby changed into a hard stone from which even fire can be struck. When the moisture is evaporated from vitriol, the sulphur which it contains predominates over the salt, and the vitriol turns red. – *De Pestilitate*, Tract I.

14 The diagnosis of vitriol is concerned with it both in Medicine and Alchemy. In Medicine it is a paramount remedy. In Alchemy it has many additional purposes. The Art of Medicine and Alchemy consists in the preparation of vitriol, for it is worthless in its crude state. It is like unto wood, out of which it is possible to carve anything. Three kinds of oil are extracted from vitriol – a red oil, by distillation in a retort after an alchemistic method, and this is the most acid of all substances, and has also a corrosive quality – also a green and a white oil, distilled from crude vitriol by descension. – *De Vitriolo*. Nor let it be regarded as absurd that we assign such great virtues to vitriol, for therein resides, secret and hidden, a certain peculiar golden force, not corporeal but spiritual, which excellent and admirable virtue exists in greater potency and certainty therein than it does in gold. When this golden spirit of vitriol is volatilized and separated from its impurities, so that the essence alone remains, it is like unto potable gold. – *De Morbis Amentium, Methodus II.*, c. 1.

15 Antimony can be made into a pap with the water of vitriol, and then purified by sal ammoniac, and in this manner there may be obtained from it a thick purple or reddish liquor. This is oil of antimony, and it has many virtues. – *Chirurgia Magna*, Lib. V. Take three pounds of antimony and as much of sal gemmae. Distil them together in a retort for three natural days, and so you will have a red oil, which has incredible healing power in cases of otherwise incurable wounds. – *Chirurgia Minor*, Tract II., c. 11.

16 Man himself was created from that which is termed limbus. This limbus contained the potency and nature of all creatures. Hence man himself is called the microcosmus, or world in miniature. – *De Generatione Stultorum*. Man was fashioned out of the limbus, and this limbus is the universal world. – *Paramirum Aliud*, Lib. II., c. 2. The limbus was the first matter of man. ... Whosoever knows the limbus knows also what man is. Whatsoever the limbus is, that also is man. – *Paramirum Aliud*, Lib. IV. There is a dual limbus, man, the lesser limbus, and that Great Limbus from which he was produced. – *De Podagra, s. v. de Limbo*. The limbus is the seed out of which all creatures are produced and grow, as the tree comes forth from its own special seed. The limbus has its ground in the word of God. – *Ibid.* The limbus of Adam was heaven and earth, water and air. Therefore, man also remains in the limbus, and contains in himself heaven and earth, air and water, and these things he also himself is. – *Paragranum Alterum*, Tract II.

# The Book Concerning The Tincture Of The Philosophers by Paracelsus

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THE BOOK CONCERNING THE TINCTURE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS

WRITTEN AGAINST THOSE SOPHISTS BORN SINCE THE DELUGE,  
IN THE AGE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD;

By PH. THEOPHRASTUS BOMBAST, of HOHENHEIM,

Philosopher of the Monarchia, Prince of Spagyrist, Chief Astronomer,  
Surpassing Physician, and Trismegistus of Mechanical Arcana.

## PREFACE.

SINCE you, O Sophist, everywhere abuse me with such fatuous and mendacious words, on the ground that being sprung from rude Helvetia I can understand and know nothing: and also because being a duly qualified physician I still wander from one district to another; therefore I have proposed by means of this treatise to disclose to the ignorant and inexperienced: what good arts existed in the first age; what my art avails against you and yours against me; what should be thought of each, and how my posterity in this age of grace will imitate me. Look at Hermes, Archelaus, and others in the first age: see what Spagyrist and what Philosopher then existed. By this they testify that their enemies, who are your patrons, O Sophist, at the present time are but mere empty forms and idols. Although this would not be attested by those who are falsely considered your authentic fathers and saints, yet the ancient Emerald Table shews more art and experience in Philosophy, Alchemy, Magic, and the like, than could ever be taught by you and your crowd of followers. If you do not yet understand, from the aforesaid facts, what and how great treasures these are, tell me why no prince or king was ever able to subdue the Egyptians. Then tell me why the Emperor Diocletian ordered all the Spagyric books to be burnt (so far as he could lay his hands upon them). Unless the contents of those books had been known, they would have been obliged to bear still his intolerable yoke, - a yoke, O Sophist, which shall one day be put upon the neck of yourself and your colleagues.

From the middle of this age the Monarchy of all the Arts has been at length derived and conferred on me, Theophrastus Paracelsus, Prince of Philosophy and of Medicine. For this purpose I have been chosen by God to extinguish and blot out all the phantasies of elaborate and false works, of delusive and presumptuous words, be they the words of Aristotle, Galen, Avicenna, Mesva, or the dogmas of any among their followers. My theory, proceeding as it does from the light of Nature, can never, through its consistency, pass away or be changed: but in the fifty-eighth year after its millennium and a half it will then begin to flourish. The practice at the same time following upon the theory will be proved by wonderful and incredible signs, so as to be open to mechanics and common people, and they will thoroughly understand how firm and immovable is that Paracelsic Art against the triflings of the Sophists: though meanwhile that sophistical science has to have its ineptitude propped up and fortified

by papal and imperial privileges. In that I am esteemed by you a mendicant and vagabond sophist, the Danube and the Rhine will answer that accusation, though I hold my tongue. Those calumnies of yours falsely devised against me have often displeased many courts and princes, many imperial cities, the knightly order, and the nobility. I have a treasure hidden in a certain city called Weinden, belonging to Forum Julii, at an inn, - a treasure which neither you, Leo of Rome, nor you, Charles the German, could purchase with all your substance. Although the signed star has been applied to the arcanum of your names, it is known to none but the sons of the divine Spagyric Art. So then, you wormy and lousy Sophist, since you deem the monarch of arcana a mere ignorant, fatuous, and prodigal quack, now, in this mid age, I determine in my present treatise to disclose the honourable course of procedure in these matters, the virtues and preparation of the celebrated Tincture of the Philosophers for the use and honour of all who love the truth, and in order that all who despise the true arts may be reduced to poverty. By this arcanum the last age shall be illuminated clearly and compensated for all its losses by the gift of grace and the reward of the spirit of truth, so that since the beginning of the world no similar germination of the intelligence and of wisdom shall ever have been heard of. In the meantime, vice will not be able to suppress the good, nor will the resources of those vicious persons, many though they be, cause any loss to the upright.

## THE BOOK CONCERNING THE TINCTURE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.

### CHAPTER I.

I, PHILIPPUS Theophrastus Paracelsus Bombast, say that, by Divine grace, many ways have been sought to the Tincture of the Philosophers, which finally all came to the same scope and end. Hermes Trismegistus, the Egyptian, approached this task in his own method. Orus, the Greek, observed the same process. Hali, the Arabian, remained firm in his order. But Albertus Magnus, the German, followed also a lengthy process. Each one of these advanced in proportion to his own method; nevertheless, they all arrive at one and the same end, at a long life, so much desired by the philosophers, and also at an honourable sustenance and means of preserving that life in this Valley of Misery. Now at this time, I, Theophrastus Paracelsus Bombast, Monarch of the Arcana, am endowed by God with special gifts for this end, that every searcher after this supreme philosophic work may be forced to imitate and to follow me, be he Italian, Pole, Gaul, German, or whatsoever or whosoever he be. Come hither after me, all you philosophers, astronomers, and spagyrist, of however lofty a name ye may be, I will show and open to you, Alchemists and Doctors, who are exalted by me with the most consummate labours, this corporeal regeneration. I will teach you the tincture, the arcanum<sup>1</sup>, the quintessence, wherein lie hid the foundations of all mysteries and of all works. For every person may and ought to believe in another only in those matters, which he has tried by fire. If any one shall have brought forward anything contrary to this method of experimentation in the Spagyric Art or in Medicine, there is no reason for your belief in him, since, experimentally, through the agency of fire, the true is separated from the false. The light of Nature indeed is created in this way, that by means thereof the proof or trial of everything may appear, but only to those who walk in this light. With this light we will teach, by the very best methods of demonstration, that all those who before me have approached this so difficult province with their own fancies and acute speculations have, to their own loss, incurred the danger of their foolishness. On which account, from my standpoint,

many rustics have been ennobled; but, on the other hand, through the speculative and opinionative art of these many nobles have been changed into clowns, and since they carried golden mountains in their head before they had put their hand to the fire. First of all, then, there must be learnt - digestions, distillations, sublimations, reverberations, extractions, solutions, coagulations, fermentations, fixations, and every instrument which is requisite for this work must be mastered by experience, such as glass vessels, cucurbites, circulators, vessels of Hermes, earthen vessels, baths, blast-furnaces, reverberatories, and instruments of like kind, also marble, coals, and tongs. Thus at length you will be able to profit in Alchemy and in Medicine.

But so long as, relying on fancy and opinion, you cleave to your fictitious books, you are fitted and predestinated for no one of these things.

## CHAPTER II.

### CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF THE SUBJECT AND MATTER OF THE TINCTURE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.

Before I come, then, to the process of the Tincture, it is needful that I open to you the subject thereof: for, up to the present time, this has always been kept in a specially occult way by the lovers of truth. So, then, the matter of the Tincture (when you understand me in a Spagyric sense) is a certain thing which, by the art of Vulcan<sup>2</sup>, passes out of three essences into one essence, or it may remain. But, that I may give it its proper name, according to the use of the ancients, though it is called by many the Red Lion, still it is known by few. This, by the aid of Nature and the skill of the Artist himself, can be transmuted into a White Eagle, so that out of one two are produced; and beyond this the brightness of gold does not shine so much for the Spagyrist as do these two when kept in one. Now, if you do not understand the use of the Cabalists and the old astronomers, you are not born by God for the Spagyric art, or chosen by Nature for the work of Vulcan, or created to open your mouth concerning Alchemical Arts. The matter of the Tincture, then, is a very great pearl and a most precious treasure, and the noblest thing next to the manifestation of the Most High and the consideration of men which can exist upon earth. This is the Lili of Alchemy and of Medicine, which the philosophers have so diligently sought after, but, through the failure of entire knowledge and complete preparation, they have not progressed to the perfect end thereof. By means of their investigations and experiments, only the initial stage of the Tincture has been given to us; but the true foundation, which my colleagues must imitate, has been left for me, so that no one should mingle their shadows with our good intentions. I, by right after my long experiences, correct the Spagyrists, and separate the false or the erroneous from the true, since, by long investigations, I have found reasons why I should be able justly to blame and to change diverse things. If, indeed, I had found out experiments of the ancients better than my own, I should scarcely have taken up such great labours as, for the sake, the utility, and the advantage of all good Alchemists, I have undergone willingly. Since, then, the subject of the Tincture has been sufficiently declared, so that it scarcely could or ought to be exceeded in fidelity between two brothers, I approach its preparation, and after I have laid down the experiences of the first age, I wish to add my own inventions; to which at last the Age of Grace will by-and-by give its adhesion, whichever of the patriarchs, O Sophist, you, in the meantime, shall have made leaders.

### CHAPTER III.

#### CONCERNING THE PROCESS OF THE ANCIENTS FOR THE TINCTURE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS, AND A MORE COMPENDIOUS METHOD BY PARACELSUS.

The old Spagyrist putrefied Lili for a philosophical month, and afterwards distilled therefrom the moist spirits, until at length the dry spirits were elevated. They again imbued the caput mortuum with moist spirits, and drew them off from it frequently by distillation until the dry spirits were all elevated. Then afterwards they united the moisture that had been drawn off and the dry spirits by means of a pelican, three or four times, until the whole Lili remained dry at the bottom. Although early experience gave this process before fixation, none the less our ancestors often attained a perfect realisation of their wish by this method. They would, however, have had a shorter way of arriving at the treasure of the Red Lion if they had learnt the agreement of Astronomy with Alchemy, as I have demonstrated it in the Apocalypse of Hermes<sup>3</sup>. But since every day (as Christ says for the consolation of the faithful) has its own peculiar care, the labour for the Spagyrist before my times has been great and heavy; but this, by the help of the Holy Spirit flowing into us, will, in this last age, be lightened and made clear by my theory and practice, for all those who constantly persevere in their work with patience. For I have tested the properties of Nature, its essences and conditions, and I know its conjunction and resolution, which are the highest and greatest gift for a philosopher, and never understood by the sophists up to this time. When, therefore, the earliest age gave the first experience of the Tincture, the Spagyrist made two things out of one simple. But when afterwards, in the Middle Age, this invention had died out, their successors by diligent scrutiny afterwards came upon the two names of this simple, and they named it with one word, namely, Lili, as being the subject of the Tincture. At length the imitators of Nature putrefied this matter at its proper period just like the seed in the earth, since before this corruption nothing could be born from it, nor any arcanum break forth from it. Afterwards they drew off the moist spirits from the matter, until at length, by the violence of the fire, the dry were also equally sublimated, so that, in this way, just as the rustic does at the proper time of year, they might come to maturity as one after another is wont to ascend and to fall away. Lastly, as after the spring comes summer, they incorporated those fruits and dry spirits, and brought the Magistry of the Tincture to such a point that it came to the harvest, and laid itself out for ripening.

### CHAPTER IV.

#### CONCERNING THE PROCESS FOR THE TINCTURE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS, AS IT IS SHORTENED BY PARACELSUS.

The ancient Spagyrist would not have required such lengthened labour and such wearisome repetition if they had learnt and practised their work in my school. They would have obtained their wish just as well, with far less expense and labour. But at this time, when Theophrastus Paracelsus has arrived as the Monarch of Arcana, the opportunity is at hand for finding out those things which were occult to all Spagyrist before me. Wherefore I say, Take only the rose-coloured blood from the Lion and the gluten from the Eagle. When you have mixed these, coagulate them according to the old process, and you will have the Tincture of the Philosophers, which an infinite

number have sought after and very few have found. Whether you will or not, sophist, this Magistry is in Nature itself, a wonderful thing of God above Nature, and a most precious treasure in this Valley of Sorrows. If you look at it from without it seems a paltry thing to transmute another into something far more noble than it was before. But you must, nevertheless, allow this, and confess that it is a miracle produced by the Spagyrist, who by the art of his preparation corrupts a visible body which is externally vile, from which he excites another most noble and most precious essence. If you, in like manner, have learnt anything from the light of Aristotle, or from us, or from the rules of Serapio, come forth, and bring that knowledge experimentally to light. Preserve now the right of the Schools, as becomes a lover of honour and a doctor. But if you know nothing and can do nothing, why do you despise me as though I were an irrational Helvetian cow, and inveigh against me as a wandering vagabond? Art is a second Nature and a universe of its own, as experience witnesses, and demonstrates against you and your idols. Sometimes, therefore, the Alchemist compounds certain simples, which he afterwards corrupts according to his need, and prepares thence another thing. For thus very often out of many things one is made, which effects more than Nature of herself can do, as in Gastaynum it is perfectly well known that Venus is produced from Saturn; in Carinthia, Luna out of Venus; and in Hungary, Sol out of Luna; to pass over in silence for the time being the transmutations of other natural objects, which were well known to the Magi, and more wonderfully than Ovid narrates in his Metamorphoses do they come to the light. That you may rightly understand me, seek your Lion in the East, and your Eagle in the South, for this our work which has been undertaken. You will not find better instruments than Hungary and Istria produce. But if you desire to lead from unity by duality in trinity with equal permutation of each, then you should direct your journey to the South; so in Cyprus shall you gain all your desire, concerning which we must not dilate more profusely than we have done at present. There are still many more of these arcana which exhibit transmutations, though they are known to few. And although these may by the Lord God be made manifest to anyone, still, the rumour of this Art does not on that account at once break forth, but the Almighty gives therewith the understanding how to conceal these and other like arts even to the coming of Elias the Artist, at which time there shall be nothing so occult that it shall not be revealed. You also see with your eyes (though there is no need to speak of these things, which may be taken derisively by some) that in the fire of Sulphur is a great tincture for gems, which, indeed, exalts them to a loftier degree than Nature by herself could do. But this gradation of metals and gems shall be omitted by me in this place, since I have written sufficiently about it in my Secret of Secrets, in my book on the Vexations of Alchemists, and abundantly elsewhere. As I have begun the process of our ancestors with the Tincture of the Philosophers, I will now perfectly conclude it.

## CHAPTER V.

### CONCERNING THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROCESS OF THE ANCIENTS, MADE BY PARACELSUS.

Lastly, the ancient Spagyrists having placed Lili in a pelican and dried it, fixed it by means of a regulated increase of the fire, continued so long until from blackness, by permutation into all the colours, it became red as blood, and therewith assumed the condition of a salamander. Rightly, indeed, did they proceed with such labour, and in the same way it is right and becoming that everyone should proceed who seeks this pearl. It will be very difficult for me to make this clearer to you unless you shall have



learnt in the School of the Alchemists to observe the degrees of the fire, and also to change your vessels. For then at length you will see that soon after your Lili shall have become heated in the Philosophic Egg, it becomes, with wonderful appearances, blacker than the crow; afterwards, in succession of time, whiter than the swan; and at last, passing through a yellow colour, it turns out more red than any blood. Seek, seek, says the first Spagyrist, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. It would be impious and indecorous to put food in the mouth of a perfidious bird. Let her rather fly to it, even as I, with others before me, have been compelled to do. But follow true Art; for this will lead you to its perfect knowledge. It is not possible that anything should here be set down more fully or more clearly than I have before spoken. Let your Pharisaical schools teach you what they will from their unstable and slippery foundation, which reaches not its end or its aim. When at length you shall have been taught as accurately as possible the Alchemistic Art, nothing in the nature of things shall then at length be so difficult which cannot be made manifest to you by the aid of this Art. Nature, indeed, herself does not bring forth anything into the light which is advanced to its highest perfection, as can be seen in this place from the unity, or the union, of our duality. But a man ought by Spagyric preparations to lead it thither where it was ordained by Nature. Let this have been sufficiently said by me, concerning the process of the ancients and my correction of the Tincture of the Philosophers, so far as relates to its preparation.

Moreover, since now we have that treasure of the Egyptians in our hands, it remains that we turn it to our use: and this is offered to us by the Spagyric Magistry in two ways. According to the former mode it can be applied for the renewing of the body; according to the latter it is to be used for the transmutation of metals. Since, then, I, Theophrastus Paracelsus, have tried each of them in different ways, I am willing to put them forward and to describe them according to the signs indeed of the work, and as in experience and proof they appeared to me better and more perfectly.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CONCERNING THE TRANSMUTATION OF METALS BY THE PERFECTION OF MEDICINE.

If the Tincture of the Philosophers is to be used for transmutation, a pound of it must be projected on a thousand pounds of melted Sol. Then, at length, will a Medicine have been prepared for transmuted the leprous moisture of the metals. This work is a wonderful one in the light of Nature, namely, that by the Magistry, or the operation of the Spagyrist, a metal, which formerly existed, should perish, and another be produced. This fact has rendered that same Aristotle, with his ill-founded philosophy, fatuous. For truly, when the rustics in Hungary cast iron at the proper season into a certain fountain, commonly called Zifferbrunnen, it is consumed into rust, and when this is liquefied with a blast-fire, it soon exists as pure Venus, and never more returns to iron. Similarly, in the mountain commonly called Kuttentberg, they obtain a lixivium out of marcasites, in which iron is forthwith turned into Venus of a high grade, and more malleable than the other produced by Nature. These things, and more like them, are known to simple men rather than to sophists, namely, those which turn one appearance of a metal into another. And these things, moreover, through the remarkable contempt of the ignorant, and partly, too, on account of the just envy of the artificers, remain almost hidden. But I myself, in Istria, have often brought Venus

to more than twenty-four (al. 38) degrees, so that the colour of Sol could not mount higher, consisting of Antimony or or Quartal, which Venus I used in all respects as other kinds.

But though the old artists were very desirous of this arcanum, and sought it with the greatest diligence, nevertheless, very few could bring it by means of a perfect preparation to its end. For the transmutation of an inferior metal into a superior one brings with it many difficulties and obstacles, as the change of Jove into Luna, or Venus into Sol. Perhaps on account of their sins God willed that the Magnalia of Nature should be hidden from many men. For sometimes, when this Tincture has been prepared by artists, and they were not able to reduce their projection to work its effects, it happened that, by their carelessness and bad guardianship, this was eaten up by fowls, whose feathers thereupon fell off, and, as I myself have seen, grew again. In this way transmutation, through its abuse from the carelessness of the artists, came into Medicine and Alchemy. For when they were unable to use the Tincture according to their desire, they converted the same to the renovation of men, as shall be heard more at large in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CONCERNING THE RENOVATION OF MEN.

Some of the first and primitive philosophers of Egypt have lived by means of this Tincture for a hundred and fifty years. The life of many, too, has been extended and prolonged to several centuries, as is most clearly shewn in different histories, though it seems scarcely credible to any one. For its power is so remarkable that it extends the life of the body beyond what is possible to its congenital nature, and keeps it so firmly in that condition that it lives on in safety from all infirmities. And although, indeed, the body at length comes to old age, nevertheless, it still appears as though it were established in its primal youth.

So, then, the Tincture of the Philosophers is a Universal Medicine, and consumes all diseases, by whatsoever name they are called, just like an invisible fire. The dose is very small, but its effect is most powerful. By means thereof I have cured the leprosy, venereal disease, dropsy, the falling sickness, colic, scab, and similar afflictions; also lupus, cancer, noli-me-tangere, fistulas, and the whole race of internal diseases, more surely than one could believe. Of this fact Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Bohemia, etc., will afford the most ample evidence.

Now, Sophist, look at Theophrastus Paracelsus. How can your Apollo, Machaon, and Hippocrates stand against me? This is the Catholicum of the Philosophers, by which all these philosophers have attained long life for resisting diseases, and they have attained this end entirely and most effectually, and so, according to their judgment, they named it The Tincture of the Philosophers. For what can there be in the whole range of medicine greater than such purgation of the body, by means whereof all superfluity is radically removed from it and transmuted? For when the seed is once made sound all else is perfected. What avails the ill-founded purgation of the sophists since it removes nothing as it ought? This, therefore, is the most excellent foundation of a true physician, the regeneration of the nature, and the restoration of youth. After this, the new essence itself drives out all that is opposed to it. To effect this

regeneration, the powers and virtues of the Tincture of the Philosophers were miraculously discovered, and up to this time have been used in secret and kept concealed by true Spagyrist.

## HERE ENDS THE BOOK CONCERNING THE TINCTURE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.

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### NOTES

1 The Arcanum of a substance is not the virtue (*virtus*) but the essence (*vir*) and the potency (*potentia*), and is stronger than the virtue; nevertheless, an old error of the doctors conferred the name of virtues upon the potential essences. - *Paramirum*, Lib. IV. Many things are elsewhere set forth concerning the Quintessence, but what is described is really a separation or extraction of the pure from the impure, not a true quintessence, and it is more correctly termed an Arcanum. - *Explicatio Totius Astronomiae*.

2 The office of Vulcan is the separation of the good from the bad. So the Art of Vulcan, which is Alchemy, is like unto death, by which the eternal and the temporal are divided one from another. So also this art might be called the death of things. - *De Morbis Metallicis*, Lib. I., Tract III., c. 1. Vulcan is an astral and not a corporal fabricator. - *De Caduco Matricis*, Par. VI. The artist working in metals and other minerals transforms them into other colours, and in so doing his operation is like that of the heaven itself. For as the artist excocts by means of Vulcan, or the igneous element, so heaven performs the work of coction through the Sun. The Sun, therefore, is the Vulcan of heaven accomplishing coction in the earth. - *De Icteritiis*. Vulcan is the fabricator and architect of all things, nor is his habitation in heaven only, that is, in the firmament, but equally in all the other elements. - *Lib. Meteorum*, c. 4. Where the three prime principles are wanting, there also the igneous essence is absent. The Igneous Vulcan is nothing else but Sulphur, Sal Nitrum, and Mercury. - *Ibid.*, c.5.

3 The Book of the Revelation of Hermes, interpreted by Theophrastus Paracelsus, concerning the Supreme Secret of the World, seems to have been first brought to light by Benedictus Figulus, and appeared as a *piece de r sistance* in his "Golden and Blessed Casket of Nature's Marvels", of which an English translation has been very recently published. ("A Golden and Blessed Casket of Nature's Marvels". By Benedictus Figulus. Now first done into English from the German original published at Frankfort in the year 1608. London: James Elliott and Co. 8vo., 1893). Among the many writings which have been fabulously attributed to Hermes, there does not seem to be any record of an apocalypse, and it is impossible to say what forged document may have been the subject of interpretation by Paracelsus. As the collection of Figulus is now so readily accessible, it is somewhat superfluous to reproduce the treatise here, but since this translation claims to include everything written by the physician of Hohenheim on the subject of Alchemy and the Universal Medicine, it is appended at this point. It should be premised that Benedictus Figulus complains bitterly of the mutilation and perversion to which the works of Paracelsus were subjected, and the Revelation of Hermes seems in many parts to betray another hand, especially in its quotation of authorities who are not countenanced by its reputed author. Hermes, Plato, Aristotle, and other philosophers, flourishing at different times, who have introduced the Arts, and more especially have explored the secrets of inferior Creation, all these have eagerly sought a means whereby man's body might be preserved from decay and become endued with immortality. To them it was answered that there is nothing which might deliver the mortal body from death; but that there is One Thing which may postpone decay, renew youth; and prolong short human life (as with the patriarchs). For death was laid as a punishment upon our first parents, Adam and Eve, and will never depart from all their descendants. Therefore, the above philosophers, and many others, have sought this One Thing with great labour, and have found that that which preserves the human body from corruption, and prolongs life, conducts itself, with respect to other elements, as it were like the Heavens; from which they understood that the Heavens are a substance above the Four Elements. And just as the Heavens, with respect to the other elements, are held to be the fifth substance (for they are indestructible, stable, and suffer no foreign admixture), so also this One Thing (compared to the forces of our body) is an indestructible essence, drying up all the superfluities of our bodies, and has been philosophically called by the above-mentioned name. It is neither hot and dry like fire, nor cold and moist like water, nor warm and moist like air, nor dry and cold like earth. But it is a skilful, perfect equation of all the Elements, a right commingling of natural forces, a most particular union of spiritual virtues, an indissoluble uniting of body and soul. It is the purest and noblest substance of an indestructible body, which cannot be destroyed nor harmed by the Elements, and is

produced by Art. With this, Aristotle prepared an apple, prolonging life by its scent, when he, fifteen days before his death, could neither eat nor drink on account of old age. This spiritual Essence, or One Thing, was revealed from above to Adam, and was greatly desired by the Holy Fathers; this also Hermes and Aristotle call the Truth without Lies, the most sure of all things certain, the Secret of all Secrets. It is the Last and the Highest Thing to be sought under the Heavens, a wondrous closing and finish of philosophical work, by which are discovered the dews of Heaven and the fastnesses of Earth. What the mouth of man cannot utter is all found in this spirit. As Morienus says: "He who has this has all things, and wants no other aid. For in it are all temporal happiness, bodily health, and earthly fortune. It is the spirit of the fifth substance, a Fount of all Joys ( beneath the rays of the moon), the Supporter of Heaven and Earth, the Mover of Sea and Wind, the Outpurer of Rain, upholding the strength of all things, an excellent spirit above Heavenly and other spirits, giving Health, Joy, Peace, Love; driving away Hatred and Sorrow, bringing in Joy, expelling all Evil, quickly healing all Diseases, destroying Poverty and misery, leading to all good things, preventing all evil words and thoughts, giving man his heart's desire, bringing to the pious earthly honour and long life, but to the wicked who misuse it, Eternal Punishment". This is the Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot comprehend without the interposition of the Holy Ghost, or without the instruction of those who know it. The same is of a mysterious nature, wondrous strength, boundless power. The Saints, from the beginning of the world, have desired to behold its face. By Avicenna this Spirit is named the Soul of the World. For, as the Soul moves all the limbs of the body, so also does this Spirit move all bodies. And as the Soul is in all the limbs of the Body, so also is this Spirit in all elementary created things. It is sought by many and found by few. It is beheld from afar and found near; for it exists in every thing, in every place, and at all times. It has the powers of all creatures; its action is found in all elements, and the qualities of all things are therein, even in the highest perfection. By virtue of this essence did Adam and the Patriarchs preserve their health and live to an extreme age, some of them also flourishing in great riches. When the philosophers had discovered it, with great diligence and labour, they straightway concealed it under a strange tongue, and in parables, lest the same should become known to the unworthy, and the pearls be cast before swine. For if everyone knew it, all work and industry would cease; man would desire nothing but this one thing, people would live wickedly, and the world be ruined, seeing that they would provoke God by reason of their avarice and superfluity. For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath the heart of man understood what Heaven hath naturally incorporated with this Spirit. Therefore have I briefly enumerated some of the qualities of this Spirit, to the Honour of God, that the pious may reverently praise Him in His gifts (which gift of God shall afterwards come to them), and I will herewith shew what powers and virtues it possesses in each thing, also its outward appearance, that it may be more readily recognised. In its first state, it appears as an impure earthly body, full of imperfections. It then has an earthly nature, healing all sickness and wounds in the bowels of man, producing good and consuming proud flesh, expelling all stench, and healing generally, inwardly and outwardly. In its second nature, it appears as a watery body, somewhat more beautiful than before, because (although still having its corruptions) its Virtue is greater. It is much nearer the truth, and more effective in works. In this form it cures cold and hot fevers and is a specific against poisons, which it drives from heart and lungs, healing the same when injured or wounded, purifying the blood, and, taken three times a day, is of great comfort in all diseases. But in its third nature it appears as an aerial body, of an oily nature, almost freed from all imperfections, in which form it does many wondrous works, producing beauty and strength of body, and (a small quantity being taken in the food) preventing melancholy and heating of the gall, increasing the quantity of the blood and seed, so that frequent bleeding becomes necessary. It expands the blood vessels, cures withered limbs, restores strength to the sight, in growing persons removes what is superfluous and makes good defects in the limbs. In its fourth nature it appears in a fiery form (not quite freed from all imperfections, still somewhat watery and not dried enough), wherein it has many virtues, making the old young and reviving those at the point of death. For if to such an one there be given, in wine, a barleycorn's weight of this fire, so that it reach the stomach, it goes to his heart, renewing him at once, driving away all previous moisture and poison, and restoring the natural heat of the liver. Given in small doses to old people, it removes the diseases of age, giving the old young hearts and bodies. Hence it is called the Elixir of Life. In its fifth and last nature, it appears in a glorified and illuminated form, without defects, shining like gold and silver, wherein it possesses all previous powers and virtues in a higher and more wondrous degree. Here its natural works are taken for miracles. When applied to the roots of dead trees they revive, bringing forth leaves and fruit. A lamp, the oil of which is mingled with this spirit, continues to burn for ever without diminution. It converts crystals into the most precious stones of all colours, equal to those from the mines, and does many other incredible wonders which may not be revealed to the unworthy. For it heals all dead and living bodies without other medicine. Here Christ is my witness that I lie not, for all heavenly influences are united and combined therein. This essence also

reveals all treasures in earth and sea, converts all metallic bodies into gold, and there is nothing like unto it under Heaven. This spirit is the secret hidden from the beginning, yet granted by God to a few holy men for the revealing of these riches to His Glory - dwelling in fiery form in the air, and leading earth with itself to heaven, while from its body there flow whole rivers of living water. This spirit flies through the midst of the Heavens like a morning mist, leads its burning fire into the water, and has its shining realm in the heavens. And although these writings may be regarded as false by the reader, yet to the initiated they are true and possible, when the hidden sense is properly understood. For God is wonderful in His works, and His wisdom is without end. This spirit in its fiery form is called a Sandaraca, in the aerial a Kybrick, in the watery an Azoth, in the earthly Alcohol and Aliocosoph. Hence they are deceived by these names who, seeking without instruction, think to find this Spirit of Life in things foreign to our Art. For although this spirit which we seek, on account of its qualities, is called by these names, yet the same is not in these bodies and cannot be in them. For a refined spirit cannot appear except in a body suitable to its nature. And, by however many names it be called, let no one imagine there be different spirits, for, say what one will, there is but one spirit working everywhere and in all things. That is the spirit which, when rising, illumines the Heavens, when setting incorporates the purity of Earth, and when brooding has embraced the Waters. This spirit is named Raphael, the Angel of God, the subtlest and purest, whom the others all obey as their King. This spiritual substance is neither heavenly nor hellish, but an airy, pure, and hearty body, midway between the highest and lowest, without reason, but fruitful in works, and the most select and beautiful of all other heavenly things. This work of God is far too deep for understanding, for it is the last, greatest, and highest secret of Nature. It is the Spirit of God, which in the Beginning filled the earth and brooded over the waters, which the world cannot grasp without the gracious interposition of the Holy Spirit and instruction from those who know it, which also the whole world desires for its virtue, and which cannot be prized enough. For it reaches to the planets, raises the clouds, drives away mists, gives its light to all things, turns everything into Sun and Moon, bestows all health and abundance of treasure, cleanses the leper, brightens the eyes, banishes sorrow, heals the sick, reveals all hidden treasures, and, generally, cures all diseases. Through this spirit have the philosophers invented the Seven Liberal Arts, and thereby gained their riches. Through the same Moses made the golden vessels in the Ark, and King Solomon did many beautiful works to the honour of God. Therewith Moses built the Tabernacle, Noah the Ark, Solomon the Temple. By this, Ezra restored the Law, and Miriam, Moses' sister, was hospitable; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and other righteous men, have had lifelong abundance and riches; and all the saints possessing it have therewith praised God. Therefore is its acquisition very hard, more than that of gold and silver. For it is the best of all things, because, of all things mortal that man can desire in this world, nothing can compare with it, and in it alone is truth. Hence it is called the Stone and Spirit of Truth; in its works is no vanity, its praise cannot be sufficiently expressed. I am unable to speak enough of its virtues, because its good qualities and powers are beyond human thoughts, unutterable by the tongue of man, and in it are found the properties of all things. Yea, there is nothing deeper in Nature. O unfathomable abyss of God's Wisdom, which thus hath united and comprised in the virtue and power of this One Spirit the qualities of all existing bodies! O unspeakable honour and boundless joy granted to mortal man! For the destructible things of Nature are restored by virtue of the said Spirit. O mystery of mysteries, most secret of all secret things, and healing and medicine of all things! Thou last discovery in earthly natures, last best gift to Patriarchs and Sages, greatly desired by the whole world! Oh, what a wondrous and laudable spirit is purity, in which stand all joy, riches, fruitfulness of life, and art of all arts, a power which to its initiates grants all material joys! O desirable knowledge, lovely above all things beneath the circle of the Moon, by which Nature is strengthened, and heart and limbs are renewed, blooming youth is preserved, old age driven away, weakness destroyed, beauty in its perfection preserved, and abundance ensured in all things pleasing to men! O thou spiritual substance, lovely above all things! O thou wondrous power, strengthening all the world! O thou invincible virtue, highest of all that is, although despised by the ignorant, yet held by the wise in great praise, honour, and glory, that - proceeding from humours - wakest the dead, expellest diseases, restorest the voice of the dying! O thou treasure of treasures, mystery of mysteries, called by Avicenna "an unspeakable substance", the purest and most perfect soul of the world, than which there is nothing more costly under Heaven, unfathomable in nature and power, wonderful in virtue and works, having no equal among creatures, possessing the virtues of all bodies under Heaven! For from it flow the water of life, the oil and honey of eternal healing, and thus hath it nourished them with honey and water from the rock. Therefore, saith Morienus: "He who hath it, the same also hath all things". Blessed art Thou, Lord God of our Fathers, in that Thou hast given the prophets this knowledge and understanding, that they have hidden these things (lest they should be discovered by the blind, and those drowned in worldly godlessness) by which the wise and the pious have praised Thee! For the discoverers of the mystery of this thing to the unworthy are breakers of the seal of Heavenly Revelation, thereby offending God's

Majesty, and bringing upon themselves many misfortunes and the punishments of God. Therefore, I beg all Christians, possessing this knowledge, to communicate the same to nobody, except it be to one living in Godliness, of well-proved virtue, and praising God, Who has given such a treasure to man. For many seek, but few find it. Hence the impure and those living in vice are unworthy of it. Therefore is this Art to be shewn to all God-fearing persons, because it cannot be bought with a price. I testify before God that I lie not, although it appear impossible to fools, that no one has hitherto explored Nature so deeply. The Almighty be praised for having created this Art and for revealing it to God-fearing men. Amen. And thus is fulfilled this precious and excellent work, called the revealing of the occult spirit, in which lie hidden the secrets and mysteries of the world. But this spirit is one genius, and divine, wonderful, and lordly power. For it embraces the whole world, and overcomes the Elements and the fifth Substance. To our Trismegistus Spagyryus, Jesus Christ, be praise and glory immortal. Amen.

**THE**  
**CHEMICAL TREATISE**

**OF**

**THOMAS NORTON,**

**THE ENGLISHMAN,**

**CALLED**

**BELIEVE-ME,**

**OR**

**THE ORDINAL OF ALCHEMY.**

AN EPIGRAM

WRITTEN BY M. M., ON NORTON'S CHEMICAL

TREATISE.

As the Nile with its overflowing waters floods the surrounding country, and covers it with fertilizing slime, bearing in it the promise of a rich and laughing harvest, so the genius of Norton overflows its banks far and wide, while he makes known to us the glorious works of Nature. He spreads himself abroad over an immensity of space, that he may fertilize the fields of Alchemy, and rejoice the hearts of its husband men. If you are fortunate you will catch beneath this wide expanse of waters a fish which will satisfy the longing of your heart. And if you fail of success, yet your mind will be stored with the precious treasures of knowledge, and you will in any case be richly rewarded for your labour. The treasures of Hermes are not laid open in one book: perhaps one writer may render clear to you what another fails to explain.



**THE TREATISE, CREDE-MIHI, OR ORDINAL,  
OF THOMAS NORTON.**

**PREFACE FIRST.**

*(By the Author himself)*

THIS Book shews to the initiated knowledge, but intensifies the ignorance of the vulgar. It is the book of honouring, increasing riches, and the book of the needy, putting to flight poverty. It is the book of confidence and truth, full of counsel for kings and of teaching for prelates, a book useful for sainted men, who wish to live unspotted of sin; a secret book, the Book of the Gift of God, to chosen men a pathway of true hope, a strength to those constant in firm faith, and who unwaveringly believe in my words. Alchemy is sought by the false and the true—by false seekers without number, but they are rejected. Many are aflame with the desire of gain, but amongst a thousand thousand scarce three are chosen. There are many called to knowledge, noble and poor, learned and ignorant, but they will not submit to toil, or await the time; they do not attain to the goal because they are ungrateful. The Book of our Art is clear as light to the sons of knowledge, to whom God has freely given to understand this matter. Only let them believe this prophetic saying; to the thankful all flows forth from the fount of Divine love.

This noble science is bestowed only on those who love justice with a devout mind, but to the deceitful, the treacherous, and the violent it is denied, because their sin's hinder the coming of God's gifts.

This knowledge would often have been the glory of England's Kings, if their hope had been firmly placed upon God. One who shall have obtained his honours by means of this Art, will mend old manners, and change them for the better. When he comes, he will reform the kingdom, and by his goodness and virtue he will set an everlasting example to rulers. In his time the common people will rejoice, and render praise to God in mutual neighbourly love. O King, who art to accomplish all this, pray to God the King, and implore His aid in the matter! So the glory of thy mind will be crowned with the glory of a golden age, which shall not then be hoped for as future.

## PREFACE SECOND.

To the honour of the One God, who is Three Persons in One, this book has been written, in order that, after my death, learned and unlearned men might see how every one who will follow my good counsel, and ponder it well before he begins the work, may obtain great treasure through the Art of Alchemy. But the book is also a storehouse of mighty secrets for the learned. Let me warn the unlearned that they must study this Art with fear and trembling, lest they be led astray by the false delusions of those who counsel many costly experiments, and use high sounding words. For my part, I desire none of that fame which the world can give, but only your prayers to God for me, though you need not utter my name. Let no one trouble himself about the author, but rather let him diligently consider the contents of the Book. If you enquire into the motives of men, you will find many who are induced to give their minds to the study of Alchemy, only by the desire of gain and riches; and such men are found even among Cardinals of highest rank, Archbishops, and Bishops of lofty order, Abbots and religious Priors, also among hermits, monks, and common priests, and among Kings, princes, and lords of high degree.

For men of all classes desire to partake of our good things: merchants, and those who exercise their craft in the forge, are led captive by a longing to know this Art; nor are common mechanics content to be excluded from a share in it: they love the Art as dearly as great lords. The goldsmiths are consumed with the desire of knowing—though them we may excuse since they have daily before their eyes that which they long to possess. But we may wonder that weavers, freemasons, tailors, cobblers, and needy priests join in the general search after the Philosopher's Stone, and that even painters and glaziers cannot restrain themselves from it. Nay, tinkers presumptuously aspire to exalt themselves by its means, though they should be content with the colour with which glass is stained. Many of these workmen, however, have been deceived by giving credulous heed to impostors, who helped them to convert their gold into smoke, and though they are grieved and disappointed at the loss, they yet buoy themselves up with sanguine thoughts, and hope that they will after all reach the goal; alas, too many have I known, who, after amusing themselves with delusive hopes through a long life, have at last died in squalid poverty! For them it would have been better if they had stayed their hands at once, seeing that they met with nothing but disappointment and vexation of spirit. For, surely, he who is not very learned will do well to think twice before he meddles with this Art. Believe me, it is by no means a light matter to know all the secrets connected with the science. Nay, it is a profound philosophy, a subtle science, a sacred alchemy. Concerning which I here intend to write in a style manly, but not curious. For he who desires to instruct the common people should speak to them in a language they understand. But though I must express myself in a plain and unassuming style, no candid reader should therefore contemn me. For all that before me have written on this matter have rendered their books obscure and unintelligible by an exaggerated use of poetical imagery, parables, and metaphors which grievously obstruct the path of those who first enter on this field of knowledge. This is the reason that a beginner, who strives to put their precepts into practice, only loses his trouble and his money, as is daily seen. Hermes, Rhasis, Geber, Avicenna, Merlin, Hortulanus, Democritus, Morienus, Bacon, Raymond, Aristotle, and many others, have concealed their meaning under a veil of obscurity. Hence their books, which they have handed down to us, have been a source of endless error and delusion to the vulgar and the learned, and, in spite of the beautiful conceits

which abound in their writings, no one has been able to find a path through the wilderness of their words; yea, many have been reduced to despair. Anaxagoras indeed acquitted himself better than the rest, in his book "Concerning Natural Changes." Of all the ancient Sages whose writings I have read, he lays open most plainly the foundation of our knowledge. For this very reason Aristotle is wroth against him, and attacks him most virulently in many passages, as I can shew, his purpose being to keep men from following him. For he (Anaxagoras) was full of wisdom and love: may God above reward him for his goodness, and pardon the evil deeds of those who sow the seeds of enmity and hatred. To the latter class belonged that monk who set forth a pretentious book of A Thousand Receipts, from malice and the love of mischief—which was copied in many places, and deceived and deluded numerous enquirers, and reduced them to beggary; moreover, he represented true and approved men as forgers and impostors. For this reason I am impelled by pity to set forth the truth in a few simple words, in order to warn you against false and deceitful teaching, if, indeed, you will pay attention to me and to my words. Throw away your volumes of "Recipes," for they are full of falsehood and fraud. Do not believe them, but give diligent heed to the maxim, that nothing is wrought without its own proper cause. This is the mistake into which those self-styled "Practical Sages" fall. They do not place knowledge on a firm foundation by enquiring into the cause of things. You should therefore constantly bear this momentous rule in mind: never to set about an experiment until you fully comprehend the why and the how. He who would make good progress in this Art should also diligently eschew all falsehood. For God is Truth, and it is He who shews this Art to men: therefore keep yourself above all things unspotted from the slightest taint of falsehood. Let it be fixed in your mind as an abiding principle, under no circumstances to procure for yourselves "adulterated" metals, like those who seek to accomplish albifications and citrinations, which cannot abide a searching test, and by which they produce false silver and false coin for the purpose of duping the credulous. But God has provided that no one should succeed in attaining to this Blessed Art, who loves that which is false rather than that which is true. If any man would obtain grace of God to discover the secrets of this Art, he should be a lover of justice and truth; nor let him be too eager in his own mind to follow this Art on account of its outward advantages. He who would enjoy the fruit of his labour, should be satisfied with such wealth as is sufficient. Let him not waste time and trouble on divers methods of procedure, but let him follow the directions of this Book, which is called the "Ordinal of Alchemy," the *Crede-mihi*, an everlasting standard. For as the Ordinal instructs the presbyters concerning the ministry of the days which they must observe, so all the true and useful teaching of ill-digested books on Alchemy is here set forth in proper order. Wherefore, this Book is of inestimable value for the acquisition of the precious science, nor can its truth ever be denied, though it be composed in an unassuming style. As I have received this Art by Divine Grace, so I set it forth to you in seven chapters as fully as my fealty will permit. For I remember what is said about the judgment of God at the last day.

The first chapter will shew what persons from among the common people can attain to this knowledge, and why the science of Alchemy was by the Ancients called blessed and sacred.

In the second chapter will be set forth the wise joy and the long labours of those who follow this Art.

The third chapter will, for the sake of my fellow-men, contain a faithful description of the substance of that Stone which the Arabians call the Elixir. There you will learn whence it is obtained.

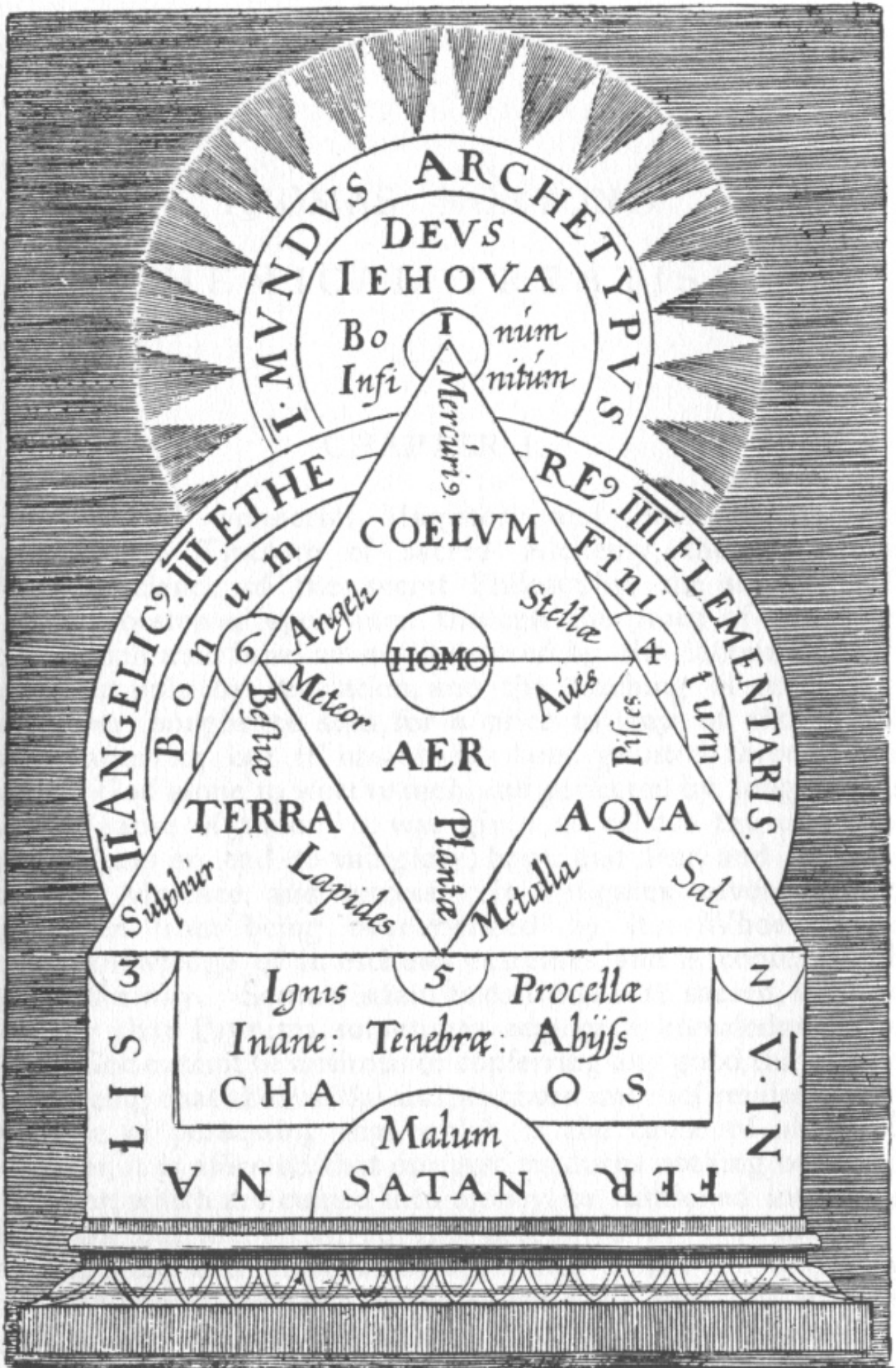
The fourth chapter will treat of the gross part of the work, which is foul and little suited to delicate persons.

The fifth chapter is concerned with the subtle part of the process which God has ordained for the learned only, but which few of the learned ever comprehend; so that the secret is really possessed by very few.

The sixth chapter deals with the question of proportion, and with the agreement of this world below with the sphere of heaven above, of which a right understanding greatly helps many learners, and proves of great assistance to them in our wonderful Art.

The seventh chapter will truly set forth to you the principles in accordance with which your fire should be regulated.

Now, O Lord, do Thou guide and assist me, for I desire to gird myself to my task! Everyone that shall happen to read this Book, I implore to offer up prayers for my soul, and not to alter that which I have written, for the better or for the worse, on the pain of my most greivous anathema. For where the sense is obscure this is for the purpose of secrecy; but if a single syllable be altered in a critical passage, it may destroy the value of the whole book. Therefore, see that which I have written be preserved intact, for though the language be humble, yet it conveys truths of most momentous importance, and it should be read not once or twice, but twenty times. Your best plan will be to read many books on Alchemy, and this one last of all.



**THOMAS NORTON'S**  
**CHEMICAL TREATISE.**

**CHAPTER I.**

A MOST wonderful Magistry and Archimagistry is the Tincture of sacred Alchemy, the marvellous science of the secret Philosophy, the singular gift bestowed upon men through the grace of Almighty God—which men have never discovered by the labour of their hands, but only by revelation, and the teaching of others. It was never bought or sold for a price to any of those who sought after it; but it has always been granted through the grace of God alone to worthy men, and perfected by long labour and the lapse of time. It was given to relieve the estate of man; it puts an end to vainglory, hope, and fear, and removes ambition, violence, and excess. It mitigates adversity, and saves men from being overwhelmed by it. Whoever has perfect knowledge of it, eschews extremes, and is content with the middle way. Some disdain to call this Art sacred, because they say that Paynims sometimes acquire a knowledge of it, though God cannot be desirous of conferring any good thing upon them, seeing that their wilful and stubborn unbelief renders them incapable of possessing that which is the cause of all good. Moreover, it is affirmed that our Art produces nothing but gold and silver, which are coined into money, or fashioned into cups and rings, but are approved and accounted by wise men the least valuable and precious of all things which are upon the earth; and hence men of this school conclude that this science, if judged by its effects, cannot claim to be regarded as sacred.

To this objection, we answer what we know to be true, that the science of this Art has never been fully revealed to anyone who has not approved himself worthy by a good and noble life, and who has not shewn himself to be deserving of this gracious gift by his love of truth, virtue, and knowledge. From those who are otherwise minded this knowledge must ever remain concealed.

Nor can anyone attain to this Art, unless there be some person sent by God to instruct him in it. For the matter is so glorious and wonderful that it cannot be fully delivered to any one but by word of mouth. Moreover, if any man would receive it, he must take a great and sacred oath, that as we his teachers refuse high rank and fame, so he will not be too eager for these frivolous distinctions, and that he will not be so presumptuous as to make the secret known to his own son; for propinquity of blood, or affinity, should be held of no account in this our Magistry. Nearness of blood, as such, does not entitle anyone to be let into the secret, but only virtue, whether in those near to us or in strangers. Therefore you should carefully test and examine the life, character, and mental aptitude of any person who would be initiated in this Art, and then you should bind him, by a sacred oath, not to let our Magistry be commonly or vulgarly known. Only when he begins to grow old and feeble, he may reveal it to one person, but not to more—and that one man must be virtuous, and generally approved by his fellows. For this Magistry must always remain a secret science, and the reason that compels us to be so careful is obvious. If any wicked man should learn to practise this Art, the event would be fraught with great danger to Christendom. For such a man would overstep all bounds of moderation, and would remove from their hereditary thrones those legitimate princes who rule over the peoples of Christendom. And the punishment of this wickedness would fall upon him who had instructed that unworthy

person in our Art. In order, then, to avoid such an outbreak of overweening pride, he who possesses the knowledge of this Art, should be scrupulously careful how he delivers it to another, and should regard it as the peculiar privilege of those who excel in virtue.

But even if this Art could, on account of its effects, be justly denied a claim to sanctity, it would still be sacred on account of its nature and essence. For as, on the one hand, no one can discover it except by the grace of God, so it is also holy, because it is a divine labour and work to change vile copper into the finest silver and gold. For no one could discover a method of producing such effects by his own thought, seeing that the substances are divers, and man cannot separate that which God has joined together. Nor could the course of Nature be quickened, unless God Himself had granted the aid of this mighty science to those whom He loves. Therefore, the ancient Sages have well called Alchemy a sacred science; and no one should be so presumptuous as to cast away the blessed gift of God. For let us only consider that God has hidden this knowledge from great and learned doctors, and out of His mercy has revealed it to men of low degree, who are faithful lovers of truth, and lowly of heart; and as there are only seven planets among the vast multitude of the stars of heaven, so amongst millions of millions of men hardly seven attain to this knowledge. As we watch men's lives, we see and learn that many scholars of profound erudition, with countless other enquirers, have striven to acquire our science, and yet that all their labour has produced as a net result—nothing. Though they have spent all their substance in the search, it has nevertheless turned out a failure. They have again and again missed the mark at which they aimed; and at last they have given up the quest in despair, and have arrived at the bitter conclusion that the Art is nothing but rank fiction and imposture. As the outcome of their fruitless enquiries they have begun to denounce our Magistry for a vain and empty thing. Let me tell such men that they take too much upon themselves in thinking that that must be nought which their wisdom is not sufficient to compass. But we are not greatly troubled by their calumnies and injurious words; for those who are wise in their own conceits, while in reality they understand nothing, are not the guests for whom our feast is prepared. Though these men cannot understand our Magistry, yet, for all that, it must remain true; and though its truth be denied by some who are lifted up by the vain pride of empty wisdom, all wise men will admit that those who have confessedly never looked upon a thing cannot be allowed to give an authoritative opinion about it. It would be foolish indeed to attach any value to a blind man's opinion about a painting; and though these men are so proud of their profundity and wisdom, I very much doubt whether they could build the tower of St. Paul's (London), or remove it from its foundations. But it is more difficult still to believe that they are keen enough to penetrate the most profound secret which this world contains. Well, now, we will say no more about them, but deliver them over to the wretchedness of their own ignorance.

Now, you who seek this wisdom, learn to distinguish the false from the true. All true enquirers into the Art of Alchemy should be well versed in the primary philosophy. Otherwise all their labour will be vain. The true seeker undertakes the search on his own account; for while he eagerly hopes to find our Delectable Stone, he does not wish to see others involved in any loss he may incur. He therefore conducts all the experiments at his own cost, nor does he grudge the expense which their labour requires. He consumes his substance and empties his coffers, and advances step by

step with great patience, basing his hope on God's assistance alone. Impostors, on the other hand, wander in ragged gown from city to city, and set traps for the unwary whom they may dupe with their pretended knowledge, and outwit by vain talk and perjury. They, say that they can augment silver, and affirm with a false oath that they can multiply both gold and silver, and thus they ingratiate themselves with the covetous, producing the excellent conjunction of Fraud and Avarice. But in no long time the multiplier of gold is found to have deceived his credulous victim with his magnificent promises and his perjured assertions—and the covetous man is reduced to beggary. This must be the result if one is not from the very first on his guard against the deceitful language of the multiplier. Of these persons I might speak at great length, but am afraid of encouraging men who are of themselves disposed to evil. I fear that by saying any more I might possibly do as much harm as good, and therefore I will only add one word to the wise: If these persons really possessed the knowledge to which they pretend, they would take good care not to make it known to others, nor would they have any need to go about boasting of their knowledge, and cheating the credulous out of their money. If these impostors were punished according to their deserts in all places where they drive their fraudulent trade, there would not be so many of them. Now these fellows put forward lying assertions about Nature when they speak of the multiplication of metals. For of this one thing you may rest assured: Metals are never multiplied. Such a thing would be contrary to Nature's methods. Nature never multiplies anything, except in either one or the other of these two ways: either by decay, which we call putrefaction, or in the case of animate creatures, by propagation. In the case of metals, there can be no propagation, though our Stone exhibits something like it. Putrefaction destroys and corrupts, but in order to be fruitful, it must go forward in some convenient place. Metals are generated in the earth; for above ground they are subject to rust: hence above ground is the place of the corruption of metals and of their gradual destruction. The cause which we assign for this fact is that above ground they are not in their proper element, and an unnatural position is destructive to natural objects, as we see, for instance, that fishes die when they are taken out of the water; and as it is natural for men, beasts, and birds to live in the air, so stones and metals are naturally generated under the earth. Physicians and apothecaries do not look for aquatic flowers on arid hills. God in His wisdom has ordained that everything should grow in its own proper place. I know that some deny this principle, and assert that metals are multiplied. For, they say, the veins of silver, lead, tin, and iron which we find in the earth, are sometimes rich and sometimes poor; and such diversity would be totally inexplicable if the metals did not multiply or grow. This fact then is thought to prove that metals grow underground—and if they grow underground, why, it is asked, should they not grow above ground, in a vessel which protects them from the influences of fire, water, and air? Our answer to this argument is that it proves nothing, because the conditions are not the same in the two cases. For the only efficient cause of metals is the mineral virtue, which is not found in every kind of earth, but only in certain places and chosen mines, into which the celestial sphere pours its rays in a straight direction year by year, and according to the arrangement of the metallic substance in these places, this or that metal is gradually formed. Only few parts of the earth are suitable for such generation—how, then, can they be multiplied above the earth? Every person of average intelligence knows that in the case of congealed water, or ice, the water, before it becomes hardened, is more plentiful in some places than in others. Before its congelation, it exists in small quantities in brooks and ditches, while more considerable veins of it are found in lakes and rivers. Afterwards, large quantities of ice are seen where there was much water;



but it would manifestly be absurd to say that the ice must have grown or multiplied in the lakes and rivers, because they contain greater masses of it than ditches or brooks. In the same way, the metals do not necessarily grow in the mountains, because in some places they exist in larger quantities than in others. A certain portion of any metal can never be increased in quantity by the action of an inherent principle; and herein minerals differ from vegetables and animals. A vegetable seed, such as an acorn, virtually contains within itself the trunk and the leaves of a tree, though they cannot at a given moment be discerned with the eye. But metals always remain exactly the same in their composition, though they be dissolved with strong waters. An ounce of silver can never become more or less than an ounce of silver. For nothing can be multiplied by inward action unless it belong to the vegetable kingdom, or the family of sensitive creatures. But the metals are elementary objects, and possess neither seed nor sensation. Hence we conclude that all multipliers of metals should be forbidden to exercise their fraudulent trade. For when a metal has once been generated, it is never added to by growth. Nevertheless, we have known one metal to be transmuted into another of a different kind by means of the cognate nature of their substances; so, for instance, iron has been changed into bronze. But nothing can produce real silver or gold except the Medicine of the Philosophers. Hence the falsehoods affected by the multipliers are eschewed and shunned by all true Sages. But all honour and reverence is due to the genuine Art of sacred Alchemy, which is concerned with the precious Medicine that has virtue to produce pure gold and silver. Of this an example exists in a certain city of Catalonia, which Raymond Lullius is supposed to have drawn up. It consists of a series of seven images, and is designed to shadow out the way of truth. Three of these pictures represent matronly figures of solid silver, and four of them represent men of gold in flowing garb. On the hems of their garments appear certain letters, the meaning of which I will proceed to expound.

"I was once an old iron horse-shoe"—such is the inscription on the garment of one woman—"but now I am the purest silver." "I," says another woman, "was iron smelted from the ore, but now I am become pure and solid gold." "I," says a third, "was once a battered piece of copper: now I am all silver." The fourth figure says: "I was once copper, generated in a vile place, but at the bidding of God I have now become perfect gold." "I," says the fifth figure, "who was once fine and pure silver, am now more excellent gold." The sixth figure proclaims that it was during 200 years a leaden pipe, but is now known by all for honest silver. The seventh says: "A wondrous thing has happened to me—I have become lead out of gold. But certainly my sisters are nearer than I."

This science derives its name from a certain King Alchymus of illustrious memory, who, being a generous and noble-hearted prince, first set himself to study this Art. He ceased not to question Nature by day and by night, and at last extorted from her a blessed answer. King Hermes also did a like thing, being deeply versed in every kind of learning. His "Quadripartite" deals with the four great branches of natural science: astrology, medicine, alchemy, and natural magic; and therein he expresses himself as follows: "Blessed is the man who knows things truly as they are, and blessed is the man who duly proves that which appertains to knowledge." It was his opinion that many are deceived in thinking that they understand that of which they do not know the cause. It is an old proverb that in a bushel of imagination there is often not even a grain of true knowledge. It is also true that by the habit of proving everything, and by wise discernment, learned men are even now adding to their stock of information. By

knowledge men understand themselves and all things; without knowledge men are beasts, and worse than beasts. Lack of knowledge renders men fierce and wild, but instruction makes them mild and gentle. It is now the custom for nobles to despise those who desire to understand the secrets of Nature; but in olden times even Kings ordained that no one should be instructed in the seven liberal sciences except those who were nobly born, and brilliantly endowed, and that he who had once devoted himself to knowledge should be bound to spend his life in its pursuit. Hence the Ancients called these sciences the seven liberal sciences, because those who wished to become perfect adepts in them should delight in them in a spirit of liberty. Freedom from all mundane cares is necessary for him who would apply himself thoroughly to the study of human law, and he who wishes to become a ripe scholar in many sciences, has much more solid reasons for turning his back on the world's toils and pleasures. This fact sufficiently shews the ground on which learned men are despised. Yet the glorious memory of the man who increases day by day in the knowledge of truth, can never perish. The man who loves wisdom, justice, and grace, may be rejected in many places, but time will circle his brow with a crown of gold. In the meantime, we must expect that those who love knowledge for its own sake shall be scorned by the ignorant multitude. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that though many devote themselves to this study for the sake of mere gain, yet avarice and science are incompatible yoke-fellows; he whose affections are set on mere lucre, will never discover the secrets of this Art. But he who delights in knowledge for its own sake approaches the study of our Art in the right spirit, and such a man is bound to succeed. There is no need to lengthen out this chapter any further, since we have already set forth who they are that may, with reasonable hope of success, apply themselves to the study of sacred Alchemy. Let me repeat that any such person should be a faithful Christian, and a man who is not easily moved from his purpose. He should be free from ambition, free from the necessity of borrowing from others, full of patience and endurance, and of unwavering confidence in God. He should be prepared to follow knowledge through good and evil report. His life should be free from guilt, falsehood, and sin. Such men alone possess mental aptitude for becoming proficient in this science. The next chapter deals with joy and sorrow.

## CHAPTER II.

In Normandy there once lived a monk, who deceived many persons of different ranks in life. When his mind had become filled with the vain conceit that he had a perfect knowledge of this Art, he gave himself up to such violent joy that he almost went out of his senses. Whose preposterous zeal I will attempt to excuse by adding the following brief narrative for the sake of illustration:—

This monk had led a vagrant life in France, in forgetfulness of his vow, and in the indulgence of his low desires. At last he came to this kingdom, and attempted to persuade all men that he had a perfect understanding of the Art of Alchemy, which he said he had obtained from a certain "Book of Recipes." He was desirous of achieving a mighty deed, which should hand down the glory of his name to posterity, and for ever establish his reputation in this island. He was always thinking how he should spend the vast wealth which (he thought) he would soon be able to procure. At last he said to himself: "Behold, I know where I shall find a faithful man, who can aid me in this matter, and help me to the fulfilment of my wish: which is, to erect in a glorious manner on Salisbury Plain, fifteen magnificent Abbeys in a short space of time, and each within a mile of the other." In pursuance of this design, the monk came to me, and laid open his whole plan, at the same time requesting me to assist him with my counsel. I have promised before the shrine of Saint James not to divulge his name; but yet I may without prejudice to my vow speak about his foolish undertaking. After telling me of his proficiency in this glorious Art, he said that he wanted nothing but an opportunity of labouring for the King's good, and permission from the Council to buy land for the aforesaid Abbeys. As to the expense, he said it would be easy for him to make it good. But he was in great doubt, where, from whom, and how he was to purchase the land. After listening to the exposition of his lofty design, I desired to test his learning and his knowledge of scholastic science; and I found that in these branches of attainment he was sadly to seek. Yet I contained myself, and kept my own counsel, in order that I might learn more about his designs. So I told him that the matter was not of sufficient importance to be laid before the King, for everyone would look upon the same as an idle tale, if no proof of his pretensions was forthcoming. The monk answered that he had in the fire a substance which would supply him with all that he needed, and that within forty days he could triumphantly demonstrate to me the truth of his words. I replied that I would not now press him any further, but that I would wait the allotted time. But when the date which he had fixed arrived, the monk's science evaporated, and all his Abbeys and lofty designs vanished into thin air; as the impostor had come, so he departed, not without great shame and confusion. But shortly afterwards I heard that he had deceived many kind-hearted people, and had then again returned to France. It seemed a great pity that fifteen abbeys, seats of religion, sanctity, and learning, should so unceremoniously have vanished with him! It was also wonderful that such a man could have deluded himself into the belief that he could erect fifteen abbeys, while he himself could not live true to his vow of obedience, and must needs wander about as an apostate vagabond, for the purpose of obtaining a knowledge of this sacred Art. But I have already repeatedly said that just because it is sacred, no false or deceitful person can attain to it. In order to illustrate my meaning, I will now add another example. There was a man who thought that he was as deeply versed in this Art as Raymond Lullius or Friar Bacon, for which reason he was so presumptuous as to call himself peerless. He was the priest of a small town, not far from the city of London, and was thought by others to have little skill in

preaching. This man felt sure that he had discovered the secret of our Art, and so, in order to advance his fame, he formed the design of throwing a bridge over the Thames for the benefit of travellers, and for the convenience of the whole neighbourhood. But nothing would serve him but he must set up a grand and lofty structure which should compel the admiration of all beholders. It was to have towers covered with flaming gold, and its pillars were to be such as had never been seen before. He frequently spoke of the new thing which he was going to accomplish, for his bridge was to be seen far and wide by night, and was to endure for ever; its glory was never to grow dim. Then he revolved different plans in his mind concerning the best manner of carrying out his design. At first he thought that flaming torches would answer his purpose, and elaborated a plan of setting them up in sufficient numbers. But soon he was seized with a fear that after his death the trustees of his benefaction might neglect the torches, and apply the money allotted to that purpose in some other way, Thus he at length arrived at the conclusion that it would be best to light up his bridge by night with great flaming gems and carbuncles, such as should be visible far and wide, and radiate their splendour in all directions. But here again he was troubled with new misgivings, where such carbuncles could be found, and where he should meet with wise and reliable men, who would travel through all the countries of the world, and procure for him a sufficient number of these jewels. These thoughts caused him so much anxiety, that he wasted away to a mere shadow. All this time, of course, he was firmly persuaded that he had found the true secret of our Art. But when the year came to an end, his Art and all his substance vanished with it; for he had opened his glass vessel and found that it contained neither gold nor silver. Then he flew into a great passion, and cursed himself in the bitterness of his heart. For he had spent all his wealth, and passed the rest of his life in poverty. What more shall I say about him? His case speaks for itself.

When learned scholars and those who frequent the schools hear of the melancholy fate of these foolish persons, they ought to take warning, and remember that the same things may happen to themselves, if they are not constantly on their guard. For many of them are but too ready lightly to receive all conclusions, however false, if they only find them boldly asserted in books. This easy and unquestioning confidence may bring in its train poverty and vexation of spirit. The hope afforded by such teaching is an empty delight and a veritable fools' paradise, But the true sons of our Art stay their hope on God alone, since they know that without Him everything is a delusion and a failure, for they know that a man who has not the Beginning of all Knowledge cannot conduct his enquiry to a successful end. No man, O God, can comprehend without Thee, and though the exposition of the Art be uttered in his ears, without Thee it is but idle breath to him! Of Thee, O God, comes all blessed and successful effort! Thou art of all good things both the beginning and the end. Now I have told you something of the joy which is caused by the vain hopes of foolish enquirers; hear now also about the sorrow, of which this Art has been a source to many whose hopes have been grievously disappointed.

The first cause of sorrow is to see and realize that among the many who seek this Art only few ever find it, and that no one can attain this knowledge unless he be taught before he begins; and he is truly learned, and finely endowed, who can apprehend it by the teaching of another. The subtle shades of natural differences must be well known to the man who desires to be initiated in the most profound secret of the universe; and no form of words can be so accurate as to safeguard the learner against

error. For many who have now departed this life have gone widely astray before they finally succeeded in their search after our Stone. Either at the very outset, or at a later stage of the work, all are liable to error, until they are enlightened by the teaching of experience, and hit upon the proper regulation of heat and cold. Nobody is more liable to error in respect to this matter than your bold and overconfident enquirer. Nobody sooner mars our work, than he who is in too great a hurry to complete it. The man who would bring this matter to perfection, should set about it cautiously and heedfully. The most grievous circumstance connected with our Art, is that if you make a mistake in any part of it, you have to do it all over again from the very beginning. Anyone who gives himself up to this search must therefore expect to meet with much vexation of spirit. He will frequently have to change his course in consequence of new discoveries which he makes. His experiments will often turn out failures, his mind will often be in a state of doubt and perplexity; and thus he will continue to be vexed by conflicting results, until at length he reaches the goal of his desire. Again, let me tell you a little more about the sorrows and troubles of the Alchemist, which may considerably moderate your desire to acquire the practice of this Art. At first it is most difficult, as the Sages say, to find out among so many impostors, the man who has a perfect understanding of our science. And when you have found a truly learned master, you have not yet by any means left all your trouble far behind you. If your mind is devoted to virtue, the Devil will do his utmost to frustrate your search by one or the other of three stumbling blocks, namely, haste, despair, or deception. For he is afraid of the good works which you may do if you succeed in mastering this secret. The first danger lies in undue haste, which destroys and mars the work of many. All authors who have written about this Art, agree in saying, like the author of the little book of "The Philosopher's Feast," that undue haste is of the Devil. Hence he will the soonest make an end who tarries a little at the beginning; and those who act otherwise will discover to their cost the truth of the proverb which says that: "The greater haste we make, the less will be our speed." For he who is in a hurry will complete his work neither in a month, nor yet in a year; and in this Art it will always be true that the man who is in a hurry will never be without matter of complaint. Rest assured also that haste will precipitate you from the pinnacle of truth. It is the Devil's subtlest device to ensnare us; for this haste is an *ignis-fatuus* by which he causes us to wander from the right path. The man who has found grace stoutly sets his face against hurry; he does so as a matter of habit, for in a moment of time haste may mar your whole work. Therefore be on your guard against hurry, accounting it as a device of the Devil. Time will not allow me to caution you with sufficient vehemence of feeling against habits of hurried work. Many pierce themselves through with sharp sorrows, because they are always in a hurry, and full of impatience to reach the goal, which comes about through the temptation of Satan. I will say no more about hurry, but blessed is he who possesses patience. If the enemy does not prevail against you by hurry, he will assault you with despondency, and will be constantly putting into your minds discouraging thoughts, how those who seek this Art are many, while they are few that find it, and how those who fail are often wiser men than yourself. He will then ask you what hope there can be of your attaining the grand arcanum; moreover, he will vex you with doubts, whether your master is himself possessed of the secret which he professes to impart to you; or whether he is not concealing from you the best part of that which he knows. The Evil One will endeavour to fill your mind with these doubts, in order to turn you from your purpose by diffidence and despondency. Nor will anything avail against his assaults, except the calm confidence inspired by virtue, and the sound conclusions of reason. Your fears will be scattered to the winds if you quietly consider

the high character of your master and teacher; nor need you despair if you can call to mind that he was induced to instruct you by love, and by no selfish motive. It is difficult indeed to trust a man who offers you his services; for such a person stands more in need of you than you of him. But if your master be such a man as I have directed you to seek, and if he has waited for you to come to him, you ought to be strongly armed against the shafts of distrust. If your master be at all such a man as mine was, you can have no excuse for doubting him, for mine was noble and true, a lover of justice, and an enemy to deceit. Moreover, he was a good keeper of his secret, and when others ostentatiously displayed their knowledge, he held his peace as if he knew nothing. When others talked in his presence about the colours of the rose, he would listen in grave and impenetrable silence. Him I attended during many years; but he would not impart to me anything of moment, until he had made me submit to many tests for the purpose of proving my disposition; and when he had found me faithful and true, and had seen the great hope which I had conceived in my mind, I obtained favour in his eyes through the will of God, and his heart inclined to me. When at length he thought that I should not be put off any longer—since my scholarly attainments and the generous aspiration of my soul had moved his heart, and made it go out to me—he took up his pen, and wrote to me as follows: "My faithful friend and beloved brother, I am constrained to accede to your request, as no other person like you will ever come to me. The time has arrived for you to receive this favour of me on account of your manly character and firm faith, your approved virtue and wisdom, your truthfulness, love, and perseverance, your constancy, and the generous aspiration of your soul. This your excellent mental condition I will now reward, to your lasting solace and comfort, by divulging to you the mighty secret. For this purpose it is necessary to converse with you by word of mouth; if I laid open to you the secret in writing, I should be violating my oath. Hence it is necessary that we should meet; and when you come, I will make you the heir of my Art, and depart from this land. You shall be my brother and my heir in respect of this grand secret, which is the despair of the learned. For this reason give thanks to God for this message: it is better than to become heir-apparent to a crown. For only those whom God has chosen next to His own heavenly saints, ever receive this Art by which He is so highly honoured. I will write no more to you at the present time: mount on horseback, and come to me without delay." When I had perused these lines, I set out at the very same hour, and at once hastened to my master, though the distance exceeded a hundred miles. I continued with him forty days, and learned all the secrets of Alchemy (although before I had understood philosophy as well as any other person in the kingdom). Yet it would be foolish to suppose that the work itself can be completed within forty days: I say that I was fully instructed within that time, but the work itself requires a longer period. Then all that had been dark became as clear as the light, when I beheld the secret gates of Nature unbarred; I saw so plainly the causes and the rationale of everything, that it was no longer possible for me to doubt or despair. If you are as fortunate in your master as I, you will never be assailed by despondency.

The third enemy against whom you must guard is deceit, and this one is perhaps more dangerous than the other two. The servants whom you must employ to feed your furnaces are frequently most untrustworthy. Some are careless, and go to sleep when they should be attending to the fire; others are depraved, and do you all the harm they can; others, again, are either stupid or conceited and over-confident, and disobey instructions; some have fingers retentive of other people's property, or they are drunken, negligent, and absent-minded. Be on your guard against all these, if you

wish to be spared some great loss. If servants are faithful, they are generally stupid; those who are quick-witted, are generally also false; and it is difficult to say whether the deceitful or the stupid are the greater evil of the two. For when I had all my experiments in proper train, some thievish servants ran away with my materials and utensils, and left me nothing but the empty laboratory; and when I calculated the cost, time, and labour of beginning the work all over again, I had almost in the bitterness of my heart resolved to bid an everlasting farewell to this Art of Alchemy. For it will hardly be believed how completely I had been stripped of all that I possessed, although ten trustworthy persons still survive to attest the fact. Indeed the blow was so great that it could hardly have been inflicted on me by human agency alone, without the instigation and co-operation of the Devil. I also made an Elixir of Life, of which a merchant's wife bereft me, and I procured a quintessence, with many other precious preparations, but of all these things I was robbed by wicked men, and thus found, to my smart, that in the sweetest cup of this world's joy, there is a liberal infusion of bitterness. Let me tell you a little more of what has fallen under my observation, concerning the perplexities of this work. The calamity of which I am thinking happened to a good and godly man; and I am the only person that can give a true account of it.

Thomas Dalton, a devout and religious servant of God, possessed a larger quantity of the Red Medicine than has ever been obtained by any other Englishman. Now a certain knight of King Edward's household, named Thomas Herbert, dragged this Dalton forth by violence from an abbey in Gloucestershire, and brought him before the King, where he was confronted with Delvis. For Dalton had been scribe (secretary) to this William Delvis, and Delvis had told the King about Dalton's skill in this Art. Delvis was a faithful servant, who always stood in the presence of King Edward, and he deposed that within an hour Dalton had made for himself one thousand pounds sterling of gold, fully equal to that of the royal coin: and he confirmed his testimony by a most sacred oath upon the Bible. Then Dalton looked full upon Delvis, and said: "O Delvis, thou hast perjured thyself! Thou hast foully broken the pledge thou gavest me, and hast betrayed me even as Judas betrayed his Master." "I did, indeed," rejoined Delvis, "once swear to thee that I would not betray thy secret; yet I do not consider myself as guilty of perjury, since the service of my King and country release me from my oath." Then Dalton soberly answered him thus: "This subterfuge does not excuse thy perjury; for if it did, how could the King himself trust thee, who hast confessed thy perjury in his presence? And," he continued, turning to His Majesty, "I do admit that I possessed this Medicine for a long time; but at length it was only a source of grief and anxiety to me—and therefore after retiring to that abbey from which I was brought hither, I threw it into a tidal river which is daily renewed by the ebb and flow of the sea. Thus as much wealth has been lost as would have sufficed for the outfit and support of twenty thousand knights, who might have been willing to go forth and recover the Holy Sepulchre. For the love of God, I kept this Medicine many years, in order that through its means I might succour a King who should undertake this expedition. But as this sacred duty was forgotten, the Medicine is now irrecoverably lost." The King replied that it was a foolish act to destroy so wonderful a treasure, and demanded that Dalton should prepare some more of the Medicine. "No," said Dalton, "that can never be." "Why not?" enquired the King. "How did you obtain it?" Dalton replied that he had received it from a learned Canon of Lichfield, whose works he had diligently attended to during many years, until at length the Canon had bequeathed to him as much of the Medicine as he had

ever possessed. Then the King gave Dalton four marks, with liberty to depart withersoever he desired; and, at parting, he expressed his grief and concern that he had not known Dalton before. But as it oftens happens that the worst tyrants are found in the retinues of kings, so Herbert now caused Dalton to be seized, robbed of the money which the King had given him, and carried off to Stepney, where he detained him a long time. Thence Dalton was conveyed by Herbert to a castle in Gloucestershire, cast into the dungeon thereof, and kept close prisoner for four years, during which period he was tormented by Herbert in every conceivable manner. At length he was led forth to execution, and when he saw the ministers of death, he said: "O blessed Lord Jesus, I have been separated from Thee too long: Thou didst give me this knowledge, and I have used it without overweening pride. I have not been able to find a fit person to whom .I might have bequeathed my wisdom. Therefore, dearest Lord, I now resign Thy gift into Thy own hands." Then he poured forth a devout prayer, and thereupon turned to the executioner and said, with a smile, "Now thou mayest work thy will."

When Herbert heard these words, his eyes filled with tears, because neither deceit, imprisonment, nor death could induce his victim to yield up the precious secret; and he bade his servants let the old man go, as his obstinacy was not to be overcome. Then Dalton arose, looked about him with sadness and disappointment depicted in his countenance, and departed with a heavy heart; for he had no desire to live even another year. This injury happened to him through the greed and cruelty of godless men. Herbert died not long after, and Delvis lost his life at Tewkesbury. Such are the sufferings which they who aspire to a knowledge of this Art, must lay their account with having to bear. Yet we also see how the greed of wicked men over-reaches itself. For if Herbert had treated Dalton with kindness and gentleness, instead of with cruelty, insolence, and violence, much advantage might have been reaped not, only by the King, but also by the entire commonwealth. Yet we need not wonder that gracious means were not used, for sin reigns everywhere in this kingdom. Otherwise, the people might have obtained great relief from rates and taxes, and much money might have been bestowed in charity among knights, priests, and the common people. Hence we may learn that profligate violence is incapable of acquiring wisdom; for virtue and vice are contrary the one to the other, and men abandoned to the one cannot receive the reward of the other. If vicious persons could gain a full knowledge of this Art, their overbearing insolence would grow unendurable, and their ambition would overleap all bounds; they would by its means become worse men than they were before. Now this chapter respecting the delights and sufferings of our Art is finished. The next will declare the Matter of our Stone.



### CHAPTER III.

Tonsilus had been engaged in the momentous search during more than sixty years. Bryan, too, and Halton, in the western parts, had been employed day and night in practical experiments; yet they did not find this noble science, because they did not know the Matter and root of the Art, but sought it by a mistaken method, until they had wasted their lives and goods. They were put to great expense, loss, and suffering, by the recipes according to which they worked. Then Tonsil complained to me with tears that he was in great bitterness of soul, because he had spent the better part of his life on false receipts, vile substances, herbs, gums, roots, and grasses, of which he enumerated many species, as, for instance, crowfoot, celandine, mezerion, lunaria, and mortagon—also upon hair, eggs vervein, excrements, and urine—upon antimony, arsenic, honey, wax, and wine—on quicklime, vitriol, marchasita, and all kinds of minerals—on amalgams, albifications, and citrinations. All had been reduced to nothing by his operations; for he had not well considered his purpose, and the due proportions of natural truth. After he had failed with all these substances he thought nothing could be better than to operate on human blood, until I told him that by a fierce fire blood was destroyed, and converted into smoke. Then he besought me by the love of Christ to declare to him the true substance of the Stone. "Tonsil," I replied, "what good would it do an old man like you? Renounce this pursuit and give yourself up to prayer; for that is what your time of life requires. If you did know the substance of our Stone, you would fall a victim to old age before you could prepare it." But he bade me not to trouble myself about what might be the result to himself. "It would be a comfort to me at least to know the substance of the Stone which I have sought so long." "Tonsil," I said, "your request is more easily made than granted. For all the authors who deal with this subject write about it in obscure language, and not one of them declares it plainly; nay, they beseech God to remove them suddenly out of this world, if they ever write books about the grand secret. For many of them have been fearful of committing to paper more than was right about this science; and not one of them has given more than one or two plain hints respecting it. They did not write with the object of divulging their secret to the world, but in an obscurely allusive style, in order that they might be able to recognize those who understood their meaning as brothers and fellow adepts. Hence you must not be content with reading only one book, but you should study a variety of authors; because, according to the learned Arnold, one book opens up the understanding of another. The same thought is expressed by the learned Anaxagoras, who testifies that if a man will not take the trouble of reading many books, he can never attain to a practical knowledge of our Art. But though I may not reveal to you for the sake of charity what has never yet been plainly set forth by the brethren of our Art, I may at least give you some comfort by answering as straightforwardly as I can, any questions which you may like to put to me." "Good Master," he replied, "tell me truly whether the substance be Sun (gold) and Mercury, or Sun and Moon (silver), or whether these three must be taken together; or whether it be Gold by itself, or Mercury by itself, or whether Sulphur with these two be the substance of the Stone? Or, is salt of ammonia nearer the truth, or is some other mineral the right thing to use in our Art?" The questions you have put, Tonsil, are wisely and astutely conceived; nevertheless, you have not named the substance, except generically. For you must take a part of these, and of other things at various times, according to the requirements of the Art. Divers things are used in the preparation of our Stone, but there are two materials, and only one Stone. Between the two there is the same difference as that between a mother and her offspring; or,

looking at the matter from another point of view, the difference resembles that which exists between male and female. These two substances will furnish you with all that you need. As for the white Tincture, if you are wise, one of these you shall find to be a Stone, which is rightly named, because, like a stone, it is indestructible by fire. Yet it is not like a stone to the touch or the sight, but is a fine earthy powder, of a dull red. In its separate form we call it our ground litharge; at first it is brown and ruddy, and then of a whitish colour. It is called our chosen Marcasite, and one ounce of it is worth more than fifty pounds. Yet is it not sold in the cities of Christendom, but he who desires it, must either get it made by someone else, or prepare it himself. There is this advantage concerning it, that to make it once well dispenses with all need of repeating the task. Ancient writers call it a thing of small price, because it is lightly esteemed by the merchants, and no one that finds it cares to pick it up, any more than if it were an ounce of dirt. Few will believe that it is a pearl of great price, for it is known to none but the wise. Thus have I laid bare to you a great secret, more plainly than any of the dead masters. Then, Tonsilus, you must also have another Stone, or else you want your principal material. This Stone is most glorious, fair, and bright. It is sold as a stone, and looks like a stone of singular transparency and brilliance. One ounce of it may, in most places, be obtained for about twenty shillings. Its name is Magnesia, but its real nature is known to few. It is found on the tops of the highest mountains, and in the lowest depths of the earth Plato knew its properties and called it by its name. Chaucer says, in the Canon's Tale, that it is called Dytanos, thus defining an obscure term in language still more hopelessly obscure; but it is impossible to understand a thing if for one unintelligible term another still less intelligible is substituted. Nevertheless, my Tonsilus, I will endeavour to explain to you the meaning of Magnesia in our own tongue. *Magos* is Greek, and is equivalent to the Latin *mirabile*; *aes* is money, *ycos*, science; *A* is God; that is to say, it is a matter in which much divine knowledge is involved. Now you know what Magnesia is—it is *res aeris*, and in it lies hidden a wonderful and divine secret. These two stones, my Tonsilus, you must take as your materials for the preparation of the Elixir. Although at first no further materials are needed, yet, as I have already hinted, divers other things are of great use in our Art. The great secret was never before so plainly expounded. But take my explanation in all its fulness; and I will pray God, lest my excess of frankness be reckoned to me for a crime—for I fear that I have suffered my pen to run riot. Though few may understand what I have said, yet there are some students of this Art so subtle, cunning, and keen-witted, that still fewer data would suffice to them for the discovery of all that we know. Nevertheless, God shall provide that none shall find it except the man of a pure and virtuous life. It was with this end in view that the ancient writers concealed with so much solicitude the matters of our Stone, which I have here declared. You need no other substances but these two for the preparation of the white Stone, except salt of ammonia, and that kind of sulphur which is extracted from metals. These two substances suffice for the fulfilment of your desire; none but these two finally abide the test of the fire. Sulphur is burned, and loses its colour. But our Litharge is indestructible. Do not set about with any metal or quicksilver. If you destroy its whole composition, some of its component parts will be of use to you. But the principal substances are the two which I have mentioned, namely, Magnesia and Litharge, its brother."

## CHAPTER IV.

I will not attempt to escape from the task which I have undertaken to expound the great work: I will instruct you as fully as possible in this secret, and all my endeavour shall be to make known to you the truth. As far as I may do so without prejudice to my vow, I will be your guide, and shew you the way to the goal of your desire. If you consider into what a state of obscurity and confusion the different parts of this work have been wilfully thrown by the old writers, you will understand the difficulty of my task. None of them has declared more than one point of our experiment; and for this reason their writings, even if you understand them, will not enable you to practise the Art yourself. Arnold testifies in his books that the central secret of our Art is to know the substance on which it is based; and in his work "Multifary," where he shews how pure and simple essences are to be recognised, he says that our fundamental matter is of two kinds; but he does not tell us how they are to be found. Their names you have already learned in the last chapter. Friar Bacon dwells more fully on this point, where he says: "Divide all parts into their cognate elements. For the unlearned do not proceed in this way; but they continue pertinaciously and senselessly to add more and more to a divisible substance—and while they fancy that they are on the point of bringing to perfection the flower of our Art, all that they really effect is the multiplication of error." In this passage Bacon, like his predecessors, appears fearful of saying too much. Perhaps you also remember what Avicenna says, in his "Gate": "You must go forward to perfection by true teaching in accordance with the facts of Nature: you must eat to drink, and drink to eat, and in the mean season be covered with perspiration." Rhasis expresses himself to the same effect, but warns us against suffering the matter to consume its food too quickly: "Let it assimilate its aliment little by little." Of this rule the Prophet also makes mention, if you rightly comprehend his meaning: "Thou hast visited the earth," he says, "and watered it: Thou hast multiplied its wealth: the fruitful land hast Thou turned into a dry place, and the arid land into a river of water." When it has plenty of meat and drink, it is needful to watch at a time when the body craves sleep. For our labour demands constant vigils and great diligence, and it must be nourished and fed with precious substances. "Therefore let all poor men eschew this experiment," says Arnold, "as this Art is for the rich of this world"—and I myself can attest to ail poor men the truth of these words. "Moreover," he continues, "let the enquirer be patient and of an even temper, for those who are in a hurry will never reach the goal." The length of time required for the purification of the substance, is a stone of stumbling to many who will not believe in it. I advise you, therefore, ye poor, not to attempt the solution of this mystery, but to stay your hands before it is too late. One fourth of an ounce too much or too little may in a single hour mar and destroy the labour of weeks. The substance you must prepare with gentle heat, and so long as there is no violent effervescence, you may keep it over the fire: you should gradually consume it by gentle coction, but it must not be suffered to throw up great bubbles, as such a course would be indicative of haste. Gentleness and patience will mark out to you the safest method, and enable you to avoid the manifold dangers which beset the enquirer's path. One of the most difficult experiments in the gross work, is the classification of our intermediate minerals. The different media that are used must all be in a highly purified state, if the work is to be brought to a successful conclusion. For the pure and impure, the mature and immature, are by nature violently opposed to each other; that which is fixed naturally adheres to fixed substances, and volatile substances are sympathetically attracted by that which is volatile. Everywhere Nature strives to produce harmony by drawing like to like. Now

you will find our gross work to be generically impure; and it is a matter of great difficulty and danger, requiring the utmost wisdom of the wise, and confounding the folly of the ignorant, to purge our Substance from all foreign matter. The learned as well as the simple are often led astray at this point, and prove the truth of the saying of Anaxagoras, that all men need to be taught discretion by bitter experience. Once I heard a wise man say that, at the present time, magnesia (in a pure state) is sold in Catalonia, together with the other intermediate minerals, so that the hands of a fastidious man need now no longer be defiled with this dirty work; and if this were really true, both the commencement and the consummation of your work would be a much easier matter than it is under ordinary conditions. For if you are compelled to do all that I have had to accomplish, you will be wearied out before you reach the work proper. The work of the Sages does not begin until all substances are pure, both without and within. Let us remember that as we are seeking a tincture which imparts perfection to all things else, we must remove from it all that is foul and vile. Of the different media, each has its own properties, and its own function to perform, according to its essential nature; of those media by which our experiment is advanced, some are of their own nature helpful, and others are harmful. Our Apothecaries do not understand the secret of their preparation, and we refuse to instruct them, because we know that they would adulterate them (for the purpose of deceiving their customers) rather than take diligent and conscientious pains to let their drugs be genuine and pure. It is their practice (as I know by bitter experience) to ask a high price, and to furnish an untrustworthy article. If a man would have materials on which he may rely, he must not be afraid of soiling his own hands, nor must he shun expense, though it may swallow up all his hoarded wealth. In the gross work that man is furthest from the goal who is in too great a hurry to reach it. If our great work, with all that belongs to it, could be accomplished in three years, artists might account themselves [fortunate](#); for when it has once been brought to a satisfactory conclusion, there is no need to undertake it a second time, if indeed one is skilled in the art of augmenting his medicine; and the attainment of this skill is one of the great objects of our Magistry. There is no need for me to name in this place the different minerals which are required, seeing that Albertus has most fully discussed this point. I might say much about the properties of minerals; but the discussion would prove barren of results in the advancement of our Art. One of the most important conditions of success is the mechanical skill in the manipulation of experiments; in regard to these it is possible to go astray in a thousand ways, the path being beset with all but insurmountable difficulties at every step. Therefore, believe that which the ancient writers tell us—that nothing can be rightly done without experience. Consider all circumstances, and take care to secure uniformity in all that is required. Use one vessel which is simple both in material and in shape; beware of one made of mixed material, lest some accident happen at a critical moment. This general admonition will save me the trouble of laying down, and you the trouble of remembering, a hundred special cautions; and this instruction may suffice for him who is wisely intent on the practice of our Art. If your servants are faithful and true, you will be able to carry out your experiments without constant vexation. Therefore, if you would be free from all fear, over the gross work, follow my counsel, and never engage married men; for they soon give in and pretend that they are tired out, as I can assure you from my own experience. Hire your workmen for certain stipulated wages, and not for longer periods than twenty-four hours at a time. Give them higher wages than they would receive elsewhere, and be prompt and ready in your payments. For your kindness will stir up in their hearts love and reverence, and a spirit of zeal in the conduct of the

work committed to them; for they know withal that they are liable to be discharged at once if they are negligent in your service. Married men will not agree to be engaged for such short periods; therefore, give them a wide berth. If I had known and acted on this principle before, I might have been spared much loss and vexation. In the pursuit of our Art, you must preserve at all times your liberty of action; and you should also take care, from time to time, to unbend your mind from its sterner employments with some convenient recreation; otherwise your [spirits](#) might be weighed down with melancholy and despair, and you might lose heart for the continuation of your work. There is no need to add much to this chapter, for the ancient writers have already fully set forth all that I have not yet touched upon. But that which they have omitted is most plainly expounded in this Book. Hence it is called the Ordinal of Alchemy, the supplement of all other works on the subject. The following chapter is for the initiated, and shews all the rules to be observed in the subtle part of the work.

## CHAPTER V.

When Briseus was a money-changer, he caused loss to many persons, but to others his dealings were a source of delight and joy; and as this fact seemed at the time a wonder and marvel to all who heard of it, so in our own time—not so very long ago—an almost miraculous event was observed to take place: within the short space of ten days the same bed in a house near Leadenhall was successively occupied by three Masters of this Art, every one of whom possessed both the white and the red Tincture; though hardly one person amongst a million of men ever becomes possessed of the glorious prize. One of them, as I was told, was from the Duchy of Lorraine, the second hailed from the Midland Counties of England, the third was the youngest, and was born near a Cross, which stands at the boundary of three shires. Wise men had foretold from the conjunction of planets that prevailed at his birth, that he would be an ornament to England. Anyone might travel through the length and breadth of Europe without meeting with three such Masters. Two of them are about to depart, but the third will remain and do much good in this part of the world. Nevertheless, the sins of our rulers will delay the good which otherwise he might confer upon our country at once. The oldest of the three Masters prophesied concerning this young adept, that he would have to endure much suffering at the hands of those who owed him the greatest debt of gratitude. He also uttered many other prophecies, some of which were verified by the event, while the rest remain to be fulfilled. "One thing is most certain," he said, "after great sorrow there will be great joy in all parts of this country—joy which will be experienced by all good men." The youth enquired when this thing should be, and the old man's answer was that it should come to pass when the Cross was honoured by night and by day in the land of God, and the land of Light: which thing will happen in due time, but is delayed by the greivous wickedness of men. But when the blessed hour arrives, this Art will be revealed to a King; and more glorious things will then be brought to pass than it is possible for us to enumerate in this place, when he shall have reformed our manners and abolished all abuses. He will investigate this science in secret, and will be instructed in it by hermits, or monks. So King Calid, in his time of need, sought this knowledge of many, until it was imparted to him by Morienus, who succoured the King with his counsel, being removed thereto by his nobleness and virtue. But now we will speak of this subject no longer, but proceed to give an account of the subtle work. He that would understand it must be deeply learned. He should know elementary philosophy if he wishes to study Alchemy.

Now, let me tell you who are intent upon this Art, that when materials have by preparation been rendered fit for generation, they must by division be separated into four elements. If you cannot do this, go and learn of Hortulanus, who has written a special treatise on the subject—in which treatise he shews how to divide wine into its elements. Moreover, you should know the effects of the four qualities—heat, cold, moisture, and dryness—of which all things are composed; and because in this Art you are specially desirous of obtaining a colour which abides the fire, you ought also to know, before you set about its production, how colours are generated. For every colour that can be named is seen in our work, before the white colour appears. Moreover, you must be able to melt your substance easily, like wax or gum. Otherwise, according to the Masters, it could not enter or penetrate metals. The substance should be both fixed and fluxible, and have abundance of colour. To conjoin these three contraries in one substance, is the great secret of our Art. Nevertheless, an apt learner may find it expounded in this chapter. And first—to

speak as briefly and concisely as possible concerning the aforesaid four primary qualities: heat and cold are active qualities; moisture and dryness, on the other hand, are qualities of a passive kind. For the latter are always passively subject to the former, as, for instance, stones when they become lime, and water when it is changed to ice. Whence you may easily see that nothing is fully wrought except by heat and cold. Yet the passive qualities have some power, as we find every day in mechanical operations, in the baking of bread, the brewing of beer, and other processes brought about by the operation of moisture and dryness. Aristotle, in his physical treatise, and many others, say that from action proceeds knowledge; thus they call practice the source and root of speculation and of all science. For the properties of all things are perceived by watching their operations, as, from the colour of urine we hear physicians draw conclusions in regard to the excess or lack of animal heat in the body. By means of those four primary qualities, we study the colours in the due order of their succession. But we can have no real assurance respecting the white colour, except in a very pure substance. You will be materially assisted in your task by a knowledge of the way in which colours are daily generated. Colour is the extremity of every transparent body; a clear substance is here beautifully consummated. If dryness dominates in a dry substance, its colour will most certainly be white. Of this fact you may convince yourself by ocular proof in the case of burned bones, or of quicklime made of stones. Where cold prevails in a moist and clear substance, a white colour will be the result, as is seen in the case of ice, or water indurated by frost. The cause has already before been declared in our philosophy; but here I do not speak of common philosophy, but only adduce these facts in illustration of alchemistic principles. And indeed one fact explains another, as the offspring may be known by looking at its mother. If heat operates on a thick and moist substance, a black colour will be the result.

If you desire an illustration of this principle, you need only put some green wood on the fire. When cold is brought to bear on a thick and dry substance, the colour which is produced will be black. The reason is that the substance is compact and very thick, and under the influence of cold which is destructive of life, the thickness causes obscurity and absence of light; and negation of colour is blackness. Thus you may accept it for an universal fact that a clear substance is a white substance. The efficient cause is not always the same; it is sometimes heat, and sometimes it is cold. But blackness and whiteness (as every one knows) are the two extremes of colour. Hence your work must begin with blackness, if whiteness is its final perfection. Red—as the Sages say—is an intermediate colour between black and white. Nevertheless you may believe what I say: Red is the final colour in Alchemy. The Sages also tell us that pink and orange are colours intermediate between white and red; and that green and grey are intermediate colours between red and black. Flesh colour is seen in very pure substances. Physicians have discovered nineteen colours intermediate between white and black in urine; of these colours one is whitish, like that of the onyx stone. Magnesia appears to partake of this colour—though Magnesia throws out a mild, pure splendour in the subtle stage of our Art; and here we behold all colours that ever were seen by mortal eye—a hundred colours, and certainly a good many more than have been observed in urine; and in all those colours our Stone must be found in all its successive stages. In the ordering of your practical experiments, and in conceiving the different parts of the work in your own mind, you must have as many phases, or stages, as there are colours. If you do not know the different stages of this Art, you will find them in Raymond's "General Exposition of Alchemy." Gilbert Kymer has

indeed left us a fanciful book, in which he describes seventeen proportions. But they do not suffice for this science, of which he was never able to discover the true secret, though he was profoundly learned in Medicine.

Such, however, is the strength of the human constitution, that it often overcomes disease in spite of the doctor's physic: and the physician's art is praised in many cases where his remedies had nothing to do with the cure, or even retarded it. But the case is different with respect to our mineral medicine; for our Art is raised far above all generations, and exists only in the wisdom of the Artist, as any wise man may discover by experience. Thus, the true foundation of Alchemy consists in the proper graduation of the work, and in the correct adjustment of heat and cold, moisture and dryness; also in the knowledge that through these qualities others are generated, such as hardness and softness, heaviness and lightness, roughness and smoothness—according to the addition of these primary qualities in certain proportions of weight, number, and measure. Under these three categories we may range everything that God has made. For God has created and ordered all things in accordance with certain proportions of number, weight, and measure; and if you depart from these proportions, you destroy the harmony of Nature. It is therefore a wise caution which is given by Anaxagoras, that we should not proceed to join together our elements, until we have discovered the exact proportion of weight in which all the elements are found in the substances with which we have to deal. Bacon says that the Ancients have concealed nothing except these proportions, respecting which they give us no information. For when they speak of proportions, they bewilder the student with the most contradictory assertions. If you wish to know the truth about these proportions, you may obtain it by studying the works of Albertus, Raymond, Bacon, and Anaxagoras the Elder. You must collect your knowledge from the pages of these four writers, as one of them by himself will not afford it. Though you understand the secret of joining the four qualities together into one cohesive whole, yet the more difficult task of combining the different elements still remains to be accomplished. A proper union has to be effected between earth and water on the one hand, and air and fire on the other. Though the third and the second are the most noble of all, yet the first and the fourth cannot be excluded. Earth is the most useful element, and that of which we have the greatest need. Here lies latent the possibility of growth and the power of generation; it is the earthy litharge of our Stone. Without it there can be no generation and no fixation thereof. For there is nothing fixed save earth alone; all the other elements are volatile. Daily experience teaches you that this is true of fire, water, and air. Fire is the cause of expansion, and renders the substance capable of per-mixtion; but the transparent splendour and beautiful colour are produced through the influence of air. Moreover, when air is condensed, it produces substances which are easily melted, such as wax, butter, and gum; these are liquefied by a very slight degree of heat. Water purifies by ablution, and causes mortifying things to revive. There is nothing wonderful in the multiplication of fire, and it is greatly inferior to the power of multiplication inherent in earth. For earth daily produces fresh herbs, while one spark of fire is miraculously enlarged only when it is fed with plenty of combustible matter. Fire and earth are the only elements that are capable of multiplication, and they cause the power of multiplication inherent in our Stone. Of this earth Albertus the Great says, that among all mineral substances lithargyrium (which he describes at some length) is the most suitable for our white Elixir. We will now proceed to discuss the conjunction of the elements; and, on this point, we may lay down the following rules: (1) Combine your elements grammatically, in accordance with their own proper



rules. These rules are the principal instruments for aiding the learned in this work: for the two greatest contraries upon earth are fixedness and volatility. All the grammarians of England and France cannot skill to teach you this concord. But this Ordinal can shew you where you may learn it, namely, in the book called *De Arbore*. (2) Join them together also after the manner of the rhetorician, with purified and ornate essences. Inasmuch as your tincture must be pure and fair, take pure earth, water, fire, and air. (3) In accordance with logical methods, combine such things as admit of a true and natural union. Many learned men, by neglecting this precept, have lost all their labour and pains. (4) Combine them also arithmetically, in accordance with those subtle natural proportions, of which little was known when Boëthius wrote: "Bind together the elements by numbers." (5) Combine your elements musically, for two reasons: first, on account of melody, which is based on its own proper harmonies. Join them according to the rules which obtain in music in the proportions which produce musical consonance; for these musical proportions closely resemble the true proportions of Alchemy, at least, as far as the more general aspects of our Art are concerned. Its more subtle proportions you must learn from the writings of Raymond and Bacon. Bacon discusses them allusively in his three Epistles. Raymond expounds them more fully in his General Treatise. Many who read his words think that they understand them, but they are deceived. (6) Combine your elements also by means of Astrology, that all their operations may prosper, and that the simple, rude, and unformed substance may, in due course of time, and in the proper order of its development, be brought to perfection through the blessed influences of the Stars. (7) The science of perspective (optics) also affords much help to those who labour in our noble Art; and it is materially advanced by many other sciences, (8) as, for instance, that science which deals with the plenum and the vacuum. But, as far as this Art is concerned, we must regard as the mistress of all sciences, (9) the science of Natural Magic. Now, when the four elements have been wisely combined, and each thing ordered in its own proper degree, then we shall behold in the various stages of coction, a constantly shifting succession of colours, until perfection is attained. For the substance is wrought upon from within by the natural warmth, which is found to exist intellectually in our substance, though it can be neither seen, nor felt, nor handled. Its operation is known only to few. When this inward natural heat is stirred up by the influence of outward artificial heat, Nature, having once been roused into activity, will go on to operate, and produce the various changes which the substance has to undergo; and this is one cause, as the Sages will tell you, why so many colours are seen in our work. Many mistakes arise in the study of this Art through ignorance of the difference between outward and inward heat. In order that you may know how these two kinds of heat ought to aid and stimulate each other, and which of the two ought to predominate in our work, you should be guided by the analogy of animate creation, and more especially by the analogy of the coction which goes on in the human body. It was well said by Morienus, that the generation of our Stone exhibits a wonderful analogy to the creation of man, in whom, says Raymond, the four degrees of the four complexions are found together. On account of the close analogy which exists between the generation of man and that of our Stone, it has been said that there are in this world only two microcosms—man and our Stone.

Now, we have described the conjunction or digestion of the elements, and we proceed to give an account of the nutrition of our substance. There is a solid humour rendered firm by dryness, well mixed in all its degrees; and the passive qualities are generated in due mixture by inward and outward heat. Hence our digestion is nothing but

perfection produced out of a substantial humour. You must pardon my using these expressions, which to the unlearned must appear obscure and meaningless; but this Art of Alchemy, like all other arts and sciences, has its own proper terminology, from which it is not safe for me to depart. Digestion is sometimes quickened by outward cold, as you may see from the fact that in winter men take a larger quantity of food than in summer, when their heat is more intense. For cold drives heat inward and increases its action, giving it greater virtue and power of digestion than it had before. The digestive quality in our Art is the virtual heat of a digestive organism. Nevertheless, the warmth of a digestible substance is also instrumental in aiding digestion. Fever heat digests nothing. Baths may both aid and cause destruction. Digested (fermented) wine has more natural heat than must. Coagulation is not a substantial form, but only a passive state of some material substance. Moreover, you should know when the colours appear, that the principal agent in the substance is either heat, or cold, or moisture, or dryness. To recognise the principal agent at any given stage requires the practised eye [of](#) the Master, and a quick observation of the manner in which the colours arise. The principal agent obtains royal power over the four qualities, and during its temporary predominance assimilates them to its own nature. This change is discussed by Anaxagoras in his book entitled "Natural Conversion," and its *rationale* is also given by Raymond. The discernment of your principal agent is not by any means such a simple matter as you may suppose; I will attempt to teach it you by means of four signs or symptoms, viz., colour, taste, smell, and fluxibility. The colour of your substance may guide you in recognising its principal agent, because that colour which a glance at your vessel exhibits as predominant is caused by that quality which, for the time being, is the principal agent. Of course, you will be able to moderate any excessive action of this principal agent, if you are aware of its nature; and its nature I will now enable you to tell, by giving you an account of the causes whereby the different colours which appear in our Art are produced. Whiteness is the effect of transparency in any object. Blackness arises when the clearness of a dense body is obscured by the thickness of its constituent parts: it is produced out of an earthy substance by combustion, particularly when the heat causes a greater hardness of the atoms. By the mixture of the dense and obscure with the clear and pure, we obtain all the intermediate colours. Any clear and transparent body arises out of the substance of air and water condensed in purified earth which does not destroy their transparency. If in such clear and transparent bodies you do not perceive any special shades of colour, you may confidently conclude that they are the effect of intense cold, as is the case with the crystal, beryl, and other formations which you may thus distinguish from each other: Crystal is aeriform water, and is clear, transparent, and fair; but where the aqueous element predominates, it is more obscure, as in the case of beryl, or ice. Where the substance is essentially dry, it is dense, hard, and obscure, as may be seen in the diamond, and other substances of a like nature. In a clear substance light causes a brilliancy such as we behold in Magnesia; and a watery vapour produced by heat is instrumental in the formation of such bodies. Such are the causes of transparency, and of the extreme colours. As to the intermediate colours, that of the ruby is caused by a thin smoke in a clear body, which happens when much light and brilliancy prevail in such a body; and it is more or less brilliant in proportion to the quantity of light. The amethyst comes next in glory after the ruby, its obscurity being greater, and its transparency less; the shining substance of the chalcedony stands next to beryl. Green, or the colour of the emerald, is formed of pure water, mixed with a burned earthy substance, and the greater the transparency of the earth, the more marked is also the brilliant green of the

emerald. Yellow is generated out of water and earth, and has the clearness of air dimmed by the obscurity of black vapour. Grey, or lead colour, is the result of an union of watery and earthy elements, and where these atoms are cold and dense, the grey colour is more intense, as is seen in very old lead; or in persons at the point of death. This colour is called livid, and is frequent in men of an envious disposition. It concentrates the natural colour and the blood in the heart, for the purpose of comforting it, and leaves the face cold and dry, as it has been forsaken by its warmth and blood. In the same way, when fevers have reached an extreme point, the finger nails are of a livid hue. The colour of the sapphire is an orient blue, not unlike that of the celestial firmament, and fairer to behold than the colour of lead, because it contains more air, water, and light. Moreover, the colour of the sapphire is esteemed more precious than other shades of light blue, which are more obscure because they contain more earth and less air. Silver may easily be converted into the colour of the lazulite, because the transparency of the silver, produced by air, has a tendency to become assimilated to the colour of the sky; and the abundance of quicksilver which it contains, causes the brilliancy of the silver, while the splendour of the quicksilver, in its turn, is produced by subtle earth, pure water, and clear air. The orange colour, the shade of yellow which appears in gold, is a pleasing colour, and by many is even considered charming; it is generated by a strong and vigorous digestion, as its aqueous elements are exposed to a high degree of heat, which is seen in honey, urine, gall, and lye. The yellow colour of gold is the product of a pure and subtle water perspicuously condensed. For the more pure water is condensed, the more brilliant it becomes. The cause of a mirror is fixed humidity; and for this reason it is also smooth, because air receives no impressions, and is incapable of confining itself. It is the water which produces its clearness. If pure white and pure red be well mixed, the result is a beautiful orange colour. Thus all the different ways in which the elements may be combined, produce different colours in our substance, according to the different degrees of digestion. Observe well the proper colours of elements, that you may be the better able to judge of colours. Physicians say of certain herbs that they are cold without, and warm within at the root. If you wish for an illustration of this saying, observe the nature of fragrant violets. Common philosophy teaches us that the rose is cold within and red without. Anaxagoras says in his "Natural Changes," that the outward and the inward in all things are of a nature directly opposite to each other; and the rule holds true, except in the case of such things as are very plain and simple in their composition, as, for instance, the scammony and laurel, that do not nourish like vegetables. Bear in mind that in every mixture, one of the elements will strive to obtain the mastery. This insolent and greedy disposition is found in man, as in all things beside. But all sorts and conditions of men are placed on a footing of equality by death, which is God's means of laying low men of high degree, and of shewing the vanity of all ambitious thoughts and desires. Kings and beggars find their common level in the grave. It is thus that you must treat your principal agent, if it overleaps the proper bounds of equality. In this sense Aristotle says: "Let there be perfect equality in the composition of your Stone, in order that unprofitable strife may be avoided." Let there be all the colours which we have enumerated, in their proper order, and then suffer Nature to bring about the process of generation in her own way, till among this great variety of colours one is found to predominate, which resembles the colour you are seeking to discover. In this way you may make use of the colours for the purpose of guiding you in this work. I might say much more about colours; but what has been said constitutes a satisfactory fulfilment of my promise, and will teach you how far the various colours may be made to serve your purpose in recognising your principal

agent. Many learned men indeed will justly wonder that so great a variety of colours should appear in our Stone before the final stage of permanent and immutable whiteness is reached, seeing that the ingredients seem to be so few and simple. But I will explain the mystery in a few words: Those colours are due to the properties of magnesia, the nature of which is capable of change into any proportion and degree, just as crystal, for instance, exhibits the colour of any substance which is placed under it. Hence it is well and generously said by Hermes that "for performing the miracles of one thing, God has so ordained it that out of one thing all these marvels should spring forth." For this reason common philosophers cannot find this virtuous Stone, because it transcends their comprehension.

The sense of smell will also furnish you with indications whereby you may recognise the predominant element; and, in conjunction with the indications afforded by colour, it will teach you where to look for the principal agent. Now as white and black are the two extremes of colour, so stench and fragrance are the extremes of odour. But as fishes are incapable of distinguishing intermediate colours, because their eyes are without eye-lids and cannot be closed, so we cannot become aware of intermediate odours by the sense of smell, because our nostrils are incapable of being shut, like the eyes of fishes. On this account intermediate odours are not perceived by the nostrils as distinctly as intermediate colours are perceived by the eye. An unpleasant smell is not, in the opinion of the Sages, an intermediate smell, but only one less fetid. Yet they have noted it down in their books as the result of their experience—though I have no experimental knowledge of the fact—that if you mix a sweet and fragrant odour with one of a penetratingly fetid character, the fragrant odour alone is smelt, while the fetid one is imperceptible; and the reason which they allege is that all fragrant things are more pure and spiritual than those which are fetid, and therefore penetrate the air more easily, and, being more grateful to the living organisms and more agreeable to nature, are more readily received than fetid smells. An odour is a vaporous steam dissolved by heat, of a substance resembling an exudation, which penetrates the air freely, and affects it and your sense of smell, as your palate is affected by food, your sense of hearing by sound, and your sense of sight by colour. Four things are required for the perfect apprehension of odours. First, it is necessary that a subtle substance should be affected by the operation of heat, and give out a vaporous similitude of itself, which evaporation must then be dispersed through thin, clear air, and act on the sense of smell. But this odorous vapour is not so readily given out by dense and hard substances which, like our Stone, are not easily affected by heat. Heat quickens odours, cold hinders them; manure is more fetid in summer than in winter. Grateful odours are generated out of a pure and vaporous substance, as in the case of ambergris, nard, and myrrh, which are specially pleasing to women. A pure substance under the influence of gentle heat, gives out moderate odours, such as the fragrance of violets; but when moderate heat acts on an impure substance, the result is a disagreeable odour, such as that of aloes and sulphur. When the natural heat of the substance is diminished, the fact is signaled by a most fetid smell, such as that of decomposed fish. Where a stench is produced by the putrefaction of natural heat, it is a vapour or steam issuing from decaying matter. If the juices only are corrupted, while the substance itself is not destroyed, the stench will be extremely disagreeable, yet not so fetid as in the former case. A putrid smell is caused only by the corruption of the substance itself. When an evil substance is decomposed, it gives out a horrible smell; and putrefying carcases of human beings may often cause a pestilence. The smell of extinguished coals is destructive of health, and may occasion even a mare to miscarry.

When the qualities of a substance harmonize with your nature, the odour will be pleasant; but if the substance be of a kind that does not sympathise with your nature, you will be disagreeably affected by the odour. Fishes love sweet smells, as is seen from the fact that they are more easily attracted by a fresh than by a stale bait. All fragrant matters have a corresponding degree of natural heat; and though camphor, roses, and other cold substances emit a pleasant fragrance, yet ancient writers tell us that the purity of their substance is equivalent to, and virtually represents, natural heat. You may take for granted the truth of the old saying, that one pleasant smell does not neutralize another. It is different, however, with fetid odours; for the smell of garlic overpowers that of dung. But now we have said enough for our present purpose about smells, and you will be easily able to tell when putrefaction begins to set in. The sense of smell will also enable you to distinguish between a subtle and a gross substance. You will also have knowledge of an intermediate substance which exhibits the corruption of natural heat, and of the difference between corrupted humour and corrupted substance. But our substance has been highly purified, and is conserved by the mean virtue; wherefore, you must not expect a fetid smell to arise from it, though it putrefies after its own proper kind.

The third sign and test by which you may know your principal agent is called taste, which always causes the diminution of the substance tasted. The test of the palate would be more certain than that of the eye or the nose, if it were not dangerous to taste our Stone, seeing that it is destructive of health and life, so penetrating is its quality; hence it is inexpedient and even dangerous to taste of it too often. It strengthens metals, as we know, but it is hurtful to human beings until the perfect red colour appears, which abides the test of fire. A common labouring man, who had devoted himself to the study of this Art, tasted a small piece of the white Stone in the hope that thereby he would be delivered from all pain and disease, instead of which he was suddenly struck down with the palsy. Him my master speedily cured with mineral Bezoar. Therefore, though the palate be the best judge of the progress which has been made in our Art, yet it is of little practical use, because the taste of our substance is both horrible and hurtful. Nevertheless, certain parts may, without any risk, be tasted before they are joined together, for the purpose of discovering whether the operation has been rightly performed or not. At the same time the skilled artist will be able to discover all he wants to know by the colour and odour. Thus many judge of the quality of good wine, but new wine is best tested by the palate. For the sense of smell has only one organ, and is capable of distinguishing nothing but vaporous steam. The sense of taste, on the other hand, undoubtedly possesses six organs for the perception of material qualities. These organs Nature has ordained for the security and protection of living creatures. The ape tests the wholesomeness of his food by the sense of smell, men and parrots rely upon the verdict of the palate. For many things, though fragrant, touch the palate adversely, and repel by their acidity, bitterness, or sickly and nauseating sweetness; or they are poisonous, corrosive, or too highly seasoned. In all these cases it is unadvisable to appeal for a decision to the sense of taste. The ancient writers have distinguished nine different varieties of taste, viz., acrid, oily, and vinegary (indicative of a subtle substance), biting, salt, watery (characteristic of intermediate substances), bitter, acid, and sweet (inherent in substances of great thickness and density). These nine varieties of taste are of common occurrence: five of them are the product of heat—the oily, the acrid, the salt, the bitter, and the sweet; the remaining four are produced by cold—the sour, the acid, the watery or insipid, and the biting. Taste is determined by two things, viz., by diversities of substance, and

diversities of quality. A thick substance is generally found to have a sweet taste; a substance which is moist, thick, and warm, produces an oily taste; while a substance of an intermediate quality, which is both hot and dry, is characterised by a salt or pungent taste. A thick substance, that is both hot and dry, is intensely bitter. A subtle substance, on the other hand, which is also hot and dry, is marked by a harsh and acrid flavour. In this way heat is the source of five different varieties of taste, but not of more. That which is cold and dry in the second degree, and at the same time exhibits a subtle substance, is sour—as you may see by the face which a man makes who has tasted unripe apples. The same qualities in the same degree, united to an intermediate substance, produce, as you may easily suppose, a biting effect upon the palate, as, for instance, the rose. But the acid, less acid, and slightly acid flavours are the results of cold and dryness in different degrees. Cold and humidity in the first degree always produce a watery flavour, as is seen in the whites of eggs and in oysters; for these substances are both cold and humid, and have much superfluous moisture—for which reason they are not greatly relished by the human palate. Isaac says that there are only seven varieties of taste, because the acid and the slightly acid, though different in degree, are yet in reality one and the same flavour, and because the watery or insipid variety simply represents negation of taste. We may also speak of compound flavours, such as bitter-sweet, and others of a like kind. Thus, by means of the palate, men may distinguish substances, qualities, and degrees. But if you do not care to subject our matter to the test of the palate, you may be guided by another class of symptoms, just as in medicine we do not rely upon the signs exhibited by the urine alone, but take them in conjunction with the state of the pulse, and the general condition of the body. He would be an ignorant physician indeed who should compete his diagnosis without availing himself of everything which may help him to a knowledge of the exact nature of the disease. Thus, if you would pursue the study of our Art, you should avail yourself of the indications afforded by the four methods of observation for the purpose of forming a correct judgment. Of three of these methods we have already spoken, the fourth is the fluxibility of the liquid. The liquid is the strength of our substance, and its condition affords the most striking evidence of the progress of the work; moreover, by its means the elements are both combined and dissolved. The liquid joins together the male and the female, and causes the dead to be restored to life. The liquid purges by ablution, and is the principal nutriment of our Stone. Without liquid there is no good food; the liquid carries the aliment to all the different parts of the human living body, and it performs the same function in Alchemy. But you should well consider the purity and the quantity of all your liquids, and also their consistency or thinness: otherwise you will make little progress. Now, because our Elixir needs a twofold preparation, it exhibits more natural marvels than any other substance. Physicians say that the denser and more consistent urine is, the more humidity does it indicate; but with us the thickness betokens dryness, and that which is subtle humidity. Many liquids are needed for our Stone in accordance with its requirements. In the book entitled "The Crowd," Aristeus says: that air is invisibly enclosed in water, which lifts up the earth by its aerial potency. Pythagoras remarks that if the matter were so, it would be a most fortunate circumstance. Plato expresses himself most circumspcctly when he calls it (the liquid) "the gentle dropping of dew"; and the words are thoroughly applicable to Alchemy. But in the commonplaces of the primary philosophy it is said that condensed air is changed back into rain, and rarefied water into air. Some say that the month of May is the beginning of the year, when air is condensed into water. Others say that such water descends from the sky till the Sun enters the sign of Scorpio. Others, again, tell us that no liquids should be used that are

affected by the cold, because, as the ancient writers state, their activity is chained up by the cold. Some Sages affirm that the liquid which you should employ in preparing the Elixir is milk; another expresses himself in the following mystical words: "No liquid is sufficient for the great work but the water of Litharge, which together with the water of Azoch produces virgin's milk." Democritus, on the other hand, states that the best liquid for the preparation of our Stone is permanent water, which is naturally capable of resisting the action of fire, and of enduring its heat. Rupescissa says that aqua vitæ is the liquid required, because it is spiritual and revivifying in its nature, and because it is the quintessence which restores dead things to life (concerning this quintessence Aristotle writes in his "Book of Secrets" that all perfection is in the fifth part). Rupescissa further calls this aqua vitæ the best of all liquids, for that it renders thick and dense substances spiritual. In the works of Pythagoras you will find our aqua vitæ spoken of in different language. He himself calls it the vivifying principle, and bids us volatilize that which is fixed, and fix that which is volatile, as by this strong method of compulsion the fixed materials will become easy to melt. Others say that the best of all liquids is that which stirs up most desire and love. These are best found near islands, and in places that are washed by the ocean. Certain Sages tell us of yet another liquid which is colder than spring water, and has an icy taste; its quantity, however, is never diminished, nor is its substance consumed, though it is in a state of constant activity in the preparation of our Stone. This water is called by Democritus the "shadowless light," or "the water of the rising Sun." Hermes says that no water is of such paramount importance as the water of crude mercury; "for," he says, "this water holds the high place of being the proper water of Alchemy." Thus, ye who pursue the study of this Art, may know by means of all these liquids our Stone must be perfected. A liquid is a shifting substance, of a watery and unstable nature; and all such things are more subject to lunar influences than those of a firmer structure. Of this every initiated Artist may behold a proof in the preparation of the white Tincture. Liquids wash and purify both extreme and intermediate substances. God created liquids for the use of man and for the cleansing of all impurities. Liquids doubtless possess the power of bringing hidden impurities to the surface of a body, as those will tell you who use this simple means for the purpose of cleansing soiled clothing. Liquids comfort and refresh the parched roots of grass and trees; for all natural liquids have the power of restoring any vital juices which have been lost. Liquids are also useful for the dividing and separating of qualities, and for the resolving of substances into their smallest parts. Liquids further cause the generation of our Stone by the conjunction of many things into one. They assist the fluxibility and motion of many things. Again, you should observe how liquids are to be gained from the different substances which exist on earth. Some are derived through incision, as, for instance, the juice of the terebinth; others, by crushing, as the juice of the grape and of the olive; others again, by distillation, like water; some, by combustion, like colophony; some by dissolution, according to the manner in which women prepare lye; others are produced in other ways; while some owe their origin to natural processes, as, for instance, urine, blood, milk, and sweat. Coagulatory substances, again, are of great use and profit in the making of cheese. In these and many other ways we seek and discover liquids which may be useful to us in the preparation of our glorious Elixir, the most precious Philosopher's Stone, for which we daily bless God's name.

All the liquids that we have enumerated are of a more or less adhesive nature, with the solitary exception of quicksilver, which, though fluxible, will not adhere to any other matters but those in which it finds a sister or brother mixed of the same subtle

substance; but with any other liquid it will not mingle, though they, too, are composed of the four elements, as milk contains whey, butter, and cheese. These four elements may be separated and put together again, to the great advancement of your experiment; but the manner in which cheese, butter, and whey are obtained is a simpler subject of investigation than are the liquids which exist in our Stone. Not one of them is simple and uncompounded except water alone. Of the several liquids of our Stone you should understand also the qualities and degrees; for thus you will be able to check the various superfluous activities of the principal agent, if this agent itself be permanent and durable. If the predominant quality be dryness, you may correct it by adding, according to your requirements, a greater or less quantity of humid moisture; and in the same way you may proceed with regard to the other qualities, thus compelling the principal agent to submit to the rule of your will. By the knowledge of the diversity, contrariety, and agreement of qualities, you may judge which quality ought to predominate. You will need great wisdom in so adding and diminishing your liquids that all the ingredients are placed on an equal footing. But do not believe that there is anything which has the qualities of heat and moisture in the same degree; for all that maintain the existence of two qualities of this kind, are deceived in their opinion, whoever they be. The commonplaces of philosophy, which set forth this proposition, are not true. Have done with this idea, and let a new one take its place in your mind. For all the ancient writers who have asserted that these two qualities could exist in the same degree, have been mistaken, or they have done so simply for the purpose of preventing enquirers from discovering the secret method of tempering the elements. Hence he who does not know graduations cannot be perfect in our work, seeing that God has allotted to each thing its own proper measure. Without due measurement of time no one can sing correctly; he who errs in the measurement of time, errs in the very essence of the singer's Art—and all that err inflict a wrong on Nature. Consider also that the purer your medium is, the greater will be the perfection which arises out of it. The media embrace the most important part of the virtue and potent essences of our Art. For the solid cannot become fluxible, nor the liquid firm, in the gradual process of preparing our substance, without the help of intermediate substances which partake of the nature of both the extremes. It is thus that, by means of a treble spirit, the soul is joined to the human body; of these three spirits one is called the vital spirit, the other the natural spirit, and the third the animal spirit. Let me also tell you where these spirits dwell. The vital spirit has his habitation in the heart; the natural spirit, according to the ancient writers, abides in the liver, while the animal spirit sojourns in the brain. Now, so long as these three spirits maintain a sound state of health in the human body, the soul dwells in the body without any jarring disagreements, and life is sustained. But when these spirits are unable to abide in man, the soul is also compelled to forsake the body. For the subtle, pure, and immortal soul can never dwell with the gross body, except the spirits act as media between them. In our work we ought also to distinguish between body, soul, and spirit; and our intermediate substances are the spirit which joins the body and soul together by partaking of the nature of both. Nature has no other way of binding extremes together except by intermediate substances, and these intermediate substances (media) are of different kinds. After all these things you should also know the seven circulations of each element, which agree with the number of the seven planets, and they are known to none except by grace Divine. Certain Sages of great learning tell us that these circulations are nine in number; and perhaps it is safer for us to follow their teaching. Nevertheless, the newest inventions made by modern philosophers, whose assertions are exalted beyond the possibility of doubt, enable us to dispense with two. Some



learned men think that they may avoid every risk of a mistake if they go on in due order from fire to air, from air to water, and from water to earth, thus moving downward from that which is most exalted to that which is lowest; and they adduce in support of their assertion the alleged fact that air is the food of fire. But, believe me, this kind of circulation is nothing but one method of rectification, which tends more to separation and correction than to transmutation. Moreover, the favourite food of fire, its own proper nutriment and fuel, is not air but earth, as both fire and earth are dry, and heat depends for its very existence on dryness, while the nature of air, on the other hand, is more humid. Yet it is also true that fire cannot operate without air, since the hand of God has linked together the elements in a bond of mutual dependence, which will not suffer them to be disunited by any human contrivance or device. Of this fact you may find an illustration in trumpets, where, after the ascent of air, you may often observe a deposit of water, the occurrence of which can only be explained on the supposition of the mutually inclusive nature of the elements. But our circulation begins with fire, the most exalted of all elements, and ends with water, which of all elements is the most unlike to fire. Another circulation begins with air and ends with earth. From earth to fire, thence to pure water, thence again to fire, and after this to a 'mean, passing to earth, finally once more recurring to fire—by such circulations, the Red Tincture is perfected. Other circulations are more suitable for the production of the White Tincture. Now every circulation has its own proper time, according to the facility or difficulty of its execution. For as one planet is heavier and slower than another, so some circulations that are performed by the Sages take up a space of thirty weeks, while other circulations require a much shorter period of time; just as some planets are lighter and swifter than others. Thus, after all the gross and crude operations have been performed, our work may often still require twenty-six weeks. Ignorance of this fact has deceived many, and caused them to give up their labour at a point where the Sages are wont to begin. Other inexperienced students of this Art have imagined that it can be accomplished in forty day's. They do not know that in Art as well as in Nature everything has its own time, and its own proper method. The elephant, for instance, being a huge and unwieldy animal, extends its period of gestation over two years, and is fifty years old before it can bring forth young. Anaxagoras says, in his "Considerations," that the generation of the metals requires a thousand years, and that, in comparison to that period of time, our work occupies only a single day. You must therefore conduct your operation in a very subtle manner when you see the earth rise above the water; for as the earth which we tread with our feet supports the water, so, in our Art, you should frequently cause a gentle spring of water to well forth, in order that the same may flow softly, seeing that a violent outpour is positively hurtful. Moreover, the student of Alchemy should be aware of the effects of the seven waters, concerning which you must seek instruction in the books of others; for you cannot expect me to expound our whole system in this brief treatise.

Some think that by means of these waters they can correct all metallic imperfections, and can find the effects of the four elements; for they are confident that all requisite properties are discovered in these waters, not only for the purpose of softening hard metals, but also for hardening those which are too soft, purifying them, and rendering them malleable. For the attainment of each one of these objects, the knowledge of these waters is said to be indispensable. Otherwise our Stone would not receive its proper nourishment. The ancient writers call our Stone a microcosm; and there can be no doubt that its composition greatly resembles that of the world in which we live,

consisting as it does of elements, hot, cold, moist, and dry, hard, soft, light, and heavy, rough, smooth, fixed, volatile, and fluxible; and also because, in spite of the manifold variety of its component parts, it is not many things, but one thing. The transmutation of metals implies a change, not only of colour, but also of substance. The elements of the substance which undergoes a change must become the elements of the substance into which it is to be changed, and impress upon it their own character. All transmuted parts must be proportionately impressed in the transmuting elements, so that the thin elemented matter may permanently possess the substance of the one and the virtue of the other. As soon as a child is born, it can feed and cry; and so our Stone, when first prepared, has abundant power of imparting its colour to other substances. Again, as after three years the child walks and talks, so after a certain lapse of time, our Stone receives a still more intense power of colouring, so that it can pervade with its own glorious nature a substance of a thousand times its own size. To this fact I myself can bear witness: for many a time have I seen well-purged metals transmuted into the finest silver and gold. Thus, our Stone may go on growing in quantity, and becoming more excellent in quality, during an infinite period of time; and in this respect it bears a marvellous analogy to the birth and growth of human beings. I must, however, take this occasion to state a truth which may be displeasing to some readers. The time when you first succeed in preparing your Stone should be well and wisely used, or you may even then lose all your pains, and miss your recompense for all the heavy outlay you have undergone.

For the purpose, then, of augmenting your Stone, you should at once divide it into two equal parts, carefully testing the correctness of your division by means of the balance. One-half is for the Red Tincture, and the other moiety for the White. Then, and not till then, will you begin to reap the profits of your labours. But it will be unadvisable to stop even here, seeing that you may go on augmenting your Tincture indefinitely. Miriam, the sister of Aaron, rightly says that life is short, and knowledge long; nevertheless, our Tincture, when it has once attained to the highest perfection of its excellence, has the virtue of greatly retarding old age. Some of our Sages have been so foolish as to give up the further improvement of our Stone at a point when they might have reached the final goal with little trouble and great advantage to themselves. This supine carelessness can only be explained by assuming that they were not aware of the full virtue of that Stone; and I see that I must point out to all its fortunate owners the full extent of their possession. For when I shall have departed out of this world, this testimony will remain behind as a witness, and on this account I am not slow to reveal the secrets of the Art, so far as I may do it without prejudice to my vow. I have instructed you with sufficient clearness how to prepare the White Tincture. But when my master had declared all these things to me, he said that many students have by patient and unwearied diligence independently discovered this our White Stone and Tincture, as if they had derived their knowledge from the wisest of masters; but that scarce one in fifteen kingdoms possesses our Red Stone. With these words, he fixed upon me a steady and unfaltering gaze, and he saw that his speech had clouded my countenance with sorrow. I answered: "Alas, what shall I do? for I love knowledge far beyond all earthly wealth; moreover, the Red Tincture is said to be a most precious substance, which has the virtue of prolonging life. I should account the Red Stone a more glorious acquisition than all the gold of the whole world." He replied that I was still a young man, and that youth was prone to insolence and excess. Could I expect to be enrolled among the Sages at the immature age of twenty-eight? I must be a much older man before I could expect to have this secret unfolded to me.

"Alas, good master," I said, "though my body is still young and my years are few, I beseech you to prove me, and you will see that my mind has already attained the ripeness of mellow age." My master said no more at the time, but I soon found that he was trying and testing my character by a course of probationary training, after the manner of the Sages—of which it would be both tedious and indiscreet to publish a lengthy account. Finally, however, by the grace of God, he accounted me worthy of this wonderful proof of his love and esteem, and imparted to me the true secret of preparing the Red Tincture. To inquire into the manner of its preparation would be an aimless quest before the White Tincture has been prepared. Both Medicines are composed from the same substance, in the same vessel; and by the same methods, until the living matters have been mortified. Then the material and shape of the vessel, and the degree of chemical treatment, must be changed. But my heart beats violently, and my hands tremble, when I speak of this glorious thing. Hermes said a true word when he exclaimed: "Fire and Azoth are sufficient." The expositor of Hermes and Aristotle, in the treatise appended to their works, makes a most startling assertion, when he says that Albertus Magnus, and Bacon, the Minorite friar, had no knowledge of the manner in which the Red Stone is multiplied by augmentation. This writer was well aware what he was saying, as my master proved to me by incontrovertible arguments. I myself have never actually prepared the Red Tincture as yet, because I was disheartened by being robbed of my whole wealth of chemical materials and implements—as I set forth at length in a preceding chapter. But I understand the method of its preparation perfectly, and am able to explain it to others. Those who have ventured to unfold this grand arcanum to their disciples say that the redness of this delectable Stone is contained in its whiteness, and may be brought out, and made to appear to the Artist's ravished gaze by the gently compelling heat of fire. Pandophilus, in "The Crowd" tells us that the white Tincture is the type and shadow of the red; and Miriam confirms his words by saying that the redness is concealed in the whiteness. An admirable book entitled *Laudabile Sanctum*, ascribed to Hermes, uses the following expression of the Red Tincture: "There lies the snowy wife wedded to her red spouse." That is to say, in the white Tincture you have a beautiful woman of snowy whiteness espoused to a red husband. If your white Stone is exposed to the heat, and through the action of the fire becomes red as blood, then the marriage is valid and perfect—as in the act of copulation, if it be fruitful, the male seed obtains the ascendancy, and assimilates the female seed to its own nature. That this fact is so, those who have observed the nature of the embryo have been taught by experience. When this has been brought about, our Stone is perfected. The Sages say that it should be nourished with its own poison till it has had enough. When this has been done, you may go wherever you like, for it will defray all your expenses. Thus, then, I have expounded to you the subtle part of the work with all its appurtenances, and more I need not, cannot, and will not, reveal.

## CHAPTER VI.

With respect to concords, let me say that there should be no serious difference between those things which ought to agree. For difference produces discord, and discord would make all your labour of none effect. Whoever wishes to practise our Art, should be guided by five rules or concords. The first rule to be observed is, that the student's mind should be in perfect harmony with his work. The desire of knowing this Art should hold a dominant place in his mind; else all his labours will come to nothing. The second concord is, that he should know the difference between this Art and those who profess it. The third kind of harmony is that which should exist between the work and the instruments. The fourth concord assigns to the work the place which is most suited to its execution. The fifth concord is the sympathy which should exist between your work and the celestial sphere. I will say something about each one of these five rules, and begin with the first. Few students possess the gift of perseverance. They are in a great hurry and the work seems too long. They wish you to do violence to Nature, and the zeal of some is so much like a straw fire that at the end of six months it has quite burned down. Many change their minds after a week, some after twenty-four hours. Some believe in our Art most fervently for a month; but at the end of the month they will have nothing more to do with it. For such persons it would be better to stay their hands at once than to waste their time with the study of our Art. Let these butterflies flutter whither they will. But let us, before we put our hands to this work, learn with our hearts the truth of the saying; "Let us do everything from beginning to end strenuously, and yet softly and gently." All foolish and double-minded people must necessarily be fickle and unstable; and it is natural that simple folk, who have been stripped of all their savings by heartless impostors, should conceive a deep-seated aversion to our Art. But only men of constant and persevering minds are fitted to be students thereof. If any such man undertakes the study of this science, whether he be a layman or a priest, a merchant, a knight, an abbot, or a gentleman, he is not likely to fail of success: for his mind is in harmony with his work. The second concord to which attention must be paid in the pursuit of this Art, is the securing of fit and suitable assistants. No assistant should be chosen that is not sober, discreet, and diligent, faithful, vigilant, a keeper of secrets, and a pure liver; a man of clean hands and of a delicate touch, obedient and humbly content to carry out your orders. Such ministers alone will give close heed to your work, and secure you against all avoidable accidents. Do not imagine, however, that two or three of these will be sufficient for the completion of your experiment. If the quantity of your substance be moderate, eight such servants will be required, but if the quantity be small, the work may be done by four. Of this number, one half should be on duty, while the other half sleep, or are at church; for this experiment cannot be brought to a successful termination, unless it is continually attended to, by night as well as by day; and with the exception of the Sabbath, your men should relieve each other in the morning and in the evening. While they are on duty, they should carefully eschew every wicked word and deed; otherwise your work will most certainly be marred. For this reason your assistants ought either to be all men or all women, and persons of both sexes ought not to be set to work together. If your assistants are members of your own family, you should seek to inspire them with love for the work, and interest in its success; for nothing is more important than that the hearts of your workers should be in their work. Our third rule was, that the instruments should be of a kind suited to the labour to be performed. This rule is not fully apprehended by many students of our science. It means that the different parts of the experiment require their own proper

utensils, of a substance and shape closely adapted to the particular purpose which they are intended to serve. The divisions and separations of our substance are best carried out in small vessels; a broad vessel is required for humectation, while the process of circulation demands a vessel of still larger capacity. Those used for precipitation should be long; those which you employ for the purpose of sublimation may be both short and long, while narrow vessels, four inches high, are more appropriate in the process of correction. Some vessels are made of lead, and some of dead clay. Dead clay is that which has been carefully hardened, and having been mixed with sand and gravel, is capable of sustaining a high degree of fierce heat. Other kinds of clay burst when exposed to the fire, and you should reject vessels made of them. Other vessels, again, are made of stone, and endure the test of heat admirably; but vessels of this kind, which are both impervious to water and proof against fire, are now very rarely to be obtained in England; but where they can be had, they are invaluable for our purpose. All other vessels are made of glass, and are admirably adapted to prevent the volatile substance from escaping. In our country they are made of ashes and siliceous material, but elsewhere of little stones. The best kind of glass for our purpose is that made of cinders which have been left to glow in the hearth all night; a still harder and more durable kind is prepared out of smelted glass sherds. What has been said will guide you in selecting the most suitable kind of vessel; as to its form or shape you must consult your own common sense: it is, however, clear that you should, in this case, as in all others, strive to follow as closely as possible in the footsteps of Nature. Moreover, the size and shape of your vessel should be in proportion to the quantity of your substance, and to all the other conditions of the experiment. The general principles which should determine your choice are well laid down by Albertus Magnus in his book on "Minerals." The whole secret was disclosed in a few words by my master, when he said: "If God had not given us a vessel, His other gifts would have been nothing worth—and that vessel is glass." Some other instruments are also needed, such, for instance, as suitable furnaces. The ancients describe a special furnace for use in every stage of our Art, devised differently according to the bent of their minds. Many of these, however, are quite unsuitable, some being too broad, others too high, and others out of harmony with the requirements of Nature. Some of the furnaces described in these books may be used, but by far the greater number ought to be rejected, seeing that they are the inventions of men who only appeared to be, but were not really, Sages. Of the furnace which can be most highly recommended, you will find a pictorial representation in this volume. One which was unknown to the Ancients, I am proud to call my own invention. I set it up, in the first instance, at a very considerable outlay. But its advantages more than make good its cost. It is so constructed that sixty different chemical operations, for which divers kinds of heat are required, may be carried on in it at the same time, and a very small fire of only a foot square supplies a sufficient degree of heat for all these processes. As all may not be sure of this instrument, it has not been represented in a picture. Another furnace will serve for sixty or more glasses, each of them standing in the same degree of heat, as you may see by the picture. I have also invented another furnace, which is of great use in the work of separation, exaltation, and disjunction or division, and is most admirably adapted for the processes of ablution or purging, desiccation, and preparation. These six operations may with great ease be performed in it at the same time, and one fire suffices for them all. But it is a new invention, and I cannot afford to describe it more minutely. I might also set down a description of another furnace, which is more dangerous than all the rest. It was constructed by the Ancients for the preparation of our Magnesia; and they said that while it could not

with impunity be touched for fear of the flame which rose from the wood, yet a linen rag might be placed on it without being scorched. This ingeniously constructed furnace I was fortunate enough to re-invent, and with its aid I was enabled to perform many wonderful experiments. This furnace and its structure must remain a secret for some years longer; but let me warn you, in conclusion, to be very careful in the selection and structure of your furnace. It must be so arranged as to enable you to regulate the supply of heat, and to abate the fierceness of the flame at any moment. If a man does not understand and know the use of his tools and instruments, all his work will be done in a casual, haphazard manner, and it will be impossible for him to anticipate success with any degree of certainty. Therefore, let me once more repeat my warning: See to your instruments, and test their quality before you set about your work. The fourth rule is also most important. The experiment cannot succeed unless it be performed in a suitable place. Some places must be always dry, free from air and excess of light such as is caused by the bright rays of the sun. Others cannot be too much illuminated. The places more fitted for other parts of the work, are humid and cold. But violent draughts should be carefully avoided throughout. Hence a spot must be wisely chosen to fulfil all the requirements of the different parts of the work. The Sages tell us, in their enigmatic style, that our substance should be prepared within nine bars. Astrologers say that it is a singular mark of Divine grace if a man can find the right place for our work. For many things produce wonderful effects in some places, but are entirely barren of results in others; and opposite consequences are often produced by the same thing in different places. The explanation of these facts is to be found in the knowledge that different places are differently influenced by the celestial bodies, just as a magnet, for instance, affects a needle differently in different latitudes. For this reason the Sages have declared that some places are well, and others ill, suited to our work. But the very worst of all possible places are those which have been defiled by lechery.

The fifth rule is well known to the learned. There should exist a certain harmony between the celestial spheres and our work. Nothing on earth is so simple or so easily influenced as the elements of our Stone; and when they are being prepared they obey their own proper constellations, as the needle yields to the influence of the magnet. Let this amicable concord prevail, then, in a direct and fiery ascendent, and let your happy and favourable ascendent be in fortunate aspect with his Lord. The work should be sheltered from all adverse and evil influences; if these cannot be set aside, let them have a trine aspect. When you prepare the White Tincture, let the Moon be fortunate, as also the Lord of the Fourth House, which is the Treasure of Hidden Things, according to the old Sages. The Sixth House must be favourable for the servants. Preserve your work from all great impediments, and see that it be not affected by the adverse constellation of your Nativity. The virtue of the mover of the orb is the formal influence; the virtue of the eighth sphere is instrumental to it; the virtue of the planet is proper and special; and that of the elements is material, and embodies the working of the other agents. The first resembles the genius of the operator; the second is analogous to his hands; the third corresponds to his instruments; and the fourth answers to the substance which is prepared. Let the things on earth correspond to things in heaven, and you will obtain the Elixir, and become a great Master. Do not trust to Geomancy, which is a superstitious Art; nor to all Astrologers, because this science is secret; like that of Alchemy. Necromancy God forbids, and the Church condemns; therefore, if you wish for success, let your hands be pure from all superstitious practices. Necromancy is of the Devil, and a lying Art. God will bless

you if you give yourself wholly to the study of our own Blessed Art. In the next chapter I will speak about the regulation of the fire.

## CHAPTER VII.

Would you know the perfect Master? It is he who understands the regulation of the fire, and its degrees. Nothing will prove to you so formidable an impediment as ignorance of the regimen- of heat and fire; for our whole Art may be looked upon as being concentrated in this one thing, seeing it is all important for the proper development of our substance that the degree of heat which is brought to bear on it should be neither too great nor too small. In regard to this point many learned men have gone grievously astray. (1) The degree of heat which is employed for the scalding of pigs and geese, is that which we require for our decoction of intermediate minerals, and for the purpose of covering the Litharge with sweat. (2) The degree of heat which is sufficient for drying thin linen is good for our air in thirty operations; for the purpose of division you may employ the degree of heat used by cooks in roasting meat. (3) A similar degree of heat with a circular fire will be found useful for the separation of the dividents. (4) But for the circulation of the elements you will require white heat, which must be- maintained at an even temperature, without either increase or diminution, until the whole operation is accomplished. Moreover, there ought not to be in this fire any moisture that can be perceived by the touch, or seen with the eye. (5) There also is such a thing as a moist fire, though the expression sounds like a contradiction in terms. This fire should be used at a certain stage of the work, in order to remove the substances which adhere to the sides of the vessel. The same degree of heat is also employed to dilute thick substances. The Sages declare that, in its highest degree, it causes and generates an even dryness, and that its effect here coincides with that of dry heat in the first degree. (6) There is also another fire which is employed for the purpose of drying substances steeped in moisture. (7) Another variety of fire is that of conservation, because by its operation all things are parched up. (8) In the preparation of Magnesia we use the effusion of fire, which is full of danger, not only to the work, but also to the Master, who may even lose his life by its noxious effects. For this reason you should carefully protect your mouth, ears, eyes, and nose, as the smoke of this fire is ten times more baneful than poison. By neglecting this caution many students have sustained considerable injuries. (9) A corrosive fire answers the purpose of judiciously separating kindred elements. One moment of excess, one moment of premature diminution, may mar the labour of months. He that regulates the fire aright is worthy of being hailed as a great Master of the Fire. It is exceedingly difficult to tell the exact degree of heat which any given fire will produce; and here the sense of sight is the only reliable test. No sound or intelligible directions can be given in writing: the only schoolmistress that can impart to you a thorough knowledge of this branch of our Art is experience. It is in regard to this variety of heat that Anaxagoras says: "Nobody is all at once an accomplished Sage." (10) The next kind of heat is of a consuming fierceness. It is employed to smelt very hard minerals. It cannot be too fierce or powerful, even though it may occasionally be necessary to keep it up for some length of time. (11) The next variety of heat is that of calcination, and is used for the purging of impure metals, the essential qualities of which would be impaired by smelting. (12) The kind of heat used for sublimation comes next, and by its means volatile minerals may be sublimed. (13) The last variety of heat is the most important of all. It should be employed at the time of the projection of our Stone. But experience is a good teacher, and I will say no more, except that he who makes a mistake at this point, must begin the work over again.



I have now told you all things as plainly as if I had been describing to you the way to this or that town. I have, as it were, named every county, river, bridge, and village that has to be passed, and, with this my guide-book in his hand, a judicious traveller may easily find his way. A wise and intelligent man may, by means of this Book, discover the secret of our science; for the foolish and dull-witted it was not intended, and it will not teach them anything. Our Science is the height of earthly knowledge, and is to be attained by neither Pope nor Emperor through their rank, influence, or power, but only by virtue, and by Divine grace. Our Stone cannot be discovered or perfected unless it be sought with intense devotion. In the works of the Ancients, understood in the light of this my Ordinal, the truth of the matter is fully set forth; the present Book, in particular, was written for the purpose of resolving all your doubts; here everything is in its proper place, and nothing is wanting. Time was when I would cheerfully have paid down a thousand pounds for the contents of this volume; and this last chapter I would not have missed for three hundred pounds.

Do not wonder, Masters and Friends, that our Science is here so plainly expounded: I set pen to paper with the requirements of the common people in view. For just because the vulgar are not instructed in this knowledge, infinite wealth is annually wasted in this country, as all Sages know, and many others of all ranks are daily reduced to beggary. Study our Art, then, ye uninstructed, and scorn to abide in fatuous ignorance. It is better for you to take to this study late than never.

Let all that are benefitted by the reading of this Ordinal offer up prayers for my soul, and for the living and the dead.

In the year of our Lord 1477 this Book was begun.

Glory be to God!

# Henry NOLLIUS

## *The Chemists Key*

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Published by Eugenius Philalethes  
London  
1657

**The Chemists Key to Shut and Open: As the True Doctrine of the Corruption and Generation in Ten Brief Aphorisms, Illustrated with most plain and faithful Commentaries, out of the Pure Light of Nature: By that Judicious and Industrious Artist**

Henry Nollius

1617

[ Produced by R.A.M.S. (Restoration of Alchemical Manuscripts), 1977; The English Edition contained only X Aphorisms. The remaining five chapters are added in this Mss. Nollius also was the author of *Theoria Philosophica Hermetica* ]

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### **To the Reader**

This book having worth enough in itself needs not my commendation, this Author in his lifetime being an eminent physician and most able Philosopher as the discourse itself can best testify.

The translator also wanted not judgment to choose what was best in his kind, nor abilities to perform, the choice being made. It is I alone that appear here as Menelaus at that feast in the Iliad, who came though not invited. I shall not endeavor to excuse myself, for I come not empty but will contribute somewhat to the collation.

The Author builds on good principles, so that his Theory is as true as it is plausible; and I presume he aimed at nothing more, leaving all particulars and their application to the industry of his readers. He is sometimes pleased to descend to examples, but to such only as are natural, and they indeed are good to teach but hard to imitate. We see not all that Nature does.

When he speaks of rain and dew I am contented to think, he means something else than what is vulgarly so called. And I doubt not but his Salt petri is something different from that which is combustibile and common. The Philosophers Dew, if I know it at all is a dry water, and their salt-peter is a most white incombustible body of a gummy aerial nature, and indeed, if my eyes have not deceived me, it is so aerial and unctuous that it will no more mingle with water than common oil will. I have for trial taken it in its gross body, and putting it in distilled rain water have digested it for

a full fortnight, without the addition of any third thing, but they would never mix, the Nitre notwithstanding many long and violent agitations of the glass, keeping still apart in the form of butter or oil more white than snow. The truth is there is no affinity between this Salt-peter and water, for it is not made of water, but of air hid and condensed in water. We see also that the air is a dry spirit and wets nothing; but the mist or vapor of the water incorporating with the air wets all things. Even so those bodies or substances which are generated of air retain the first complexion of their parents; this dry aerial humidity being predominant in them as is evident in common quicksilver and in all resinous substances, as vegetable and mineral gums which will not mix with water. But this will not be more apparent to those who know that universal gum or sperm whereof Nitre is made, which is neither Dew nor Rain, but a water and no water; that is it is a dry water whereof see D'Espagnet in the 49 the canon of his first aphoristical part. Here is the reason then why Nitre Philosophical will not dissolve in nor mix with common water; for it is a fat, oleous, airy substance, made by natural congelation of a mercurial dry humidity which separates from phlegm, as is evident in that succus vitalis and great Lunary of Lully.

Nitre then or Mercury Philosophical is to be found in 150 places, and of several complexions.

In the great Hali Cali of Nature it is congealed and in a manner crucified between two extremes, and both of them venomous and caustic. If you know how to extract it thence in the form of buter or a most white sweet oil, then the [\*\*\*], whence the Art has its name, is in your power, and D'Espagnet in his 225 canon will tell you what you have attained to.

Thus you see where the air of radical humidity is congealed; and now I must instruct you where it is a volatile and not congealed. It is so in the sperm whereof Nature immediately makes the Hali Cali, to which purpose the former author has left us a considerable maxim in his 214 canon: Rerum seminitz plurimus humidis radicalis inest; for this volatile air, which is in the seed or sperm reincrudates the fixed air which is in the Hali Cali. I say this volatile spermatic air or oil does it, and not oil of soap or salad, as some fools have dreamed; for nothing reincrudates and naturally dissolves a body but that crude sperm whereof the body was made. Most excellent in this respect is that passage in Lully Chap. XLVIII of his great testament: Quando volumes, quod siccum convertatur in humidii, cafrimus intrumuntum quod iesin aqua, quoequidus participal de humido radicali, viz. in vapore spiritus Quinta delatus est, etc. (When we wish to convert a dry thing into a moist thing, we take an agent which is in water --- one which partakes of the humid radical --- or rather in the vapor of aerial humidity disassociating it from its watery phlegm, in which the male spirit is carried). Thus Lully and now I think I have sufficiently introduced you; but if this be not enough I am afraid the whole discourse will not satisfy. I should have said much more, but that I intend shortly to publish a discourse of my own wherein I have endeavored to give some reasons for a most excellent and mysterious experience I have lately seen.

*Eugenius Philalethes*

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**The Authors Epistle,  
Dedicatory to his noble friend and kinsman, the Lord Wygand Heymel,  
President of Dresden, etc.**

It is no long time (my honored Lord and patron) since there came to Gueilberg in quest of me, a most learned man, a professor of Logic and a Tutor of under-graduates in a certain famous University, who did earnestly entreat me to discover unto him those principles by which he might be introduced into the true knowledge of our most secret philosophy, finding him therefore to be a person of Singular Humanity, of most excellent abilities, and (as I perceived by frequent discourse) of a most acute and discerning apprehension, I resolved to grant his request; and for that end I did purposely lead him into a dissertation or reasoning about the Generation of natural bodies, and having brought him thither I advised him to search curiously after what manner, and by what means, this great and secret, though daily, work was performed: Signifying farther unto him, that the Foundation of our Art did, next to the divine assistance, consist chiefly in the perfect knowledge of Corruption and Generation. Now, though this answer and advice of mine did nothing like this learned man, seeming in this Book-judgment to be very simple and wise; nevertheless, that which I told him is the very truth; for he that perfectly knows the ways of Generation, will easily come to be acquainted with the true menstruum of every body, which in our philosophy is the most useful and difficult matter to come by; yea, he will find out a way or Process; which if he, by a right Imitation of Nature will wisely practice, he shall out of a convenient body (dissolved first, and digested in its own most natural and proper Vinegar) perfectly extracted and attain to a most noble and precious medicine: A medicine I say, and not Gold; for the sophisters or Pseudo-Chymists, pining with an insatiable hunger after Gold, do by most covetous, chargeable and fruitless processes, infuse into their silly readers a strong desire of Gold-making, and promise them golden mountains; but Art cannot make Gold, Nature only produces substances; but how to perfect and purify imperfect metals by Nature only, and a natural way (not by adding to them, or mixing with them any extraneous substance or ingredient) and to separate and purge from them those obstructing, discordant impurities, which are the cause of their imperfection, the Philosophers do know very well.

Art, I say, cannot produce or make any substance; but how to propagate and multiply natures in their own species by transplantation and incision, he does know, but not without Nature. This I am sure of by the Light of Nature, whose only contemplation, with Gods blessing and gracious assistance has enabled me to write this short discourse of Generation, and wholly persuaded me to believe, that the sovereign true medicine must be sought and prepared, ad modum Generationis, after the same method that natural generations are performed.

Everything that nature affords for the subsistence and health of man its crude, and needs a further digestion, before it can be converted either into the substance of Man, or into a wholesome medicine: Let us consider our daily food; this grows in our gardens, is fed in our houses, and sown in our fields; but it is not turned into a blood and nutriment, before it is (after the Manner of Generation) altered, putrefied, and dissolved in our stomachs: That from this mass, so dissolved within us, the natural spirit may be extracted and communicated to the heart and the other members, for their conservation and strength, and so after other various digestions, the blood may

become Seed, and turn into that radical Balsom, by whose virtue Mankind is both preserved and propagated: What hinders them, seeing out internal vessel of putrefaction is insufficient, but we may after the same manner, by natural means and a philosophic skill, so imitate and assist Nature, that all crude bodies whatsoever, may externally (without the *Officina Ciborum*) be set to putrefy, to be digested and dissolved until their spiritual nature may (after that solution) be easily extracted or taken out of them; by which spirit so extracted, our internal, vital spirit (for the singular Harmony that is betwixt them) would be so marvelously comforted and strengthened, that by this excellent kind of assistance, it would be brought to exercise all its faculties with such effectual activity and virtue, as would quickly expel and exterminate all the enemies and disturbers of life; I mean all diseases, though never so desperate.

If we certainly knew what that is what purifies all Seeds, and how it is done, without doubt we might and would by a constant industry (God assisting us) find out and prepare medicines truly philosophical, to the great advantage and comfort of Mankind. To this purpose Chymistry serves; for by the help of this Art we know how to digest, to dissolve, to putrefy to separate the impure from the pure, and so come by most perfect medicines: And verily, so great and precious a blessing it is, that God never imparts it to any fraudulent Montebanks, nor to tyrants, nor to any impure, lazy envious persons, nor to the effeminate and idle, nor to gluttons, nor usurers, nor to any worshippers of Mammon: But in all Ages, the pious, the charitable, the liberal, the meek, the patient, and indefatigable spirit, who was a diligent observer and admirer of his works, found it out. This truth is elegantly sung and expressly taught by that famous Philosopher and Poet, the excellent Augurellus.

The greedy cheat with impure hands may not  
Attempt this Art, nor is it ever got, by the unlearned and rude: The villains mind  
To lust and softness given, it strikes stark blind,  
So the slym wandering Traitor and co. And shortly after.  
But the sage, pious Man, who still adores  
And loves his Maker, and his love implores  
Whoever joys to search the Secret cause.  
And series of his works, their love and laws,  
Let Him draw near, and joining will with strength,  
Study this Art in all her Depth and Length;  
Then grave experience shall his consort be  
Skilled in large Nature's inmost mystery.  
The knots and doubts his busy course and cares  
Will oft destruct, till time the truth declares,  
And stable Patience (though all Trials past)  
Brings the glad end and long hoped for, at last.

Give ear all you Medicasters, who hate and persecute this divine science; give ear, I say, and tell me with what conscience of honest confidence can you profess yourselves to be physicians, seeing that all Physick or Medicines are, without Chymistry, imperfect? Without that Chymistry, I say, which out of the manifested Light of Nature has its invincible grounds and canons laid down in this little book. This is the only Art, which (by supplying us, out of the Light of Nature, with convenient means and particular natures to separate the impure from the pure) will

teach us first how to heal all diseases of the Macrocosmical substances, and afterwards by examples and experiments deducted from those exterior cures, will show us the right and infallible cure of all diseases in our own bodies.

He that knows not how to heal and purge metals, how can he restore the decayed or weakened radical Balsom in Man and excite it by comfortable and concordant Medicines to perform perfectly all his appointed functions, which must necessarily be put into action, before any disease can be expelled? He that knows not what that is in Antimony, which purges Gold, how can he come by an effectual and wholesome Medicine, that will purge and out those extraneous peccant causes and humors that afflict and destroy the body of Man?

He that knows not how to fix Arsenic, to take away the corrosive nature of sublimate, to coagulate sulphureous spirits, and by a convenient specific Medicine to break and analyze stones in the greater world, will never in the body of Man allay and tame the Arsenical spirits of the Microcosmic Slat, nor take quite away the venomous indisposition of the Sulphur, nor dissolve the Stone in the bladder, and drive it out being dissolved. It is a noble safe and pious course we examine and try the force and virtues of Medicines upon the Microcosmical substances, before we apply them to our fellow creatures, and the rare fabric of Man.

This was the very consideration that moved the Ancients, who were true Philosophers, to a careful and effectual study of true Chymistry, the only genuine Philosophical Science, that by imitating Hermes, the Father and the Prince of all true and loyal Philosophers, they might find out most effectual and proper Medicines against all griefs and diseases, especially that glorious and supreme natural remedy, which is termed the Universal one, and is really without deception or exception (unless the finger of God oppose it) the most sure antidote of all diseases: For the obtaining of which sovereign Medicine, because this my treatise of Generation is no mean help. I would have it no longer concealed from the ingenious Lovers of this Art, but resolved to expose it to the Publick view, that the enemies of the truth may see and know, that our Science is grounded upon, and proceeded from the clear Light of Nature, and that all the Sons of Art may be more and more encouraged to a studious enquiry and a laborious search after the truth. If they benefit anything by this book, let them give God the glory, and lend me what further assistance they shall think fit to communicate.

Whatever it is, unto you, most noble and prudent Sir, my intimate Friend and my kinsman, I humbly do dedicate it; that you may see how willing I am to requite, in some measure, those numerous favours, which from the first day I entered upon this study, you have cheerfully conferred upon me, to this very hour. Therefore, I must entreat you to accept of this small Renumeration with your usual good will and benignity, still favorable to my endeavors, and to defend me from the calumnies and envy of the malicious, who from all parts set upon me and do defame my studies. This undeserved malignity I suffer under, will require your permanent favors and affection: And I do here solemnly promise, that I will never (God willing) do anything that shall tend to the violation of so sacred a friendship, and shall daily endeavor that we may be more and more endeared and closer united, which the only wise and good God mercifully grant, Amen! Farewell, most noble Sir, and as really do so continue still to

further the studies of Your  
Henry Nollius.

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### **The Author's Preface to his Treatise of Generation**

Being to write of the generation of natural things, I must ingenuously confess, that I learned it not in the books of the Athenian Sophisters (he means the Schoolmen, and the followers of Aristotle; this term he borrowed from Paracelsus, for he first called them so, and writing his *Mysterium Magnum*, entitled it, *Philosophy* for the Athenians, for Aristotle's school was at Athens), but by the true Light of Nature: Neither will I borrow any thing from them, or their books, and convert it in this discourse, like a Plagiary, to my own use or Glory; for the truth is not to be found in their books, but most gross ignorance and errors, grounded upon and supported by the vain men, which opinions the credulous people esteem and cry up as the utmost bounds and Non Ultra of all wisdom and perfection.

As men are killed by fighting, so truth is lost by disputing; for while they only dispute and wrangle about Nature, every one of them in particular, and all of them in general are so filled and swollen up with a testy intolerable Pride and self worship, that each of them arrogating a kind of infallibility to his own Chimera's or monstrous conceits, does with all might and main labor to refute and demolish the airy castle and fond imaginations of the other, and by this ridiculous continued feud, they wander from the Bath and fundamentals of true knowledge, entangling themselves and too credulous posterity in an inextricable Labyrinth of quarrels and Errors, fortified with fictitious and groundless Principles never reduced to practice or trial, but merely suppose and implicitly believed, so that he would get out of this spacious and wearisome wilderness, cannot do it without much difficulty and laboriousness, and shall not do it without their general envy and opposition. Leaving therefore these lewd contenders and their verbosity, let us, the divine mercy assisting us, go directly to the house of wisdom by the Light of Nature, that by the simple and peaceable contemplation of the creatures, and her operations in them, we may truly discover and describe unto others the perfect manner of Generation, and so come not only to the certain knowledge of ourselves, but learn also how to produce and prepare out of perfect bodies and substance such a Medicine or Medicines as will innocuously and faithfully cure all diseases that are incident to our own frail bodies: For as Men, Corn and Herbs are, every one of them, generated and born out of their own Specific Seed, so or in the same manner is the true Medicine of the Ancients (than which there cannot be a better) generated and prepared out of the most perfect bodies and essence. Look not therefore with careless and transient eyes upon what is offered thee in this book, but know and be assured that this Doctrine is the most profitable and advantageous for thee, by whose Light and guidance thou will be most prosperously led to the true knowledge of the Secret generation of all Animals, Vegetables, and Minerals, and to the finding out of that rich and rare Medicine which perfectly cures all imperfect Metals.

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### **Of the Generation of Natural Things**

To begin then: You are to know in the first place, that generation is two fold, first Ordinary and second Extraordinary. Extraordinary generation is that by which an unlike thing is generated out of dung and putrefaction by the sun. This generation is termed in the schools equivocal. The Ordinary is that by which a like thing begets his like, as when a man begets a manchild, and a lion begets a lion. This in the schools is termed univocal. This generation with the method and the means I shall include in these ten following Aphorisms or propositions.

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## I

Everything generated or begotten is generated and born of his own specific seed (1) and in his proper (2) matrix.

*The Commentary or Illustration.*

( 1 ) Seed is a spiritual or subtile body, out of which the included spirits, by attraction of nutriment to it, forms and produces, in his proper matrix, a living body, endued with the like prolific and multiplicable seed. This very spirit is by some Philosophers termed seed, and the body in which it resides they call sperm. But while we agree about the matter I shall not quarrel about words. This seminal spirit is the most subtile essence of the seed, exalted by Nature out of some perfect body and containing in it, after the most eminent and perfect manner, all the virtues and faculties of the said body, and in a seminific power besides, which enables it, in its own species, to propagate and multiply its own body.

( 2 ) No kind of seed is of any virtue or effect, unless its be placed by Nature, or by Art, in its proper matrix (See Apor. VIII). That matrix is only proper and fostering which is naturally agreeable and ordained for the seed, according to its particular species and regimen. Therefore mineral seeds require a mineral matrix, vegetable seeds a vegetable, and animal seeds an animal matrix.

The matrix of mineral seeds are subterraneous mines, the earth is the matrix of vegetables and the female womb is the matrix of animal seeds.

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## II

Before any perfect thing can be generated the seed mus necessarily putrefy and tehn be nourished:

*Commentary*

Believe our Savior John XII, 22, "Verily, verily I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; bit if it die it bringeth forth much fruit".

"Nothing can be animated and born unless it first suffer corruption, putrefaction and mortification", says Raymond Lully in his Testament, see Rosar. Philo., page 254.



Therefore say Paramenides, unless the body be dissolve and broken and putrefied and suffer a change in its substantial substance, that secret central virtue cannot be extracted nor be at liberty to mix with another body.

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### III

The seed putrefies when a (1) salt of the same nature with it, dissolved in a convenient (2) liquor, does by the assistance of a gentle heat (3) penetrate, analyze and rarify the substance of the seed, that the included spirit may, out of its subject matter, form a convenient (4) habitation or body for itself, in which it may perform the offices of natural generation and seminal multiplication.

#### *Commentary*

( 1 ) Therefore every mineral seed requires to its purification a mineral salt and liquor; which is common water impregnated with saltpeter; and animal seeds require an animal salt and liquor, which is the female menstruum impregnated with the salt of the animal matrix. By this doctrine a passage of the most acute Philosopher Basil Valentine in his treatise of the world's great mystery, is easily understood. The words are these: "Metals and minerals must be dissolved and reduced again to their first matter by minerals, but in doing this you must in every sort of mineral consider the species or kind; for every kind mixes only with his own kind, and so yields his seed, unless you will have a monster. The virtues and propension of every seed is to join and mix itself with every thing that is within its own order or latitude; for no seed naturally applies to anything that is Extra Regnum Suum; therefore in any ordinary and lawful generation, that one like may beget another, man applies to woman, the lion to the lioness", etc.

( 2 ) Without the humour of water (says Basil Valentine, in his eighth key), true putrefaction can never be performed: For humours or liquors are the true mediums by which salt does by his dissolving and searching nature enter into and open the most intricate recesses of the seed; for when this humour or liquor is by a due degree of heat rarified and provoked, then also is the salt in it attenuated and rendered fit to pass into and open the most compacted body of the seed, and there stirs up and excites to vegetation a spirit of salt that is the like and the same with itself, which before lay hid and inactive.

( 3 ) A spirit that is at liberty will easily and quickly free another spirit of the same nature that is bound up and restrained. This is done first by reason of that activity and generability which the free spirit is imbued with, secondly by reason of the harmony, likeness and love betwixt them: This correlation is the cause that the exterior free spirit makes way into and joins with that spirit of salt included in the seed, and so does with more ease work upon him and excite him, for, as the proverb has it, like will easily go to like, and their unity is most intimate. Now you must know that very spirit, when loose and floating in liquid bodies or liquors, is at liberty in this state, by the mediation of heat, it does (like a lodestone) attract to it the spirit that is under restraint, opening and dissolving the body which holds it in; and the restrained spirit itself (like a sensible prisoner) labours for life by conspiring and striving to be in

action and a full communion with the other. The free spirit by his sudden and subtile accession still exciting and strengthening him, and by this means so provokes him to action, as fire, does enkindle fire so that the body holding it must necessarily suffer a change and calcification, and comes to be putrefied by its own included spirit, whose operation before was obstructed and kept under; for the included spirit having acquired liberty and a power to be in action from the other, strives to get out and enlarge itself, and to that end breaks and destroys its first body and procures another new one. So the spirit of salt of the earth, when it is dissolved in the unmixed humour of that element (since every salt melts in its own liquor) is then at liberty; for every salt when it is once dissolved in its own liquor becomes active. Hence it is that a corn of wheat (in whose body, as if under lock and key, the spirit of vegetable salt is bound up and fettered) as soon as it is cast into the ground, is by the free spirit of the salt of the earth penetrated and opened, that the salt which lies dissolved or loose in that liquor or inmixed humour may excite the vegetable spirit in the corn of wheat to action and vegetation, which spirit being thus set at liberty does presently, by putrefaction of the corn or grain, produce in the wheat's proper matrix the substance of the root (which is a new body) by whose mediation and deference the earth must afterwards (the spirit attracting it) communicate nutriment to the blade and the rest of this vegetable as it grows up and increases. You must observe here that this salt which conduces to the solution and opening of bodies is sometimes weak, sometimes strong. If it be weak you must strengthen it with a salt that is of the same nature and property with the seed; and the liquor which has the weak salt in it must be impregnated with it; that the solution may be more effectual and more convenient for nature in the operations. Let us consider the generation of wheat. There is in rainwater a volatile salt by solution made in the earth; but when that salt, by reason of the earth's over dryness, is not sufficient to cause a perfect and fruitful solution of the seed corn, then does the husbandman strengthen and manure his ground with muck and dung in which there is a salt of the same nature with the seed; so that when the rain descends and mixes itself with the compost or mould, there proceeds from the muck and the ground a nitrosulphureous salt which the inmixed humour of the earth imbibes or takes in, and being strengthened by it opens the most compacted and firmest seeds, whence comes a fruitful and joyful harvest. If thou desire to see the secrets of Nature now open thine eyes.

( 4 ) Seeing that the seminal virtue lurks in the most intricate recesses of the seed, and consist in the most subtile portion of the sulphureous salt, it is most clear that it cannot be exalted and multiplied but in an humour that is most eminently subtile and pure: but because the seed sown does not at the first or presently take in that subtile humour out of those places which supply it with nutriment. Therefore Nature does, before all things, take care first to produce and form those vessels in which that humour, taken afterwards out of the elements, is digested, rarified and most accurately purged, that out of the whole body when formed and perfected, she may contribute and produce the most pure seminal essence, for the conservation and the multiplication of that species which yields it; for which very reason provident Nature does, by the intervening of putrefaction, out of the seed of herbs form first the roots, and out of the roots she does afterwards shoot forth the blade, driving it, in the growth, into several sections or joints. That the humour taken out of the soil in which the seed is sown may, at the first in the root and afterwards in the herb (when grown up and flourishing) be more and more digested, and drive the seminal virtue (through all the vessels and joints) from the very root to the uppermost top branches, where, in

a matrix purposely formed for the reception of this seminal matter, a most perfect seed, and fit for the propagation of the same species, is (by the aid of the Sun heat maturing it) found and gathered. But it happens often times (and this you are concerned to know) that though Nature forms always these vessels and vehicular of the seminal progression, yet those bodies which are thus furnished, do not always yield seed; and this comes to pass because, in those bodies, the pores through which the spermatic virtue should be promoted and driven into their superficies and upper parts, are (before the seed is stirred, or can be produced) stopped up by external colds; or else by the predominant virtue of their innate fixed salt are so bound up and obstructed that the seed either cannot come to any effectual maturity and perfection, or else is wholly suppressed and shut up. An example of this we may manifestly see in the orange trees, which grow indeed in this climate as well as other plants, but in this cold region yield no fruits: Whereas in Italy and other places, which are their natural soil, they both yield and bring forth fruit to perfection. In the like manner gold and other metals which come to our hands can make no emission of their included seed, because their pores are, by the vigor and excellency of their innate fixed salt, so bound and shut up that they are wholly restrained from the effusion of seed; so that the seminal virtue in them is not at liberty to act and come forth; for which very reason the Philosophers who knew this and were willing to assist Nature, did with most happy success reduce Gold and the other metals into their first matter, that by this course they might open their pores, which by the super-eminent vigor and power of the innate fixed salt were shut up and locked, and so bring the metals to that pass and condition in which they might, with a marvelous increase and to their great benefit, yield seed and propagate: Not otherwise then when the orange trees in the Maurice garden at Cacels are all winter long cherished with an external artificial heat, which makes them put forth and bring their fruits to maturity. He that hath ears to hear let him hear.

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#### IV

The humour or liquor which serves for putrefaction must be proportionable to that body which is to be putrefied.

##### *Commentary*

The humour must then be proportioned both for quantity and receptivity. The humour is proportioned for quantity when so much of it is taken in by the body as is sufficient for its subtilisation. It is proportioned for receptivity or the manner of reception, when the humour is not suddenly and at once, but gently and by degrees, or by little and little, taken in and drunk up by the body or seed: For a sudden imbibation of the humour cannot so conveniently vivify the seed, but causes by its sudden and unequal penetration, that some parts of the body or seed are insufficiently opened or dissolved; hence it happens that Darnel does sometimes come up instead of corn. Therefore the Philosophers advise the sons of this science to irrigate, or moisten our earth by long delay and a frequent and wearisome attrition.

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## V

The heat which promotes this putrefaction must be so mild and temperate that the liquor in which the resolving salt lies may remain still in and about the matter, and not be laved or evaporated from it.

### *Commentary*

This must be done for two reasons: first, because the body putrefying must receive life in this liquor: second, because such a gentle heat dissolves the salt in the liquor without violence and disperses it into the matter after a natural manner that the body may now conveniently putrefy; but if the liquor were agitated by an excessive heat the matter in it would be destroyed or spoiled so that it could neither be animated nor receive such a putrefaction as is convenient for it, and therefore nothing (in this case) could be generated out of the matter. Listen to this Pamphilus! Thou that aims at the universal medicine.

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## VI

The body putrefying must not be removed out of the matrix in which the putrefaction was begun until that which is intended be fully perfected.

### *Commentary*

Therefore when we would out of our grain of corn get a whole ear we leave it in the earth until the appointed time of harvest, and then we find the ear ripe and carry it home. Seeds (says Avicen) should not be gathered until the harvest comes.

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## VII

The more pure the matrix is, the thing generated is by so much the more perfect and sound.

### *Commentary*

For the pure matrix (says Leschus) will yield pure fruit. Now the more pure any thing is it is so much the more perfect and durable in its kind: On the contrary the impure, it is so much the more imperfect and frail. Therefore an impure matrix, because it yields impure fruit, must necessarily also produce it weak, impermanent, and useless.

Which inconvenience being found in everything, wise men willing to assist nature, attempted to putrefy and heal the impure matrix, wherever they found it. From these attempts spring a most wise and sure experience, which taught them all impurities and extraneous natures which hindered the generation or fostering of the birth in the matrix were either by a natural or else by an artificial assistance to be removed and taken away. Now, when for the separation of subtile delitescient impurities, or the

removal of any weakness, Nature requires any help, this must be done by a judicious and discerning knowledge: But after separation, when these impurities are once excluded from the matrix and are only a hindrance to generation by their incumbrance and abode in place, then there is only required a manual operation as volution or ejection. We find a plain demonstration of this in the art of tillage or husbandry, where the infirm salt of the earth is by the sulphurous fat salt of the dung assisted and strengthened; but the stones and thistles which lie separated from the matrix and hinder its fertility only by their weight and incumbrance are, by mere handy work cast out and rooted up, that the matrix of the corn thus dressed may become and be called a fruitful field. The same method do Philosophers use in their magistracy and practice; for they do first purge their field or matrix, then they enrich or strengthen it with the Sulphur of nature: And lastly, cast in their seed, that it may be vivified and multiplied, and be turned into a most noble and effectual medicine.

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## VIII

That matrix is only convenient and adapted to generation which permits an easy entrance to the seed.

### *Commentary*

This is to say, which receives it with ease and is no hindrance by its hardness or closeness to the entrance of the seed. Here you must know that when the matrix, by reason of hardness, is grown callous and impenetrable, it is then opened and rendered porous again by frequent agitation that it may be fitted for the conception of seed. So the husbandman do plough up first, then mattocks and afterwards harrow their green sward or untilled lands and beat every clod asunder, that by this rarefaction and dissolution, the earth may take and easily receive in the seed, and put it forth again with increase.

If thou desire to come by the secrets of God, and to use them rightly to his glory and the good of thy neighbor, then do thou, in this Philosophic task set before thine eyes the laborious and patient husbandman, and be sure to imitate him, then will God, without doubt, favor thy righteous attempts, and give that into thy possession which will perfectly satisfy all the longings of thy heart.

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## IX

Out of that Body which is either corrupted or destroyed by strange or extraneous natures; or whose spermatic vessels are by some violence maimed or cut off no seed can be had.

### *Commentary*

It will be a very vain and unprofitable attempt for any to hope for issue or healthful seed by a man whose body and radical balsam is deprived or dried up by an excess of

aromatic wines or hot water, or by some contagious disease. Eunuchs, because their genitals are cut off, cannot propagate their own species. Let the Sons of the Science know (says the most ingenious Leschus) that it is very fruitless work to look for that in dry twigs and lopped branches which can never be found but in the green and living.

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## X

That body which is preserved or sustains by one simple kind of nutriment is far more perfect and durable and yields more sound and perfect seeds than that which is nourished with many different kinds of nutriment.

### *Commentary*

For the nearer anything is to unity it is so much the more durable; for in unity there is no division or discord, which is the cause of corruption, and where no corruption is there is a permanent integrity and conservation. Therefore that which is nearest to unity must needs keep better and endure longer than that which is more remote. Because there is in the one less discord and more durable anything is the seed it yields is by so much the more perfect and permanent.

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[ The English edition of this work extends only thus far. The five following chapter have never been published in English. ]

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## XI

### **How the Fountain of the Wise Men Becomes Lead**

( 1 ) Nature uses nothing else for the generating of lead but our fountain, that is our mercuries.

( 2 ) Because she takes the full moisture of all the Elements, mixed with the heavenly vivifying Spirit of Light, and compound the same with all sort s of heterogenial, terrestrial and sulphureous moistures, and including them in the cavities of the earth, bakes them and digests the matter a long time.

( 3 ) When all is well united by purification or putrefaction, then she continues to bake it without separating the impure, until all is become a black glittering and heavy earth, out of which afterwards, with a small fire, lead is melted.

( 4 ) But his ore of lead is not the matter of the Stone of the Wise Men with which they transmute imperfect metals into Gold and Silver. Common lead has no such perfection that out of it should be prepared the white and red sulphur of the Wise Men, for in lead they are very raw and imperfect, which imperfection cannot be established but by the tincture itself.

( 5 ) Our Stone is prepared out of our fountain only, which differs very much from common lead, for our mercury is not common lead but the Father thereof.

( 6 ) And although our fountain or mercury often is called lead, yet the Wise Men always understood thereby our fountain out of which alone our elixir is prepared; because our Saturn or fountain, when it has dissolved its magnesia or earth out of which it issued, and is again coagulated together by a small fire, becomes a black heavy earth, which compound is then called the lead of the Wise Men.

( 7 ) He that can make the lead unto him the whole Art is open, for in it lies hid the Gold and Silver of the Wise Men; that is the white and red sulphur tinging all imperfect metals either into Gold or Silver.

( 8 ) Of this lead or Saturn the poets have written much, telling us that Saturn devours all his children, etc. Note this. His Sulphur consumes all that is hid in the matter enclosed in its belly, digests and concocts it to its ripeness.

( 9 ) But Jupiter, observing this, with sharp scythe cuts off the stones of his father Saturn and throws them into the sea, because the white sulphur, which in the operation appears after blackness, abolishes by his piercing power, which is here called the scythe, the strong power of the black sulphur called Saturn and throws the same into the sea. That black sulphur comes to be dissolved and changed into a sea, out of which the fair Venus is generated which is the green color.

( 10 ) Saturn endeavors to devour Jupiter or the white sulphur, but instead of him he swallows a stone which was laid before him, which he spews up again upon the mount of Helicon. There the same was erected as a monument for mortals.

( 11 ) Also our Saturn endeavors to devour the white color that appears after blackness, but the same is changed into a stone. For though Saturn devours the stone yet by continual concoction it is cast up again.

( 12 ) Our thus dissolved matter is coagulated into the stone of the Wise men, which isto dissolved again, and in this manner Saturn always devours a stone instead of Jupiter, which he spews up upon Helicon, until at length it becomes our blessed Stone which is dedicated to Wisdom.

( 13 ) Out of this our Jupiter and Latona are born Apollo and Diana. This is the last and perfect coction, in which the white and red sulphurs, that is Apollo and Diana, acquire their plusquam perfection.

( 14 ) Hence we see that our Saturn or lead is the father of all the gods, for from him come all the metals.

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## XII

How the Fountain of the Wise Men becomes Quicksilver

### *Commentary*

( 1 ) Between our fountain and common quicksilver there is so great a sympathy. Yea such an one that by many they are counted to be but one thing. But they err, because our fountain is the Father of quicksilver and therefore differs much from common quicksilver.

( 2 ) Our fountain generates and makes alive all things. Common quicksilver destroys, corrupts and kills all.

( 3 ) Our fountain is fiery and hot. Common mercury is moist and cold.

( 4 ) Our fountain is changed by a small distillation into a spirit a fixed body, but common mercury is a mere spirit and cannot be changed into a watery spirit, but rises corporeally without alteration.

( 5 ) The extracted spirit of our fountain is fiery, sharp, penetrating and subtile, so that it can dissolve and kill all metals; but the common quicksilver cannot be made into a spirit, neither can it dissolve and kill metals: It hides them in its belly, but by a small fire it leaves them again unchanged.

( 6 ) Our Fountain dissolves, coagulates, and makes itself, without addition of any thing: None of which can common mercury do, neither can it be coagulated without addition of other species.

( 7 ) Our fountain has within it a fixed salt white and red. Yea it is all salt and issues out of a saltish cavity; but the common mercury is nothing but a running metal, and if we will make salt out of it we must putrefy and kill it.

( 8 ) Our fountain is potentially Gold and Silver, which by coction may be got out of it, which cannot be got out of common quicksilver.

( 9 ) Our fountain becomes by mere coction, without and addition, the Elixir of the Wise Men, but this cannot be expected of common mercury.

( 10 ) In our fountain are all metals potentially; because it is the seed out of which the common metals, yea quicksilver itself grows, which cannot be said of common quicksilver.

( 11 ) Our fountain in earth all sorts of stones, noble and ignoble, which common mercury cannot do.

( 12 ) Nature mixes earth with our fountain a very subtile and clean body, and includes them in the cavities of the earth, bakes and digests it like other metals until it becomes a dark, red, glittering earth, which is called the mineral or natural cinnabar, which is distilled by a small fire into running quicksilver.

( 13 ) Yea there are vapours sublimed out of the mercurial mineral or ore of cinnabar, which in cold places run together again and become mercury.



( 14 ) Thus in many places mercury is found upon the superficies of the earth which have been sublimed out of its hidden minera, and by the coldness of the night and of the heavenly dew gathered together and made running.

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### XIII

How Our Fountain becomes known or manifested to the Wise Men.

#### *Commentary*

( 1 ) Our fountain must be prepared out of two saline substances, yet of one root, otherwise it is impossible that it pass or be acknowledged for ours.

( 2 ) These two slain substances yield by a small fire a very fiery spirit which has innumerable names.

( 3 ) When this spirit is drawn off from them they remain as dead earth behind, because they have lost their spirit by distillation.

( 4 ) But if we give the dead earth its spirit again it becomes, by a soft fire, dissolved again and a blood red liquor, which by coction becomes redder and redder, then black, and at last thick and fat.

( 5 ) The dead earth, before it is joined again with its spirit has also many names from the Wise Men, as may be seen in their writings.

( 6 ) When this spirit by due coction is once united with its body they can never be separated again.

( 7 ) Because by continued decoction they become fixt and abiding in the fire, and although they flow in the fire yet they fume not away.

( 8 ) Thus our matter has a twofold name, yet it comes from one root.

( 9 ) It is mineral and Nature has given it a mineral form, but left the same imperfect: it flows easily: It is compounded of volatile and fixed, and when they are united they purify, and then they become perfect.

( 10 ) In this operation they become all sorts of colors as black, white, red. After redness they change no more.

( 11 ) This matter after having received perfect whiteness, perfect redness and fixation, tinges all imperfect metals into the best Silver and Gold.

( 12 ) By this time our fountain is made manifest, unto which we must add that the volatile part thereof is of a very sour taste, penetrating nature, and sharp quality.

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## XIV

Whether Our Fountain to Come to its Perfection Stands in Need of Common Gold and Silver?

### *Commentary*

( 1 ) Our Fountain cannot come to its perfection without Gold and Silver, but this Sub and Moon are not common Sun and Moon, but something else not strange to our Fountain neither against it.

( 2 ) Because that Sun and Moon which contributes to the perfection of our fountain and is first part thereof, of a double nature, white and red, the white is called Silver and the red Gold.

( 3 ) Hence it appears to be very true our fountain cannot be brought to perfection without Silver and Gold, for Gold and Silver are the fixt and permanent part thereof, which can, shall and must fix the volatile.

( 4 ) It is of that of which is sung: "By Art dissolve the fixt and after let it fly; And fix the Volatile that not it rise high".

( 5 ) It is the Gold which must be dissolved and changed into a spirit by its own spirit.

( 6 ) We cannot say so of common Gold, for where must we get the spirit of common Sol and with the same dissolve it and change it into a spirit. This is also to be understood of common Silver.

( 7 ) Therefore when we speak of Gold and Silver we always understand which are in our fountain and are innate in it.

( 8 ) The spirit of the heavenly sun, when untied with the fat moisture of the elements, by his heat fixes and coagulates, and produces a peculiar salt which appropriates to itself the virtues and qualities of the heavenly light and strives to become like its father. Hence the Wise Men have Gold, whereas in truth it is salt and has the nature of salt.

( 9 ) And yet it is but one and not a twofold salt, as if one should be Sol and the other Luna: No, it is only one salt, called either Sol or Luna after a different manner.

( 10 ) And yet it is but one and a twofold salt, as if one should be Sol and the other Luna: No, it is only one salt, called either Sol or Luna after a different manner.

( 11 ) When our salt has acquired the highest whiteness then we call it Luna, but when it comes to the highest redness then we call it Sol. Our fountain cannot subsist without this Sol or Luna, and what we say cannot be applied to common Sol and Luna.

( 12 ) And although the Wise Men want some common Gold in the fermentation of their Stone, that the same may be determinated to transmute imperfect metals into Sol, it does not therefore follow that common Sol should make perfect our Stone.

( 13 ) On the contrary our Stone rather makes perfect common Sol and Luna, because the most perfect Sol is imperfect and unfruitful without our Stone. But when it comes to be united to our Stone it becomes alive and fruitful and can communicate part of its perfection to other metals.

( 14 ) Many busy themselves in endeavors to dissolve common Gold and bring it into a true essence but in vain. It is a labour not worth once thinking on.

( 15 ) There is another solution which is true and natural, which is performed by itself, because the solvent and that which is to be dissolved in it are both of one substance. Therefore are they radically dissolved.

( 16 ) We must look after this solution and not the common, because our solvent, our Sol, and our Luna, although they seem to be together yet are but one thing and are in one substance.

( 17 ) This a fool cannot understand: As soon as he hears this he falls into errors, not only in what concerns the preparation of the matter but also in the administration of the fire, making of the oven, making of the furnace, closing the vessels and the determination of the weight.

( 18 ) The powerful virtue and operation of the light in our matter is our weight. He that does not know and understand this must certainly err.

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## XV

How Much Our Fountain wants of its Gold and Silver to come to its Perfection

### *Commentary*

( 1 ) Nature has no weight in the generation of metals, because it has but one only matter wherein it works.

( 2 ) But in making our fountain every one is admonished to take of the weight because our fountain consists of two matters, one being the male, the other the female, in whose conjunction we must needs trouble ourselves about the weight. In joining male and female together this our fountain is borne.

( 3 ) But every weight will not serve in this work, but only that which has its due determination.

( 4 ) Know therefore that equal parts of both these matters are to be taken in the celebration of our first marriage, but in the second marriage in which the volatile is joined with the fixed the weight must be otherwise considered.

( 5 ) For the fixed part must be dissolved by the volatile and turned into water: Hence there must be more of the volatile than of the fixed in this solution and conjunction.

( 6 ) Some take ten parts of the volatile tone part of the fixt, some seven, some but three. It suffices that so much of the volatile water be taken as the solution of the fixt part requires.

( 7 ) Much water dissolves quickly, but then the coagulation which follows takes the longer; on which the ignorant, not knowing the nature of this work, fall into desperation when they perceive that the work does not coagulate in due time.

( 8 ) I have taken much water, but then after dissolution the superfluous is abstracted again, and God has blessed my work richly.

( 9 ) There is yet another way to be used in the multiplication to moisten the white and the red work, which is done by our highly rectified fountain; and here you must be very cautious. For the white you must only pour the thickness of a paper upon it, which must be often repeated until the Stone is perfectly satiated and it becomes white and red.

( 10 ) In this operation Art does not follow Nature, for Art stands in need of a certain weight but Nature is her own weight, for she takes as much as is necessary and thrusts away the rest, reserving it for other uses. Nature has nothing useless or superfluous, for what is not good for this is good for another thing.

( 11 ) Know for a conclusion tat you need take care for nothing but to acquire our fountain (unto which will not only serve you this Treatise, but also my other treatise entitled, *The Rules of Wisdom and Chemistry* with my third one called *Sanguis Naturae* which will give you sufficiently, yea abundant instruction and expositions) because this fountain comprehends the whole Philosophical work, makes the same and corrects all errors, if perhaps committed. Besides this fountain is to be highly esteemed, because we want neither fire nor furnaces nor vessel, for our fountain is all these if you understand it right.

( 12 ) Hast thou obtained this fountain then thou hast whole Nature in thy power. Thou lacking nothing, but have all things that thou desire already in thy hand, for which praise Jehovah!

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ANONYMOUS

## *The Crowning of Nature*

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Source: Adam McLean's Alchemy Website @ [www.alchemy.pipex.com](http://www.alchemy.pipex.com)

Commentary by Adam McLean

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### **Introduction**

The influence of the heavens by the will and command of God, descends from above and mixes with the virtues and properties of the Stars, and likewise in this manner is the first production of our seed.

You must not take it out of any combustible for it fights with it without being prejudiced, but is known out of a metallic root ordained by the Creator only for the generation of metals.

You must seek it in the seed of its proper nature from which nature may produce it.

Bernard Trevisan's books are writ true, right and once by circumstances to amuse souls.

The Elements are Water, Air, Earth, and Fire, which must be so applied and governed until such time they produce a soul.

We gather the four elements by a concordance of the Seven Planets.

All our work is to Congeal and Dissolve the body, and Congeal the Spirit.

God being before all things, when He was alone created one Substance, which He called the first matter and of that substance he created the Elements, and from them created all things.

Our Stone is the Quintessence of the Four Elements, separated from them and reduced into a fifth Essence, being extracted out of the body of the first matter. Nature created by God prepared with human artifice, then by the Conjunction and Union of the said elements after their perfect rectification, reduces them into a fifth, a glorious fifth Essence or Spirit called Quintessence, appearing in a glorified body which is found in one only thing created by God.

Wheresoever is found a metallic Spirit, a metallic Soul and a body metallic, there is also found infallibly Quicksilver, Sulphur and Salt, in which certainly will make a

perfect metallic body.

We gather it from the most perfect Creature upon which the Sun ever set his eyes.

St Dunstan's work, *De Occulta Philosophia E: G: I: A*, calls it the food of Angels, the heavenly Viaticum, the Bread of Life, and it is undoubtedly next under God, the true Alchochodon or giver of years, and he does not so much admire the question whether any man can die that uses it, as to think why the possessors of it should desire to live, who have these manifestations of Glory and eternity represented to their fleshly eyes.

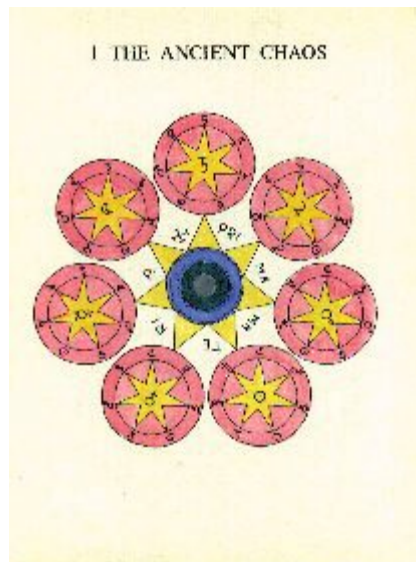
Our Stone is made or composed of Two, Three, Four, and Fire: of Five, that is the quintessence, of Four which are the Four Elements, of Three which is of three Principle natural things, of Two which signifies double mercury, and of One which is the first principle of all things, which was produced clean and pure from the Creation of the world, fiat --- be it made.

There are Creatures created more noble than Gold and we must look [for] it where truth will find it, which so hath put in nature, and man cannot know it by sight, except he see the whole work.

Adam our first father was in his inward parts, or internal man, made according to the similitude of God of the same substance and matter which the Angels were made, though men (that the world hold great Doctors) say and tell it for truth that God made man out of a piece of mud, clay, or dust of the Earth, which is false, it was no such matter, but a quintessential Matter, which is called Earth but is no earth. Adam before his all had a far different body than what he had after, and so far different that if we should behold him as he was in his Innocency, we should admire the glory of him, and tremble at the sight, as at the sight of an Angel and such a body as our blessed Saviour brought from heaven with him, such a body shall we arise with, and with such bodies shall our souls be endued with flesh and blood. Otherwise Man would not differ from Angels, for this flesh and blood is put upon us by the Holy Ghost, that is by regeneration. I forebear to speak more of these mysteries known to few. But he that liveth to be blessed with this Art, shall glorify his Creator. Man the Microcosm or Little World, from the Stars received Spirit, from the Great World his body, and from God immediately his soul, so here is an illumination of the Blessed Trinity. Now let us say something of the production of the Great World out of nothing, when there were neither time or place, and God created a certain Chaos Invisible which the Philosophers call Hyle, the most remote matter. Out of this He made an extract or Second Matter Chaos, which the Philosophers know not by speculation, but since that matter was and is visible and tangible, in which were and are all the seeds and forms of all creatures Superior and Inferior, that ever were made. From this God divided the four Elements, in a word did make all things Celestial and Terrestrial, the Angels, Sun, Moon, and Stars. The knowledge and practice of the Philosophers upon this Chaos brought them to the knowledge of all wisdom, and from thence next [to] God, seek thou and find all wisdom, and indeed Angelical wisdom is attained by it. Incredulity is given to the world as a punishment.

He that knoweth not what he seeketh, shall not know what he shall find.

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### Concerning the Ancient Chaos

Chaos is the first beginning of the first created from an Uncreated Being, this God omnipotent created in the beginning, but before the work of the days it was without shape and also confused. But afterwards all the most sound Philosophers nominated that Essence, the Mother and the first matter of the world, for Hilon, and Nature, in whose bosom innumerable forms lay hid, which the Omnipotent Builder, that great Spagirus, appointed in his time to break forth, for he had first included a spirit in that Undigested Matter, Chaos, who some hath affirmed ought to be called the Soul of the World, some the Form of Forms, others the Proximate Instrument of the Creator. By the benefit of this spirit so included, there is at length by the most free will of God, providing for and overlooking all things, a separation is made of the waters from the waters, by which they were divided. But it is very remarkable, that at the separation of the Chaos, there was a just division, no deperdition, but every particle of the same being full of spirit and life, they are fit for that to which they were ordained, waxing strong and vegetating.

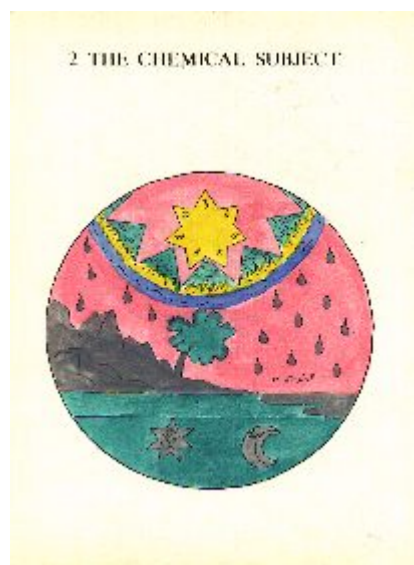
Hence the admirable strength of things, may by the sons of men be drawn forth and become a true metamorphosis, if they artificially search and handle them according to the nature of the Chemical Art, for the true Philosophers have considered of no other Mystery than Nature itself, and a possibility of Nature, which Natural simplicity may indeed suffice those that rely on it, for Nature doth work most of all from its aptness of its own virtue and beginning, as it doth demonstrate, only needing a little help of Art.

With the Cabalists this Chaos is twofold, to wit, Intelligibles and Visibles, the one proceeding from the immediate decree of God, the other is reported or declared to proceed immediatly from the execution of the same decree.

Know further, that the point you see in the White, is put for the centre of the Earth, the whiteness doth signify the Earth itself, the crooked line signifies the flowing water, which in its own place would cover the Earth, but by the decree of the most bountiful Creator, it encompasses some part only. The white circle beset with little

black spots, signifies the Air, as the sevenfold little points of a golden color denotes the Fire.

These things being thus expounded and declared, the next consideration shall be of the seven Planets punctually compassing the Chaos. The first of these is Saturn, and therefore is placed in the ascendant, but he contains all the other planets, as the others do the rest, but in a diverse order. From hence it is known that all things are in all things, according to the true philosophical intention. But Saturn himself is feminine and melancholy, Jupiter feminine and phlegmatic and sanguine, Mars masculine and sanguine, Mercury feminine and phlegmatic, lastly the Moon feminine and melancholy.



### **Saturn the Chemical Subject in the Root of Art**

Saturn is the first of the planets far exceeding all his brethren in essence, order and dignity. He is accounted the primary son of Nature, the root of metals known to few.

Hence saith the *Clangor*, the colouring spirit is the philosopher's Mercury with its Red or White Sulphur being naturally mixed with it in the mine and bowels of the Earth, also indifferently prepared, the judgement of the artificer being left until the perfect consummation, as it is in the metaphor of Bellinus concerning the Sun, that which is the spirit is called Saturn, in plain words tincturing and dividing all metallic bodies especially gold with a true and radical dissolution, as is manifest by his words in the *Rosary*, "Know, saith he, that my father the Sun hath given me power above all power and hath clothed me with a garment of glory, and all the world seeks me and runs after me, for I am that excellent one who exalts and debases all things, and none of my servants except one can overcome me, to whom is given that which is contrary to me, and he destroys me, though not my nature, and that is Saturn who separates all my members. Afterwards I turn to my Mother who congregates all my divided and separated members".



Trevisan affirms the same thing, that no other argent vive can be extracted out of any other body, except out of the Red Servant, which is called by Bellinus, the contrary Servant. But it is called a Servant (to wit) the Servant of Nature, because it serves in the generation of Metals in her Minerals, and because it serves in Chemistry to generate that heavenly and also specified stone. It is called Red, because in this last preparation he goes into red dust. But it is termed to be contrary to the Sun, because he doth radically dissolve him and bring him into his first matter. But lest thou should err, my Son, these things are not to be understood of Saturn belonging to metals or mineral Mercury, but concerning the metalline Sun and Moon which are contained in our lead, (to wit) in potential and not visible. Pythagoras says that every secret is in lead.

That I may at length conclude in one word this golden chapter, I do plainly with a constant protestation affirm the more sound Philosophers to have nominated it the Star of the Sun, the Ens of the Moon (Sun and Mercury). Know further, that although the subject of health and riches be the same, and that we will handle them both in these commentaries, yet professedly as to the sons of learning and men of understanding it may appear in this place, we will especially treat of the matter of Medicine, for it is our chief intention. But as yet you see Saturn in the ascendant, and all the planets accompanying him, but having the Sun and Moon under his feet, by which is signified that Saturn himself only doth contain in himself those two tinctures, sought by so many and found or known to few. But that a little solar star appears in the Moon, and a little lunar star in the Sun, doth not want a Mystery, for the Sun and Moon came forth of the one and same root, as may in a short space be ocularly demonstrated by an ingenious Artificer, by the little white drops which afterwards become red is signified abundance of Tincture, lying hid especially in the body of Saturn. By the mountain out of which a flourishing tree doth appear, is very fitly signified that Saturn is not gotten elsewhere than in hilly places.



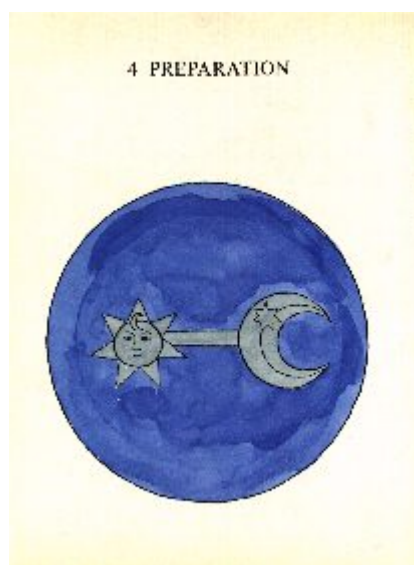
**Distillation**

After the subject was known, the first intention of the philosophers that water should be got which they had noted with many names amongst which that sharp vinegar so much spoken of by them is one. But the second is dissolving Mercury. The third is Marsh water. Dissolving Mercury is defined by a natural dissolution, and is defined by them to be that by whence metals are dissolved by a natural dissolution, and their spirits are brought from power into Action. But before they can be brought to act, Nature ought necessarily to be stirred up, but if the dissolving Mercury should be dry there would be no irritation of Nature, and so by consequence in vain would the solution be hoped for.

There are therefore some which have endeavoured to have that dissolving Mercury, or this water of those marshes, by Distillation, and it was effected. Therefore Distillation with them is the elevation of the watery vapours in the vessel, for in that are two parts of the Stone (to wit), the Superior and the Inferior. They will have the Superior part to be attenuated by Distillation, especially again when the Earth drieth and fasteneth, the Water makes clean and washeth, but the Air and Fire maketh to color.

Arnoldus says, it is necessary that there be much Water and much Air, because the multitude of the tincture will be so much as the multitude of the Air, but the Water is purging and the efficient cause of the clearness of the whole body and Medicine. Hence it is that frequent Distillation is called the most true Ablution of the Elements.

It is therefore necessary that the Stone be divided by the Four Elements and that by Distillation. First, by a light fire equally tempered and continued, water is to be gotten. Then the fire is to be made a little more vigorous and stronger, until the fire be received mixed with the fire. That which remains burned in the bottom is the dry earth where the crystalline Salt of the Stone lieth hid. Moreover, by the inferior circle, the furnace is signified. By that Red as yet beneath, the fire is signified. By the superior circle, the vessel in which the matter is put. By the cloud is signified the smoke which seems to rise like a cloud as you are distilling.



## Preparation

To prepare in this art is nothing else than to take away superfluities and supply deficiencies, because light things cannot be fixed without the company of weighty, and weighty things cannot be exalted without the consortship of light things. Neither can the hot without the consortship of the cold, the cold of the hot, the moist of the dry, the dry of the moist, the hard of the soft, the soft without the addition of the hard, be temporated or prepared. But when they are by course fitly espoused, there is generated from them a temporated substance, which the violence of the Fire cannot overcome, nor the putrefaction of the Earth vitiate, neither the limosity of the Water condensate, nor any contract, adumbrate, or overshadow.

We must know further that the preparation of the aforesaid matter is perfected by the removing of the superfluous part and the addition of the absent, by the exercise of the Four Regimens. The first of them is a reduction to the nature of the Fire. The second is a resolution into Water, and the third is a levigation into Air, and the fourth is a pressing down to the Earth or fixing. The first is by Calcining. The second is by Loosening. The third is by distilling through a still. The fourth is by Coagulating or Congealing with a light fire.

And so the whole preparation is perfected, to which purpose the Hermite did also intimate in his Smaragdine Table, saying, "it ascends from the Earth to Heaven and descends again from Heaven to Earth". And that this doctrine concerning the preparation of the Stone might be better understood, Geber testifieth most openly concerning this. Saith he, "Our art doth not consist in the plurality of things for it is one matter (to wit) of metals in which consisteth our Mystery, to which we have not added any strange thing, neither do we diminish unless that in the preparation we remove superfluity". But the other things pertaining to this Chaos are clearly enough unfolded by the second Chapter, but here it remaineth in the Water.



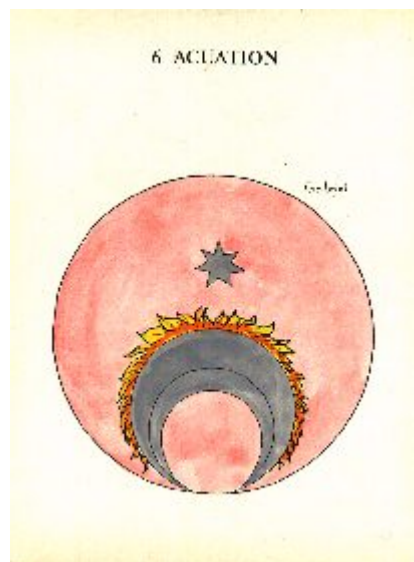
**Division**

Division in this art is the separation of the parts of the composition that they may be the better at length united. In which sense composition is contrary to Division, which indeed is the beginning and life of the thing, for unless there were a Composition, the thing would not be produced into a being.

Hence the cunning Son of Jazichus, the spirit will not remain in the body, neither will it be in it nor tarry any longer, until the body be subtilated, attenuated as the Spirit is. And when it is so attenuated and subtilated and does go out of his density and thickness to thinness, and from his grossness and corporeality to spirituality, then the spirit will be mingled with and drunk up in them, and so they are both become one and the same and will not be separated, as neither water mixed with water cannot be discerned, so although the Philosopher's Stone be divided into two principles (to wit) into the superior part which ascendeth, and into the inferior part which remaineth in bottom fixed, yet notwithstanding these two parts doth concord in virtue.

Therefore the materials are to be weighed and converted and divided because they are changed from a thing into a thing, as the seed of a man in the womb is in a natural preparation turned from thing to thing, until there be found a perfect man, from which was his root and beginning.

Moreover, by the Solar and Lunar stars is signified the water already gotten out of the body of Saturn. By the Sun and Moon the body of Saturn wherein the Salt yet remaineth. By the red understand the fire, by mediation whereof the aforesaid water was drawn forth.



### **Acuation**

Acuation is that by which the Stone is amended by the extraction of his proper earth, that is of the Salt, and by the mixing of the same with Sulphur and his proper Mercury.

Hence Gratianus, of every thing there may be made ashes, and of that Salt there is water, and of that water there is Mercury, and of that Mercury by diverse operations there is made Sun. He therefore that knows the Salt and its solution, knows the hidden secrets of the ancient wise men. Whosoever, therefore will alter spirits and bodies and change them from their nature, it behoveth that he first reduce them to the nature of Salts and Alums otherwise he will do nothing, then let him lave or wash those, that Sal may go forth fusible. You ought as Arnold saith to praise God, from whence also another Philosopher, put therefore thy mind on the Salt, the chief and most hidden Mystery of all the ancient Philosophers.

Moreover, by the lunar star is signified the White Salt of Saturn already gotten. By the circles, the furnace and vessels. By the compassing red, the fire, and that of Calcination, because Saturn is not gotten but first by calcining.



### **The Green Lion**

The Green Lion is that Philosophical Mercury so often spoken of in his first beginning, or flourishing, easily avoiding the fire, because it is not fixed, but being fixed it desires it, and expects it and rejoiceth in it. It is of a Cold and Airy nature, and out of it (as it is in the *Rosary*), God created all mines. Let it not therefore seem strange to anyone because it reduceth into and doth radically dissolve all metals into their first matter, when as out of him are all things, and in whose bosom are all the planets, they lie hid and are contained. Seeing therefore that some of them affecteth a sublime work to him and is a profitable spirit, and there is no thing in the world besides him, neither is there that may stand in his place, and is only profusive in the body that wants him (hence *Rosary*).

But the ancient and wise Philosophers have engendered the manner of wit (knowing) until it be a little done that he might expect the fire. It doth not cease to go above the reluctancy of the fire and is nourished with it, so that when any fixation is fastened unto him, there proceeds wonderful things and changes, because when he is changed he changeth, and his entrance appears in his sound and splendour. When

therefore it is coloured it coloureth, when it is loosed it looseth, and it doth make itself white in the twinkling of an eye, and it becomes red in succession, and it is a congregating water, milk, and strong urine, softening oil, and the father of all wonderful things. It is smoke and a cloud, and the fugitive servant accidental Mercury eating the Sun, who hath preferred himself before Gold and hath overcome, for it is generated, risen and produced out of him.

But lest thou should err, my son, know that those which understood of Mercury in the body of Philosophical Saturn and metalline, to be true. Moreover the Lion is said to be green in the threefold aspect. First in respect of his attractive power, for here the Central Sun is like to the Celestial Sun and make the world flourishing and green. Secondly, it is called the green Lion, because as yet the Gold is incomplete nor fixed in any body, and therefore is called living Gold. Thirdly, it is called a Lion by reason of its very great strength, reference being had to the Animal Lion, for as all beasts obey the lion, so all metallic bodies do give place to this living Gold.



### **Conjunction**

Conjunction in this art is a natural act of two vapours of the body and spirit, in one and the same genus but in a diverse species of actors and sufferers [actives and passives].

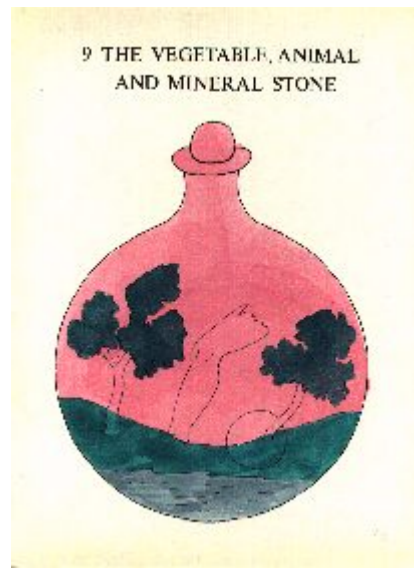
But lest thou should err, my Son, thou must now that the spirit is twofold (to wit) Tinctural and Preparing. The Preparing spirit dissolveth brass and extracteth it out of the body of the lodestone, and reduceth it again into the body itself. But the Tinctural spirit is beyond the body, and it is a body itself of a watery nature, but in the Elixir the tinctural spirit being masculine is the body, the woman the spirit.

Hence saith Arnold, the spirit is not altered from the body so that it should lose its spiritual virtue, but every body is altered and coloured by the spirit. Join therefore, my Son, (as it is in the Rosary thy Gabricius more beloved to thee than all thy sons, with his sister Beya, who is a cold girl, sweet and tender. Hence it is rightly gathered, that unless there should be such a copulation, there would never be a Conception, Raising,



Pregnation, or Birth. This therefore, is the direction of this disposition, which is especially assimilated to the creation of Man.

But by the circles is signified the vessels and furnace. By the Green Lion as it were but half into the vessel, is signified that one part ought to be put in after another and not altogether, as first Mercury then Salt or Oil, and these things are to be put in by little and little, after they are purified.



### **The Animal, Vegetable and Mineral Stone**

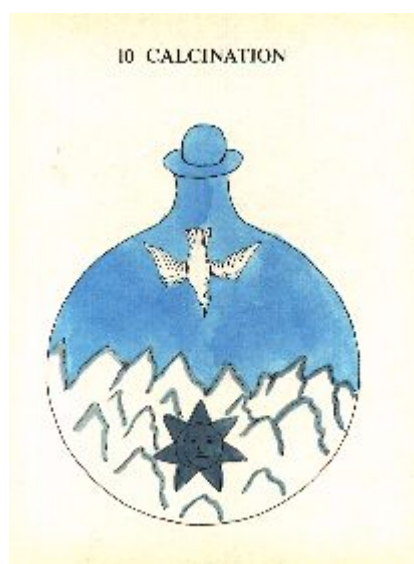
We find the Philosophers Stone to be variously defined with Philosophers in general, amongst which definitions we will at length rehearse one or other of them.

Therefore, the Stone, as Clangor hath it, is a body composed out of the first essence of metals, which first essence is indeed termed other where Argentvive reduced from the power of them into acting by the art of chemistry, the mystery of all beginnings.

Again the Philosopher's Stone is metallic matter converting the substance and forms of imperfect metals. That this conversion is not done but by its like is long ago agreed upon by all Philosophers. It is therefore necessary that the Stone be got out of a metallic matter (to wit) our Mercury in which is all that which is so sought for by the wise men, and lieth hid in our Mercury, although this Mercury may be termed threefold. From whence three principle Stones are known by philosophers, (to wit) the Mineral of the Wise men, or the Mineral, Animal, and Vegetable Stone of them, threefold in name, one in being.

Whereupon saith one of the Ancients, there are three Stones and three Salts of which the whole magistry consisteth, (to wit) Mineral, Animal, and Vegetable (Mercury is mineral; the Moon is plant, because she receiveth into herself two colours, white and red ; and the Sun is animal because he receiveth three, (to wit) constriction, white and red).

But by the tree upon the mountain on the left hand flourishing and bearing fruit, is signified his vegetability, as by the leg of a man raised out, his animality. By the third mountain upon which also a flourishing tree grows out, two things are signified. First, that Saturn is hid only in hilly places and it behoveth that he should be digged out of the Earth, which may be understood to be noted by the circle, from whence especially his minerality appears.



### **Calcination**

Calcination, as subtle witted Geber will, is the turning of a thing into dust by the fire, and by the privation of its humidity, consolidating other parts.

According to others, this Calcination is the last purgation of the Stone, the restoring of its colour, the conserving of its innate Humour, and the induction of Solution. And it is fourfold, for it is either by the desiccation of the moistness of Nature, or by reduction into the bottom of the furnace by fire, and then it is called Alcoole or a subtle powder, or by the amalgamation of familiar metals with quicksilver, by mixing metals with six parts of Mercury, or by strong waters, the spirits of the Salts of black vitriol, of sulphur and the like.

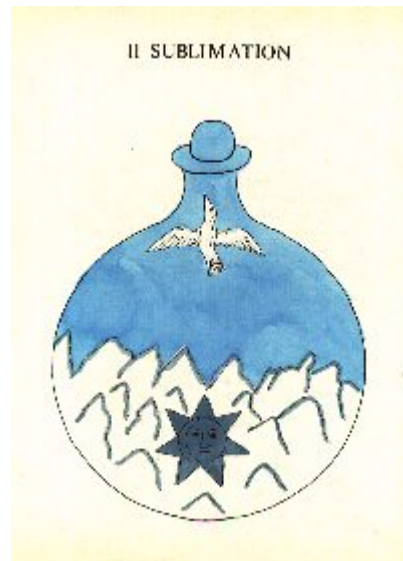
However it be, we use Calcination to mundify the part fixed, and the Earthly part of the Stone. For every calcined thing is in its kind fixed. And so the Sun and Moon are calcined with the first water philosophically, that the bodies may be opened and become spongy and subtle, that the second water may the better go in to work its work, which is to exalt the Earth into Mirable Salt by its only attractive virtue. Which second water is fire, not natural, by whose virtue the completement of this art is done.

Moreover, by the Sun here joined with the Moon, understand the body of Saturn even now to be calcined with the Philosophical water. By the bird flying from above, that in Calcination the spirit of Saturn goes downwards and remains together with the body, as in Sublimation it always goes upward, as is to be seen in the next chapter.



But by the bird or spirit flying upwards, understand dusky clouds ascending frequent indeed but moderately.

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### **Sublimation**

Sublimation according to some is when that which is extracted into the sublime part of the vessel is stirred up and doth subsist there.

According to Geber, it is the elevation of a dry thing by the fire, with the adherency of its vessel.

Either definition is honest. We must know further, that the philosophers for four reasons made sublimation. First, that the body should be made a spirit of a subtle matter. Secondly, that the Mercury might incorporate itself with the body and become one with it. And thirdly, that the whole may become White, then Red and clean, and especially that the innate humidity of the Stone might be restored, which he had at the first lost in the bottom, and may be moved forwards and made fit for a sudden liquefaction, because the medicine ought to be a simple dust of a most subtle and pure substance, adhering out of its nature to the Argent vive or a most easy liquefaction, and hidden or secret subtilation of an easy ingression, after the manner of water, and fixed on the reluctancy of the fire, before the flight of Mercury.

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## **Solution**

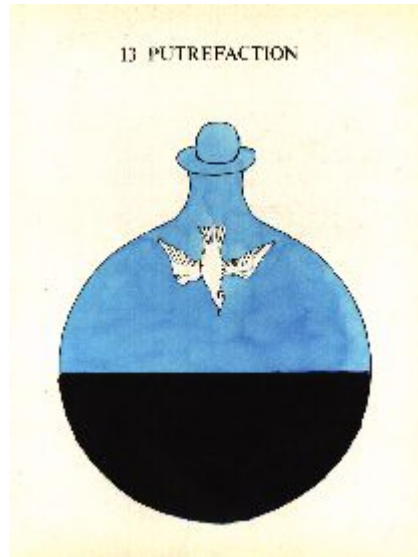
This Solution is the reduction of a dry thing into water. By this Solution metallic bodies are reduced into their first form, that is into their next matter, to wit, Mercury and Sulphur from whence they took their beginning.

Some of the Philosophers do put the matter of Solution to be twofold, to wit, by hot mud and fervent water, but others do contend that there is but only one Solution necessary in this art, which only hath and is to be done out of and with itself, and it is raw and clear without violence.

Hence saith the Philosopher --- a raw solution is better than a sodden one, a moist than a dry, a voluntary than a violent, a temperate than a swift, a fragrant than a stinking, a clean one than a thick, a black one than a red one, and therefore in every Solution we must secretly beware of the vitrification of the matter by the odours and vapours of imperfect bodies, that the force of that generative form may not be choked up with corrosives.

Therefore, saith the Philosopher "help Solution by the Moon and coagulation by the Sun".

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## Putrefaction

Putrefaction according to some is the resolution of that which is mingled into the hot and moist by a natural putrefaction. According to others, Putrefaction, which is also termed conception or espousing in the putrefaction which is in the bottom of the glass, is the Conception of the proper and natural callidity in every moisture, under the conservation of it from another moisture going about in the glass.

Yet notwithstanding, Putrefaction is necessary in this work because there is never anything born, increasing, nor animated, except after Putrefaction because if it were not putrefied, it could not be poured forth nor loosed, and if it were not loosed, it will be brought to nothing.

But thou must know this, My Son, that the Putrefaction of the Philosophers is not sordid nor unclean, but it is a mixing of the water with the Earth, and the Earth with the water, by little and little, until the whole body is become one.

Hence Morien "in the Putrefaction of our brass, the spirits are united with the body and are dried up in it. For unless the water should be dried up with or by the Earth, the colours would not appear".

For Putrefaction is nothing else but a mortification of the moist with the dry, between whose mortification there doth appear blackness in regard of the domination of the obscure woman.

Yet the process or force of itself, to wit, of the Philosopher's Stone, is first Black, because unless it were first Black it would not be White, nor Red, because that redness is composed of Black and White. The Philosophers have called this blackness, Silver, the black Lead, the head of the Crow, and from whence it is said in *Turba*, "when thou shalt see blackness to come to that water, know then the body is melted".

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## Conception

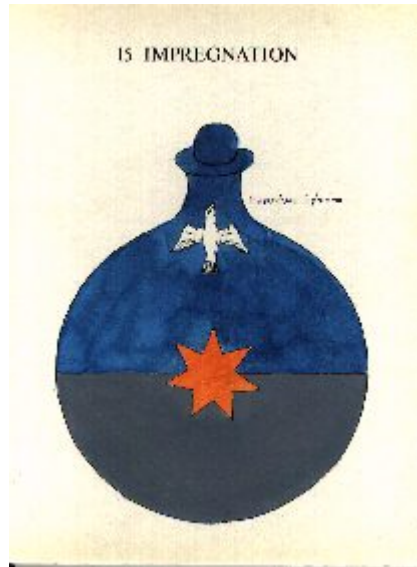
Thou must know, my Son, that whilst the Earth in the aforesaid blackness doth begin to retain with it some of the Argent vive, then it is termed Conception, and then the male acteth towards the female, to wit, Argent vive, with or into the Earth, and this is the reason why the Philosophers say that our Mystery is nothing else but the male and female and their conjunction. For the water beareth sway over the Argent vive, and the Earth increaseth, multiplieth, and augmenteth.

Hence again Philosophers say, "Conception and Dispousation are to digest it in the putrefaction in the bottom of the vessel, and the generation of the genitors in the air and head of the vessel, to wit, the still".

For the body does nothing except it putrefy and it cannot putrefy except with Mercury.

Therefore the Philosophers, "for with one part of the body are six and thirty parts of the water to be taken, and let putrefaction be made with moist gentle fire of hot and moist dung, and in no ways with others, so that nothing may ascend. Because if any thing should ascend a separation would partly be made, which ought not to be done, until the male and female are perfectly joined together, and one received the other, the sign whereof is the superficies in the nature of perfect solution".

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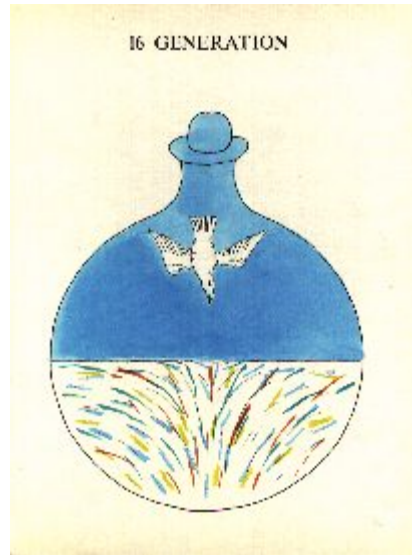
### Impregnation

We must know that when the Earth is a little made white, there it is termed Pregnation, because then the Earth is Impregnated. For when the Earth is joined with an imperfect body, it is called Our Earth, because the Earth is the Mother of all the elements, and this is that which they term [unidentified alchemical symbol], when the Earth begins to retain with it somewhat of *Arsenic*, or Our Salt, or Argent vive, for then it is called a Conception, because the male acteth towards the female, because the Mystery of the Philosophers is nothing else but the male and female and their conjunction. Water coming to them, that is *Arsenic* or Our Salt, which increases much in the Earth and is augmented and comes out when the Earth is dealbated, then it is called a Pregnation, because the Earth having conceived goes away pregnant.

Moreover, that here and in the former Chapter, the little star formed of seven fold little pricks, becometh Red but not fully, it signifies that the matter of the Stone now shut up in the Philosophical phial, hath in some part suffered putrefaction, but it is far from a plenary mundification, which is made in the bottom of the vessel. For it ought to purge further, as is demonstrated by the thirteenth Chapter.

But whereas the Red and White is not compounded of Red and White, but of Black and White, there is no doubt but by the help of the Governor of all things, it will in short space come into perfect whiteness. But that the little star is not deprived of his blackness, appeareth by the black complements sticking to the little points and planets.

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## Generation

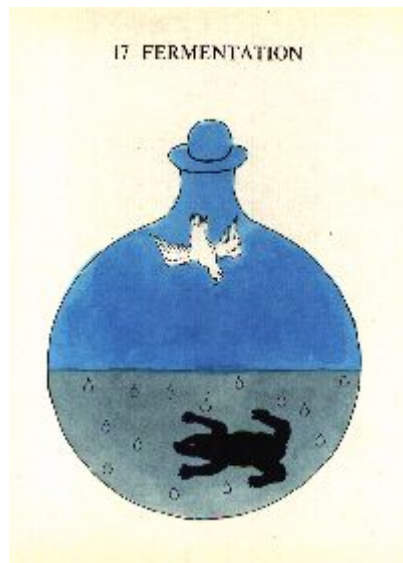
Matter and form are only contained (as saith the Philosophers) by the Generation of Nature, but they understand by the matter and form, the Agent and Patient, thin and thick, Sulphur and Mercury, male and female, and by consequence know Generation.

He therefore that doth know how to choose matter well disposed and very ready to suffer, and strong to act, this man shall bring forth the more excellent and strong effect, but that the generation of the elixir might be the better done, let the artist diligently consider what things are requisite for Nature in the generation of metals, and what of art is to the generating of the Stone, that a collection being made between these things he may have, from whence he may judge, whether it be possible to generate the stone.

Thou must know, therefore, my Son, lest thou should err, that there are four things that are altogether requisite or necessary to Nature in the Generation of metals. First, to have composing principles, one whereof hath itself as the Matter, the other is the form of composing. Secondly, to have that due weight of the principles. Thirdly, a fit place is altogether required, that is a solid place, for unless the place where Nature mingleth were according to the two principles solid, the Vapours which are also termed Spirit would exhale, and the solidity of the place doth condensate or thicken those spirits already mixed, from whence it is they begin to act and suffer one towards the other, by subtilizing and separating impurities. The fourth thing requisite in the generation of metals is heat temperated, by which metals are in the end excluded and exhaled into the air.

All these things required are necessary in the art to generate the Stone, all which the artist by imitating Nature in all things, except in her weight, shall easily conceive that the Stone may be gotten. But let him take the weight from Nature necessarily as it shall be meet.

Moreover, of the diverse and intermingled colours appearing here and elsewhere, you may see from day to day in the glass vessel, whereof it is sufficient to have put you in mind, in this place.



### **Fermentation**

Fermentation with the Philosophers is the incorporation of the Animal part, the restoration of the vapour, the inspiration of the odour, the supplying of the beings, and it is double White and Red, whose ferment is the Sun, the Sun of the Sun, the Moon of the Moon. That is, the Sun is ferment to the Gold, or Red Elixir, and the Moon is ferment to the Silver, or White elixir.

But as substantial bodies, and fixed upon the fire, cannot manifest their qualities, neither do live or are lifted up of themselves, unless by the benefit of spirituality, they are first purified and vivificated, so neither can spiritual accident manifest their permanent virtue, except they are united and perpetuated with fixed bodies. For then and not before, the body inbreatheth the spirit, teaching him by vigorating, to reluct, strive or struggle against the fire, and the spirit embraceth the body teaching him to pierce through gross bodies, actually to subtilize thick ones, and to generally cure all infirmities and diseases.

But the intention of Fermentation is that the thing to be fermented should be prepared, washed, calcined, and dissolved, that it may the better be joined with the subtle work or body, that is to say, White ferment with White, and Red with Red.

Yet these things not hindering, my Son, you are to know that Fermentation doth not change the powder of the Stone into any form but his own, but it giveth savor, odour, and strength to transmute other bodies to his own nature.

But by the Toad, here understand the sphere of Saturn swelling with tincture, or his heaven to be great and impregnate therewith, and by and by ready to bring forth, which by the ejection of the four elements appeareth most plainly in the next Chapter, in the conversion of whom one after another, until they are inseparably fixed, dependeth the chief completement of this work.

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## The Separation of the Elements

We being about to speak concerning the generation of the elements and their conjunction, by reason that one of them cannot be understood without the other, we shall handle them both together in this and the subsequent Chapter.

Therefore the separation of the elements in this art is nothing else than to separate or segregate heterogeneous (which are accidents from homogeneous (which are of the Essence of the Stone), that at length the mixture of the elements might be most pure and perfect. But the conjunction of the elements is to keep up homogeneous things, that is, those that are of the nature of the Radical Moisture.

Hence Raymond "have patience in dealbation or whitening, because here lieth much tardity".

Thou must know further, my Son, that the separation of the elements with the Philosophers is termed the conversion of them, as if to convert the elements was to make a thin body of a gross one, that is, of the body a spirit, and afterwards of the moist a dry, of water earth, and the elements are converted one into the other. But the Philosophers do prescribe such a manner of converting the body into the spirit. The earth is resolved into water, and water into air, the air into fire, but the spirit is turned into the body. This way the fire is coagulated and it becomes air, but the air is coagulated and becomes water, but the water is coagulated and becomes earth.

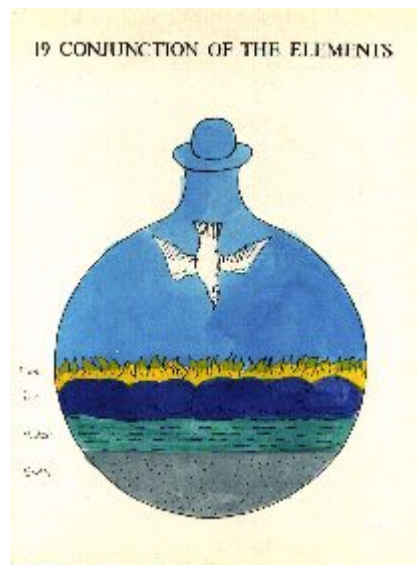
From whence saith Assidnus "behold elements hath met together in one nature, who when they are so impelled (that is coagulated) become friends, but when they wax thin they become enemies. Therefore convert the elements and thou shalt find what thou seeketh".

It behovest thee, therefore, first of all to mortify and exalt the Stone, that is, the body, soul and spirit, seeing that no one gains any thing in this art except he mortifieth, but mortification is by the separation of the elements, by which the effect of every element is shown.



Therefore if thou wilt make the elixir, it will be necessary that thou break this Stone into his elements, which is signified by the parts of the year, and then conjoin the elements by fire, Mercury mediating, which is the Philosopher's chiefest secret, and then this Mystery is completed, for all the art is placed in conjoining and loosing. But these separations are done as seest, my Son, Mercury mediating, for it first looseth the body and makes separation which in the meantime are conjoined by Salt and Mercury.

But here we must diligently note it is first of all Mercury, in the beginning of the work is called water, then the blackness appearing earth, then being sublimated air, and being made red is called fire.



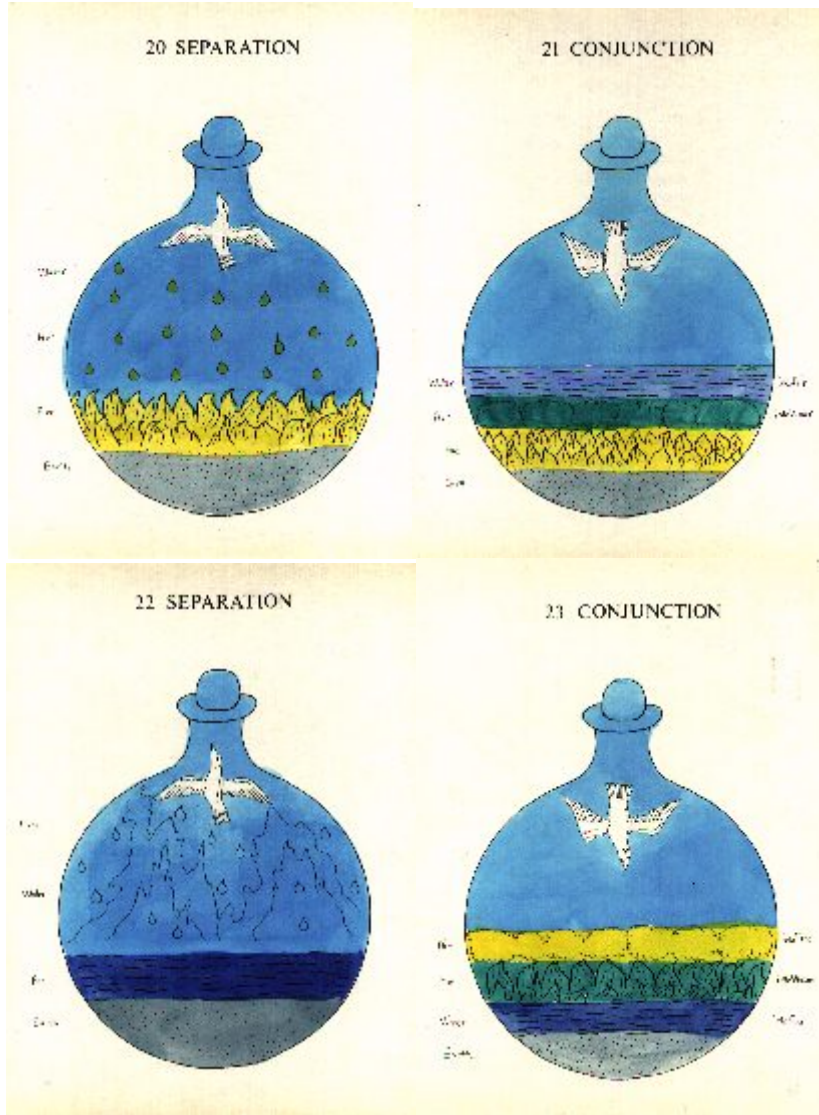
### **The Conjunction of the Elements**

Then being sublimated with some luminary body it is termed Salt.

Then being added to the whole composed matter it is called the Spirit. And so the Earth, with Water, Air and Fire, is a body, the Salt is the life, the last watering of the only Mercury, the spirit.

It is therefore evident that the Stone consisteth of four elements, to wit, Water, Air, Fire and Earth. For in the Stone there are the Soul, the Body and Spirit, and yet but one Stone, as it is above said, behoving to loose and coagulate him again, then all the operations are contained under the Solution until the Albifaction it is sodden again, and becomes a Stone again when it is coagulated. Afterwards it is loosed again and then the solution is reiterated, until the Stone comes out like wax.

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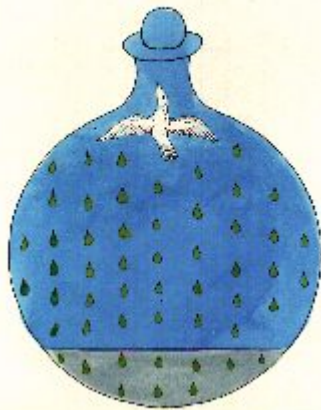
24 SEPARATION



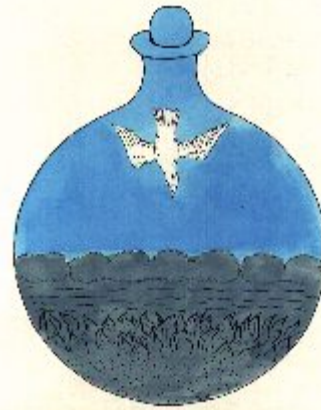
25 CONIUNCTION



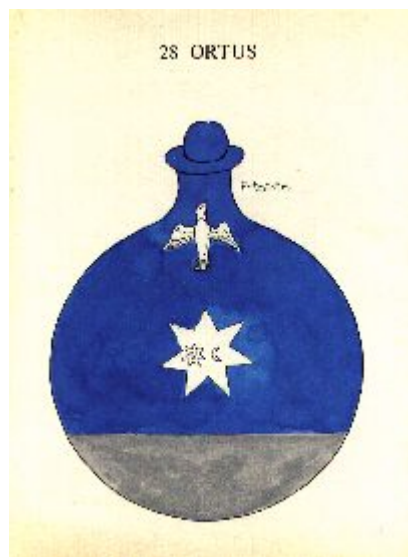
26 SEPARATION



27 CONIUNCTION



28 ORTUS



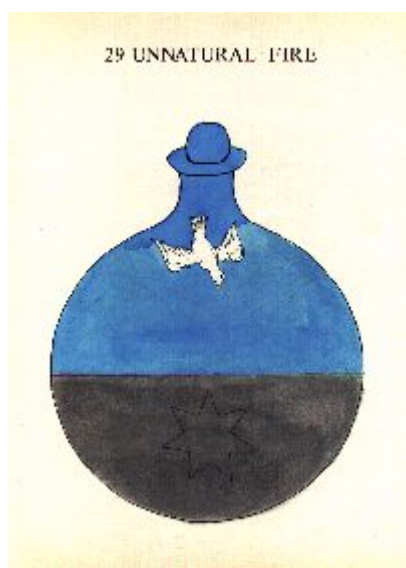
## Ortus [the Rising]

Ortus in this art is termed to be conjunction of the second salt or ferment, with the imperfect body prepared.

Hence Morien "we must know that the knowledge of our Mystery is likened to the creation of Man. For first there is conjunction, then conception, then pregnation, then Ortus or a springing or rising, a bringing forth, then Nutrition".

I would therefore have thee understand this one thing, because our seed is Argent vive. When the Earth is joined to an imperfect body, which is termed Our Earth, because the Earth is the Mother of all the elements, and they call it Copulation. But when the Earth begins to retain with it something of the Argent vive, then it is termed Conception, when the male acteth towards the female. But when the Earth is made white then it is called Pregnation, because it is then pregnant, and then the ferment is joined with the imperfect body until they become one in species and aspect, and then it is termed Ortus, because our Stone is then born, which is called a King by the Philosophers.

Whereupon it is said amongst them "Honour your King coming from the Fire. Crown him with a Diadem, and bring him up even to perfect age, whose Father is the Sun, his true Mother the Moon".



### Unnatural Fire or Fermentation

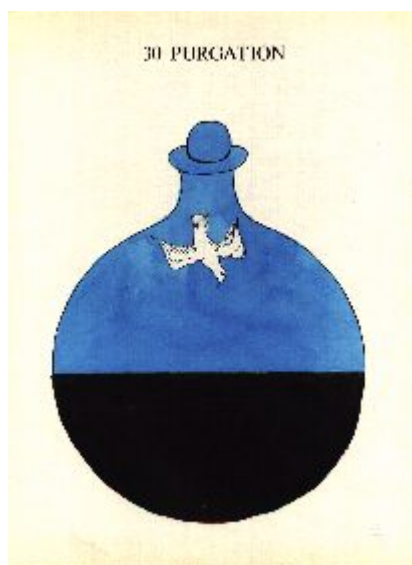
With the philosopher are four fires recorded, to wit, Natural, Unnatural, against Nature, and Elementary, and these fires may better be known by their complexion and compositions. For out of Mercury dissolving and conjoined in the body, there becomes another Mercury, which is called Adrop, Thick Water, Our Water, the Second Water, which is Fire, Strong Fire, Unnatural Fire. For those two, to wit, Spirit and Body, being fit and joined together according to their due proportion, out of them

this second Mercury, which we have described is made, and this is that Mercury of which it is written, that in it is whatsoever wise men seek, for the body, the soul and the Tincture are drawn from this Mercury.

But the second Mercury is moist in the vapour, not oily but gummy, of a property indifferent, subtle, easily lying the sharpness of the fire, and vanishing away in it, possessing both body and spirit in loosing remaining water in itself.

Moreover by Fermentation in this place, understand the second fermentation, because the Stone, especially the Inferior part thereof, should as yet be better prepared, washed, calcined, and dissolved, that it may yet unto a more higher and nobler degree of perfection, whereby it may the better be joined with any subtle work or body.

The little star with sevenfold little pricks appearing a colour somewhat duskish, signifies that the star, although it has suffered many alterations and hath his elements indifferently mixed, yet is far from being sufficiently mundified, seeing as yet it wanteth much purgation, as by the same blackness which it hath in putrefaction, appearing in the next Chapter. By the bird flying from above, understand the Spirit descending, the Stone putrefying temperately, and by little and little.

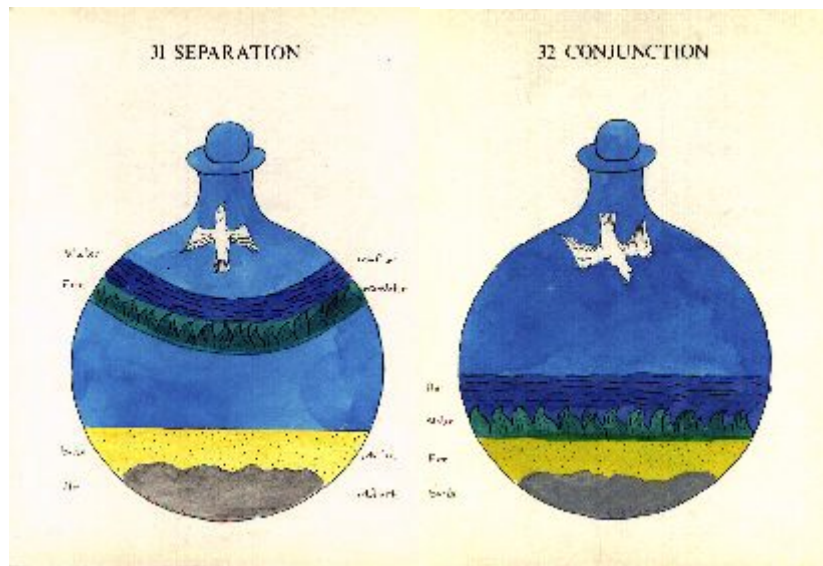


### **Purgation**

Moreover by the domination of the Woman who is of the Mercurial and Lunar humidity, the blackness doth as yet appear, but here it is a little diminished in quantity as in the following Chapters you may see, for by little and little it is changed from colour to colour until the blackness doth altogether vanish away, and the Stone becomes endued with the greatest whiteness, which is a sign of perfection.

By the bird flying from above, understand as you were admonished in the former Chapter.





34 CONJUNCTION



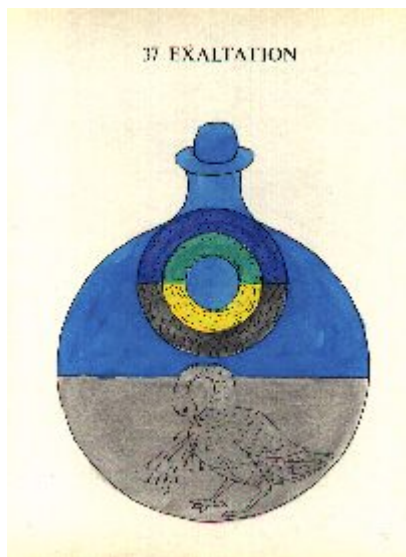
35 SEPARATION



36 CONJUNCTION



37 EXALTATION



**Exaltation**

Therefore, Exaltation is an ingenious nobiliating of the magnet or lodestone being dealbated, which is chiefly by the augmentation of the spirit, the sublimation of the Earth, the promotion of the liquefaction by the exaltation of the rectified elements, and by a lively constituting of the Fifth Essence out of them. From whom, saith the Philosophers, "when thou hast had the Water out of the Air, the Air out of the Fire, and the Fire out of the Earth, then thou mayest know that then the Stone hath lost the Water which he had at first out of the Air, after his resolution into it. For the Air and Water are contiguous elements, more light in mixing and better in operation of fire".

When the cold hath overcome the hot, the Air is turned into Water, but when the hot hath overcome the cold, the Water is turned into Air, but thou must have the Air out of the Fire by his Solution.

Moreover now you see the four elements wonderfully altered, exalted and almost fixed.

By the azure colour understand the Earth turned into Air, by the green colour the Air turned into Water, by the yellow colour Water turned into Fire, lastly by the colour somewhat brown understand the Fire to be turned into Earth. By which wonderful alteration is further signified that the Stone now draweth nigh to Fixation.

By the Pelican penetrating and wounding her own breast, from which rivers of blood do seem to flow, understand that this is spoken of the Pelican by a similitude which is called the Blood of Love, for as she doth impart her blood to her young ones, so the Stone being brought to a Quintessence by conversion into the four elements, is ready to impart his tincture to the imperfect wanting it.

Lastly in that you have in the following figure the bird of Hermes sleeping in the midst and applying himself to perpetual rest, understand the discords and hatred of enemies, that is, of the elements, are laid aside, lulled asleep by their long alterations and conversions, laid before our eyes in the former Chapters. But from the fire from above temperately cherishing the Matter, the artificer buildeth the reason of making his Athanor.

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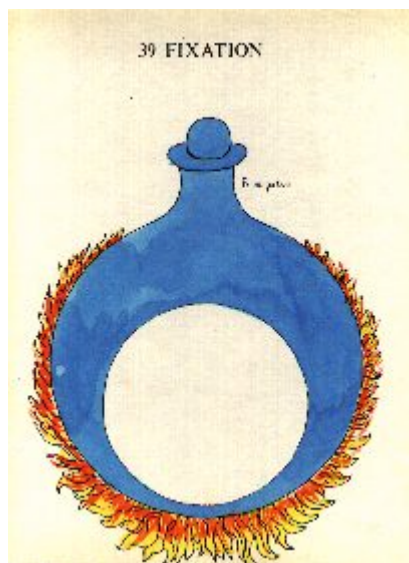




### Quinta Essentia

Let putrefaction and much conversion be upon him until it being well purged by sublimation he be made white. For as Marcus saith "when he has drunk his burning Mercury he passeth away and remaineth in the shadows of purgatory with many nights, but conceiveth in baths, and brought forth in the Air, then waxeth Red, goes upon the Water, and is white upon the tops, and is become White, light and airy, which first was ponderous, dry and obscure fire. For the Sun being Exalted the air waxeth hot and drieth".

But take this concerning the fifth essence in this work and Mastery, is the mixing of all the four elements, and the reduction of them into one pure substance. If therefore thou wilt see the Stone, to wit, the fifth substance by the four elements, thou must know that if every one of them do not partake of the fifth nature, the Stone cannot be united nor conjoined with a dry body.



## Fixation

Fixation in this art is when the body receives a tinctural or colouring spirit and takes away his volatility or flying, which is by frequent iteration, until it becomes ashes of everlasting duration, and the whole remains in the fire.

We must know further that fixation is always in the white, though not every fixation.

We must know moreover, that out of the perfection of fixation, the fire becomes cold, by whose benefit alone the Stone comes out fixed. When the hidden Mystery of him is made manifest, his colour is Citrine or Red, but after his first fixation in the white, there follows no error in the whole Mystery, although you proceed to the Crowning of Nature by often passing the Philosophical Wheel, and by bettering your blessed Stone by many reiterated solutions and coagulations.

Lastly, by the white circle is signified the white stone, now fixed by the red fire, whose punishment now it suffereth and feareth not, and by the vessel, which is within of an azure colour, is signified the Ethereal spirit of the Stone, which by the benefit of a cold fire doth animate the Stone.



## Projection

Projection in this art is the reduction of the fixed earth Multiplicative, or a formal substance firmly coloured, upon much of convenient matter, to the desired joy of the Artist. But because it is not well perceived, cast one pound upon a thousand, but before this moist medicine may go out, the Philosophers have noted some necessity of Ceration.

Hence speaketh Anonimous "it is better to project, now thou dost cast upon fundamentals, and fundamentals upon. My word, I will love thee, O Lord. I will have thee attend, the which reason is in Saffron. If the Saffron should be projected dry it would

colour but little, but if being loosed it be joined with a little liquor, and that little into much, it would colour infinitely. Thou shalt therefore make thy Projection so. First multiply 10 into 10 and then there will be 100, and 100 into 100 and they will be 10000, and so into infinity". But this cannot be done without Ceration, which the Wise have so defined "Ceration is the fitting of a hard and not fusible Medicine to Liquefaction by a frequent Imbibition".

Hence Morien in the *Rosary*, "the whole Mystery is nothing else than an extraction of Water out of the Earth, and a casting of Water on the Earth, until both it and the Earth putrefy, and become clean, seeing as yet the Earth to be mingled with the Water, and the Water or temperate decoction to be a little diminished, the other to increase". They all say that this was perfect Ceration, from whence they have also said further, that the Earth, when the Water is Cered, drunk up and dried with the tempered decoction of the Sun, that is, the heat, and is turned into Earth, that therein is the whole matter. For his force, as that divine Hermes speaketh, is entire if it were turned into Earth. But enough and more than enough has been said of the taking away of the Leprousy of Metals.

Of the curing of Man's body and continual health, understand these things from a few days to a longer time.

For a month every day let there be taken of this blessed powder, the quantity of a grain of mustard seed, in white wine or in any other liquor, early in the morning. It is sudorific or causing sweat, if anything be, to be sent forth by the pores. It is laxative, if anything be, to be evacuated by stool. It is diuretic, if anything be, to be driven forth by the passage of urine. But it is never vomative, as that is altogether contrary to nature.

Moreover, that I may briefly conclude, all this powder is like Ethereal fire, pleasantly consumes all the hurtful superfluities in Man's body, raising it up, rectifying, and bringing it to a just temperature and equality. Furthermore, it not only rectifieth Man's body but also reneweth the whole man, by the use thereof continued for a few weeks, Lastly, none of the three principles, to wit, of Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury, can in the least exalt itself. But presently, by one little grain, taken as aforesaid, the disease is rooted out, and a man is continued safe and sound without diseases, until the time appointed of God. Therefore to the most Mighty God be Praise, Honour and Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

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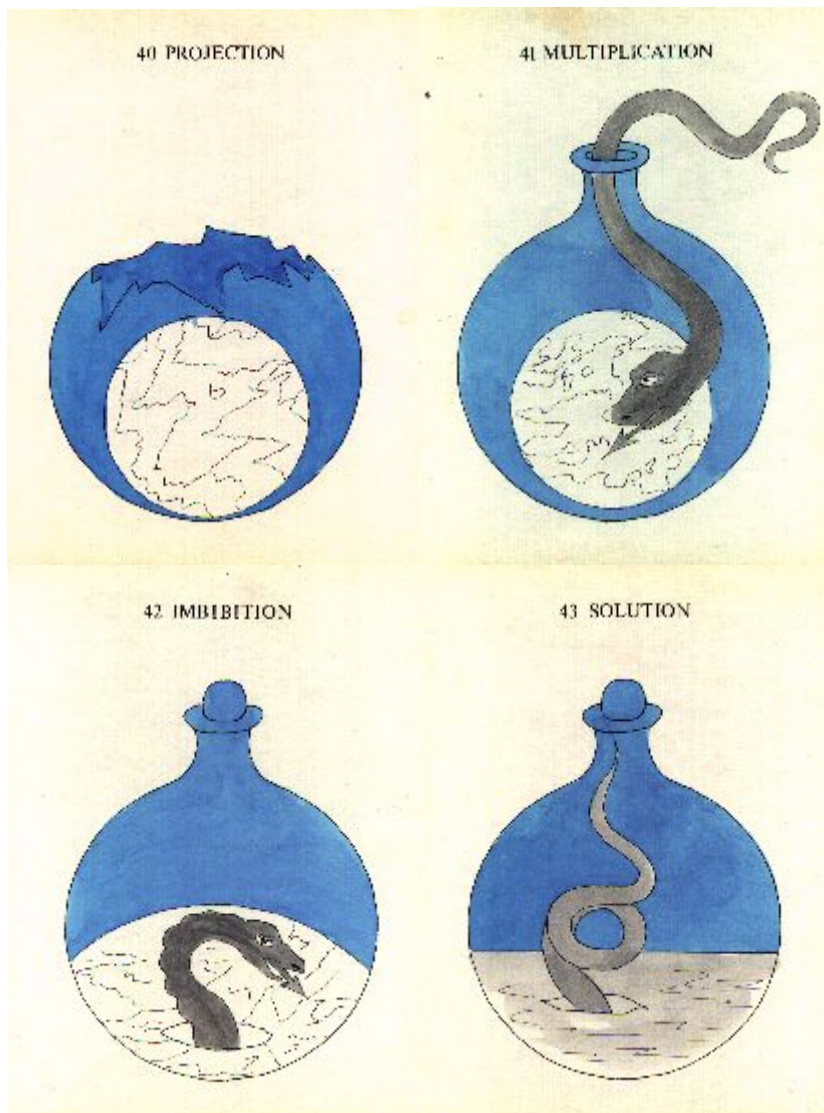
## Multiplication

In the last Chapter it is made known what it is in general, but not how many fold, but it is by two ways, to wit, quality and quantity But because the Wise have left us a perfect and known complete method concerning this doctrine of Imbibition, and of their ways of operation which follow plainly and fully the Crowning of Nature, I shall altogether give over speaking of them.

I shall add this, instead of the Crown concerning the ruling of Saturn, let a mineral be taken of the same, existing in his first being. Let it putrefy in the belly of a horse, according to the Philosophical month, to wit, 40 days. After putrefaction, by the

benefit of Distillation, let the Vinegar so often spoken of, be extracted, to radically dissolve all the metals of the Philosophers. Let that blessed produced vinegar be put upon other Saturn, who from whence may go forth into transparent redness dissolved. Let the redness be extracted and putrefied anew, for the space of a Philosophical month in a horses belly. Then in a strong vessel let it be first urged with a gentle fire, afterwards a strong fire being used, the Red Oil will go forth like blood, through a 1000 small veins. Let the dead head be reduced into Alcool, or subtle powder, calcined, and with phlegm reserved for this use, let it be drunk up and digested and evapourated. Thou shalt have then his natural Salt which if thou wilt mingle with the predicated oil and do urge back again, the red oil will go out transparent, colouring the heavenly Stone, when it hath been coloured by himself. But by the specificall Salt or Ferment, this is truth.

*Finis.*



44 CONGELATION



45 CONJUNCTION



46 SUBLIMATION



47 CALCINATION

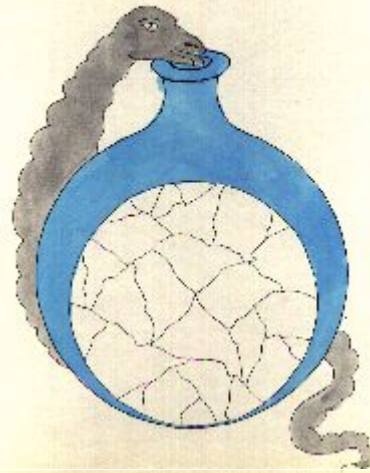




48 FIXATION



49 MULTIPLICATION



50 FERMENTATION



51 IMBIBITION



52 SOLUTION



53 CONGELATION



54 SUBLIMATION



55 CALCINATION



56 QUINTA ESSENTIA



57 FIXATION



58 MULTIPLICATION  
FERMENTATION

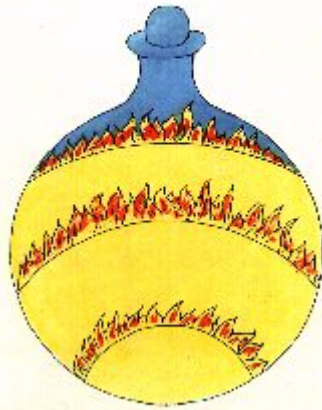


59 IMBIBITION





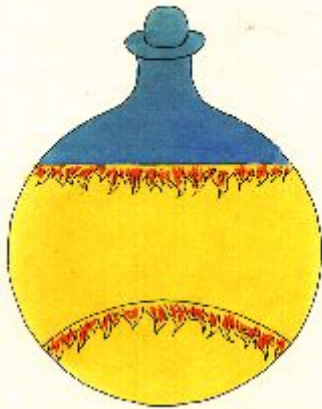
60 CALCINATION



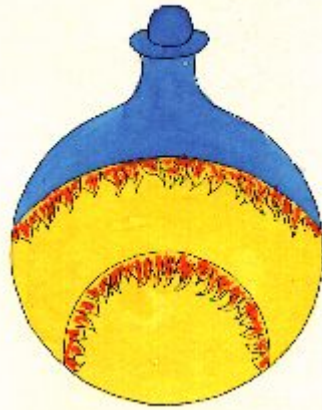
61 SUBLIMATION



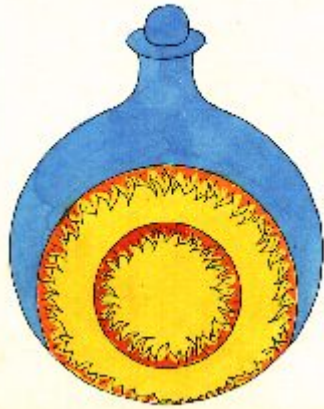
62 SOLUTION



63 CONGELATION



64 CONJUNCTION



65 EXALTATION



66 QUINTA ESSENTIA



67 FIXATION



# The Dwellings of the Philosophers

by Fulcanelli

With 39 Illustrations by Julien Champagne [Not Included]

Translated by Brigitte Donvez and Lionel Perrin

## BOOK ONE

### I. HISTORY AND MONUMENT

Paradoxical in its manifestations, disconcerting in its signs, the Middle Ages proposes to the sagacity of its admirers the resolution of a singular misconception. How to reconcile the unreconcilable? How to adjust the testimony of the historical facts to that of medieval art works?

The chroniclers depict this unfortunate period in the darkest colors. For several centuries there is nothing but invasions, wars, famines, epidemics. And yet the monuments ---faithful and sincere witnesses of these nebulous times ---bear no mark of such scourges. Much to the contrary they appear to have been built in the enthusiasm of a powerful inspiration of ideal and faith by a people happy to live in the midst of a flourishing and strongly organized society.

Must we doubt the veracity of historical accounts, the authenticity of the events which they report, and believe along with the popular wisdom of nations, that happy peoples have no history? Unless, without refuting en masse all of history, we prefer to discover the justification of medieval darkness in the relative lack of incidents.

Be that as it may, it remains undeniable is that all the Gothic buildings without exception reflect a serenity and expansiveness and a nobility without equal. If, in particular, we examine the expression of statues, we will quickly be edified by the peaceful character, the pure tranquility that emanates from these figures. All are calm and smiling, welcoming and innocent. Lapidary humanity, silent and well-bred. Women have that portliness which rather indicates, in their models, the excellence of rich and substantial nourishment. Children are plump, replete, and blooming. Priests, deacons, Capuchin monks, purveyor lay-brothers, clerks, and chorus singers, all show a jovial face or the pleasant figure of their portly dignity. Their interpreters ---those marvelous and modest carvers of images ---do not deceive us and could not be mistaken. They choose their prototypes from daily life among people who move around them and in the midst of whom they themselves live. A number of these figures randomly found in narrow streets, taverns, schools, sacristies, workshops, may be altogether marked or overdone, but in a picturesque tone, with a concern for character, for the sense of joy, for generous lines. Grotesque, you may say, but joyously grotesque and full of teaching. Satires of people enjoying laughter. Drinking, singing, and fond of good living. Masterpieces of a realist school, profoundly human and certain of its mastery, conscious of its means, and yet unaware of what pain, misery, oppression, or slavery might be. This is so true that, search as you may, question the ogival statuary, you will never discover a figure of Christ whose expression reveals true suffering. Along with us, you will recognize that the latomi (1) worked tremendously hard to give their crucified figures a grave physiognomy without always succeeding. The best ones, barely emaciated, have closed eyelids and seem to be resting. On our cathedrals the scenes of the Last Judgment show grimacing demons, distorted, monstrous, more comical than terrible; as far as the damned, the benumbed accursed are concerned, they are cooking in their pots over a slow heat without useless regret or genuine suffering.

These free, virile, and healthy images evidence that the artists of the Middle Ages did not know the depressing spectacle of human afflictions. Had the people suffered, had the masses moaned in misfortune, the monuments would have kept a memento of it. Yet we know that art, the higher expression of civilized humanity, can freely develop only under the cover of a stable and sure peace. As it is with science, art cannot exercise its genius in the atmosphere of troubled societies. This applies to all elevated manifestations of human thought; revolutions, wars, upheavals are disastrous to them. They demand security born of order and concord in order to grow, to bloom, and to bear fruit. Such strong reasons urge us to accept, with great circumspection, the medieval events recounted by History. We confess that the description "of a sequence of calamities, disasters, and accumulated ruins over 146 years" seems to us truly excessive. Something is inexplicable amiss here, since it is precisely during this unfortunate One Hundred Years' War, which lasted from 1337 to 1453, that the richest buildings of flamboyant style were built. It is the culminating point, the apogee of form and boldness, the marvelous phase where spirit, the divine flame, imposes its signature on the last creations of Gothic thought. It is the time where the great basilicas were completed; in religious architecture, other important collegiate or monasterial buildings were also being raised: the abbey of Solesmes, of Cluny, of Saint Riquier, the Chartreuse of Dijon, Saint-Wulfran d'Abbeville, Saint Etienne de Beauvais, etc. We see remarkable civil edifices rising from the earth, from the Hospice of Beaune to the law

courts of Rouen and the town hall of Compiègne; from the mansions built nearly everywhere by Jacques Coeur to the belfries of free cities, Bethune, Douai, Dunkerque, etc. In our big cities, the small streets dig their narrow bed under an agglomeration of cantilevered gables, turrets and balconies, sculpted wooden houses and stone dwellings with delicately ornate facades. Everywhere trades are developing under the protection of medieval corporations; everywhere guildmen vie with one another in their skill; everywhere emulation multiplies masterpieces. The university has turned out brilliant students and its renown spreads throughout the old world; famous doctors, illustrious scientists disseminate, propagate the blessings of science and philosophy; in the silence of the laboratory spagyrist amass materials which will later serve as the foundation for our modern chemistry; great Adepts give hermetic truth a new soaring flight... What ardor unfolded in all the branches of human activity! And what wealth, what fecundity, what powerful faith, what trust in the future transpire beneath this desire to build, create, search, and discover in the midst of a full-fledged invasion in this miserable country of France submitted to foreign domination and which knows all the horrors of an interminable war!

In truth, we do not understand...

And thus is elucidated the reason why our preference remains vested in the Middle Ages as it is revealed to us by Gothic buildings rather than in the same period as it is described by historians.

For it is easy to fabricate texts and documents out of nothing, old charters with warm patinas, parchments and archaic-looking seals, even a few sumptuous books of hours, annotated in their margins, beautifully illuminated with locks, borders, and miniatures. The Montmartre district of Paris delivers to whoever desires it, according to the price offered, the unknown Rembrandt or the authentic Teniers. A skilled artisan of the Halles district of Paris can shape with a staggering verve and mastery little gold Egyptian divinities and massive bronze statues, marvelous imitations over which some antique dealers fight. Who does not remember the infamous Tiara of Saitaphemes... Falsification and counterfeiting are as old as the hills, and history, which abhors chronological vacuums, sometimes had to call them to its rescue. A very learned Jesuit of the 17th century, Father Jean Hardouin, did not fear to denounce as spurious numerous Greek and Roman coins and medals coined during the Renaissance and buried with the aim to fill in large historical gaps. Anatole de Montaiglon (2) informs us that in 1639 Jacques de Bie published a folio volume with illustrations called: *The Families of France, Illustrated by the Monuments of Ancient and Modern Medals*, which, according to him, "contains more invented medals than real ones". Let us agree that in order to give history the documentation it was lacking, Jacques de Bie utilized a more rapid and more economical process than that denounced by Father Hardouin. Victor Hugo (3), citing the four best-known histories of France around 1830 ---those of Dupleix, Mezeray, Vely, and Father Daniel --says of the latter that the author, "a Jesuit famous for his descriptions of battles, completed in 20 years a history which has no other merit than erudition and in which the Count of Boulainvilliers found no less than 10,000 errors". We know that Caligula, in the year 40 AD, had the tower of Odre built near Boulogne-sur-Mer "to deceive future generations on the subject of the supposed raid of Caligula on Great Britain" (4). Converted into a lighthouse (*turris ardens*) by one of his successors, the tower of Odre collapsed in 1645. What historian can give us the reason ---superficial or profound --invoked by the sovereigns of England to justify their qualification and title of Kings of France which they kept until the 18th century? And yet English money from this period still bears the imprint of such a

(5) pretense .

Formerly, on the school benches, we were taught that the first French King was called Pharamond and the date of his accession to the throne was determined at 420 AD. Today the royal genealogy begins with Clodion le Cheveu (Clodion the Hairy) because his father, Pharamond, actually never ruled. But in those distant times of the 5th century, are we so certain of the authenticity of the documents pertaining to Clodion's doings? Will they not also be contested some day before they are relegated to the domain of legends and fables?

In Huysmans' view, history is the "most solemn of lies and the most childish of deceits... Events are for a man of talent nothing but a spring-board of ideas and style, since they are all mitigated or aggravated according to the needs of a cause or according to the temperament of the writer who handles them. As far as documents which support them are concerned, it is even worse, since none of them is irreducible and all are reviewable. If they are not just apocryphal, other no less certain documents can be unearthed later which contradict them, waiting in turn to be devalued by the unearthing of yet other no less certain archives" (6).

The tombs of historical personalities are also sources of information which is subject to controversy. We have been made aware of this fact more than once (7). In 1922, the inhabitants of Bergamo had a very unpleasant surprise. Could they believe that their local celebrity, that fiery soldier of fortune, Bartholomeo Coleoni, who filled the 15th century Italian annals with his bellicose whims, was nothing but a legendary shadow? And yet, following a hunch of the king who was visiting Bergamo, the municipality had the ornate mausoleum of the famous equestrian statue moved, had the tomb opened,

and all those in attendance discovered, not without tremendous surprise, that it was empty... In France at least we do not push offhandedness so far; authentic or not, our tombs hold bones. Amedee de Ponthieu (8) tells us that the sarcophagus of Francois Myron, magistrate of Paris in 1604, was found during the destruction of the house bearing the address 13 rue Arcole, a building raised on the foundations of the Church Sainte-Marine in which he had been buried. "The lead coffin", wrote the author, "shaped like a compressed ellipse... The epitaph had been erased. When the coffin lid was raised, only a skeleton was found surrounded by a blackish soot mixed with dust... Strangely enough, neither the insignias of his charge, nor his sword, nor his ring were discovered, not even traces of his coat of arms... Yet the Commission of Fine Arts, through the lips of its experts, declared that it was indeed the great Parisian magistrate, and these illustrious relics were taken down into the crypts of Notre-Dame". A similarly valuable account is mentioned by Fernand Boumon in his book Paris Atlas. "For your information, we shall only mention the house located on Quai des Fleurs bearing the numbers 9-11 and which an inscription, without a shadow of authenticity or even of verisimilitude, indicates it to be the ancient dwelling of Heloise and Abelard in 1118, rebuilt in 1849. Such pronouncements carved in marble are an offense to common sense". Let us promptly acknowledge that in his historical distortions, Father Loriguet showed much less boldness!

Allow us to make a digression here, intended to specify and define our thought. For a long time, a very tenacious prejudice, attributed the invention of the wheelbarrow to the scientist Pascal. And even though the falsity of this attribution has today been demonstrated, the great majority of people persist in the belief that it is founded. Question a school boy: he will answer you that this practical vehicle known to all, owes its conception to this illustrious physicist. Among the mischievous, noisy, and often distracted individualities of the little scholar world, it is above all through this supposed invention that the name of Pascal has been imposed on young minds. Many junior school students, unaware of who Descartes, Michelangelo, Denis Papin or Torricelli were, will not hesitate for a minute about Pascal. It would be interesting to know why our children, among so many admirable discoveries whose daily applications they have before their eyes, rather know Pascal and his wheelbarrow than the men of genius to whom we owe steam, the battery, beet sugar, and the stearic candle. Is it because the wheelbarrow touches them closer, interests them more, is more familiar to them? Perhaps! Be that as it may, the common mistake propagated by junior school history books could easily be unmasked: one could merely leaf through a few illuminated 13th and 14th century manuscripts where several miniatures represent medieval farmers using the wheelbarrow (9). And even without undertaking such difficult research, just a glance cast at monuments would have permitted us to reestablish the truth. Among the motifs surrounding one archivolt of the northern porch of the Beauvais Cathedral, is represented pushing his wheelbarrow, a type of wheelbarrow very similar to the ones we actually use today (Plate I) {use Image Gallery in Table of Contents to see illustrations}. The same implement can also be identified in agricultural scenes that form the subject of two carved misericords, coming from the stalls of the Abbey of Saint-Lucien near Beauvais (1492-1500)(10). Furthermore, if truth compels us to refuse to credit Pascal with a very old invention, older than his birth by several centuries, his greatness and the power of his genius are in no way diminished. The immortal author of the *Pensees*, of the calculus of probabilities, the inventor of the hydraulic press, of the calculating machine, etc., forces our admiration by works and inventions much greater and of a different scope than that of the wheelbarrow. However, that which is of consequence to elicit and that only counts for us is that, in the search for truth, it is preferable to call upon buildings rather than upon historical documents, sometimes incomplete, often tendentious, almost always unreliable.

Monsieur Andre Geiger comes to a parallel conclusion when, struck by the inexplicable homage rendered to the statue of Nero by Hadrian, he refutes the iniquitous accusations borne against this emperor and against Tiberius. Like ourselves, he denies and credibility to purposefully falsified historical accounts, on the subject of these so-called human monsters and he does not hesitate to write: "I trust monuments and logic more than I trust historical accounts".

If, as we have said, the falsification of a text, the writing of a chronicle demand nothing more than some skill and know-how, on the other hand, it is impossible to build a cathedral. Let us therefore call upon buildings; they will provide us with more serious or accurate information. There, at least, we will see our "characters portrayed alive", fixed in stone or wood with their real physiognomies, their costumes and their gestures, whether they figure in sacred scenes or are the subjects of secular compositions. We shall contact them and it will not be long before we love them. Now we will question the 13th century harvester who is sharpening his scythe on the portal of Paris, now the 15th century apothecary who, in the stalls of Amiens, is pounding some unknown drug in his wooden mortar. His neighbor, the drunkard with the red nose, is no stranger to us; we remember having met this merry drinker several times, as we ambled along. Would he not be the man who cried out in the middle of the "mystery play" before the sight of Jesus' miracle at the wedding of Cana:

"If I could do what he is doing, the entire sea of Galilee today would be turned into wine; And never on earth would there be a drop of water, nothing would rain from the sky but wine". And this beggar who escaped from the Cour des Miracles (11) bearing no other stigma of distress than his rags and his lice, we know him too. He is the one that the Companions of the Passion introduce at the feet of Christ and who miserable utters this soliloquy:

"I look at my rags to see if some money has been thrown there; Just now I heard: Give him, give! ---There isn't a penny, not even a half... a poor man has no friend".

In spite of all that has been written, we ought to accustom ourselves, willy-nilly, to the true fact that at the beginning of the Middle Ages society was already reaching a high degree of civilization and splendor. John of Salisbury, who visited Paris in 1176, expressed the most sincere enthusiasm on this topic in his *Polycraticon*. "When I saw the abundance of sustenance, the cheerfulness of the people, the good conduct of the clergy, the majesty and glory of the entire Church, the diverse occupations of men dedicated to the study of philosophy; it seemed to me that I saw Jacob's ladder whose top reached heaven and which angels ascended and descended. I was compelled to admit that truly the Lord was in this place and that I did not know it. This sentence from a poet also comes to mind: 'Happy is he who is sentenced to this place in exile!'" (12).

## II. MIDDLE AGES AND RENAISSANCE

No one disputes today the high value of medieval works. But who will ever logically explain the strange contempt whose victims they were until the 19th century? Who will tell us why, since the Renaissance, the elite of the artists, scientists, and thinkers made a special point of airing the most complete indifference for the bold creations of this misunderstood period, original among all, and so magnificently expressive of the genius of France? What was, what could have been, the profound cause of the reverse of opinion, and later, of the banishment, the exclusion that so long weighed on Gothic art? Must we indict ignorance, whim, perversion of taste? We do not know. A French writer, Charles de Remusat believes he has discovered the principal reason of this unfair contempt in the absence of literature, which does not fail to surprise. "The Renaissance", he affirms, "despised the Middle Ages because true French literature, that which followed it, erased the last traces of it. And yet medieval France offers a striking sight. Its genius was elevated and severe. It took pleasure in deep meditations and profound research; it exposed in a language without grace and without brilliance sublime truths and subtle hypotheses. It produced a singularly philosophical literature. This literature probably exercised the human spirit more than it served it. Several first rate men have successfully, albeit in vain, illustrated it; for modern generations their works do not exist. They had the intelligence and the ideas but not the talent to speak well in a language that is not stiff or awkward. Scotus Erigena reminds us at times of Plato; scarcely anyone has taken philosophical freedom farther than he, and he boldly rises in this region of the skies where truth shines only in bolts like lightning; he thought for himself in the 9th century. St. Anselm is an original metaphysician whose learned idealism regenerates common beliefs; he conceived and realized the audacious thought of directly touching the notion of divinity. He is a theologian of pure reason. St. Bernard is sometimes brilliant and ingenious, sometimes somber and moving. Mystical like Fenelon, he resembles an effective and popular Bossuet, who dominated his epoch by his speech and who commanded kings rather than praising or serving them. His unfortunate rival, his noble victim, Abelard, employed in the exposition of dialectic science and unknown rigor and a relative lucidity which shows a nervous and supple mind made to understand and explain everything. He was a great propagator of ideas. Heloise molded a dry and pedantic language so as to bring out the finesse of a brilliant intelligence, the sufferings of the proudest and most tender of souls, the raptures of a desperate passion. John of Salisbury is a clairvoyant critic, who watches the human mind as a sight or scene and who describes it in its progresses, in its movements, in its retrogressions, with premature truth and impartiality. It seems he foresaw this talent of our time, this art of examining the standstill postures of the intellectual society in order to judge it. St Thomas, embracing the entire philosophy of his time as a whole, went farther at times than ours; he has bound all of human knowledge into a perpetual syllogism and completely unwound it following the thread of a continuous reasoning, thus combing in a vast and a logical mind. Gerson finally, Gerson, theologian whose sentiments competed with deduction, who understood and neglected philosophy, knew how to subdue reason without humiliating it, how to captivate hearts without offending minds, finally how to imitate the God who invokes faith while he has us believe in him by making himself loved. All these men, and I named only a few, were great and their works admirable. But what were they lacking, to be admired and to keep a constant influence on the ensuing literature? It was neither science, thought, nor genius; I am afraid that it was only one thing: style.

"French literature does not come from them. It does not call to their authority, nor does it remember their names; it only takes pride in having obliterated them".

Hence we can conclude that if the Middle Ages received spirit as its share, the Renaissance took a malicious pleasure in imprisoning us in the letter...

What Charles de Remusat says is very judicious, at least as far as the first medieval period is concerned, when the intelligentsia appeared submissive to the Byzantine influence and still imbued with Roman doctrines. A century later, the same reasoning loses a great part of its value; one cannot dispute, for example, that the works of the epic of the round Table have a certain charm which arises from a more careful form. Thibaut, Count of Champagne, in his *Songs of the kings of Navarre*, Guillaume de Lorris and Jehan Clopinel, authors of the *Romance of the Rose*, all our *trouvères* and *troubadours* of

the 13th and 14th centuries without having the proud genius of the learned philosophers, their ancestors, knew how to pleasantly handle words and often express themselves with a grace and flexibility which characterizes today's literature.

Therefore, we do not see why the Renaissance held a grudge against the Middle Ages and recorded its supposed literary shortcomings, so as to prohibit it and to throw it back into the chaos of new civilizations emerging from barbarism.

As for us, we deem medieval thought to be of scientific nature and of no other, for which art and literature are only the humble servants of traditional science. They are appointed to symbolically translate the truths of the Middle Ages received from Antiquity, whose faithful depository or remained. Subjected to a purely allegorical expression, held under the forceful will of the same parable which removes Christian mystery from the layman, art and literature display an obvious unease and reveal some stiffness; yet, the solidity and simplicity of execution endow them with an incontestable originality. It is true that the observer will never find alluring the image of Christ, such as it is presented on Romanesque porches, where Jesus appears, at the center of the mystical almond, surrounded by the four evangelical animals. It is enough for us that his divinity be emphasized by his own emblems and announces itself as revealer of a secret teaching. We admire the Gothic masterpieces for their nobility and the boldness of their expression; if they do not have the delicate perfection of form, they possess to a supreme degree the initiatory power of a learned and transcendent philosophy. They are severe and austere productions, not the light, graceful, and pleasing motifs, such as those art fondly wasted on us since the Renaissance. But while the latter aspire only to flatter the eye or to charm the senses, the artistic and literary works of the Middle Ages are founded on higher thought, true and concrete, the cornerstone of an immutable science, the indestructible basis of Religion. If we had to define these two tendencies, one profound, the other superficial, we would say that Gothic art is entirely contained in the learned majesty of its buildings and the Renaissance in the pleasant ornament of its dwellings.

The medieval colossus did not collapse all at once in the decline of the 15th century. Here and there, its genius succeeded in resisting for a long time the imposition of the new directives. We see its agony prolonged well into the middle of the next century, and we find in some of the buildings of that period the same philosophical impulse, the same foundations of wisdom which generated for three centuries so many imperishable works. And so, without taking account of their later erections, we will consider these works of later importance but of similar meaning with the hope of discovering in them the secret idea symbolically expressed by their builders.

Notwithstanding their purpose and their use, we rank these refuges of the esotericism of antiquity, these sanctuaries of traditional science, quite rare today, in the hermetic iconology among the artistic guardians of the great philosophical truths.

Would you like an example? Here is an admirable tympanum (2) which decorated in the faraway 12th century the front door of an old house from the region of Reims (Plate II). The quite clear topic could easily do without a description. Under a great arcade inscribing two other twin arcades within it, the master teaches his disciple and points this finger to the pages of an open book on the passage which he is commenting on. Underneath, a young and vigorous athlete strangles a monstrous animal, perhaps a dragon, of which we can only see the head and neck. He stands next to two young people closely embracing. Science thus appears as the ruler of Strength and Love, opposing the superiority of mind to the physical manifestations of power and feeling.

How could one conceive that a construction signed with such a thought did not belong to some unknown philosopher? Why would we refuse to this bas-relief the credit of a symbolic conception emanating from a cultivated brain, from a learned man affirming his love of study and teaching by this example? We would be most assuredly wrong to exclude the dwelling with such a characteristic frontispiece from the number of emblematic works which we propose to study under the general title of Dwellings of the Philosophers.

(1) Charles de Remusat: *Critiques et Etudes Littéraires* (Literary Critics and Studies). (2) This tympanum is kept at the Musée Lapidaire of Reims Sculpture Museum, located in the public hospital building (former abbey of Saint-Remi, on Simon Street). It was discovered around 1857 during the construction of the prison in the foundations of the house called the Christendom of Reims, located on the site of the Parvis, and with the inscription: *Fidas, Spes, Caritas*, (Faith, Hope and Charity). This house belonged to the chapter.

### III. MEDIEVAL ALCHEMY

Of all the sciences cultivated in the Middle Ages certainly none was more in fashion and received more honor than the science of alchemy. Such is the name under which the sacred or priestly Art was hidden among the Arabs, who had inherited it from the Egyptians and which the medieval West was to receive later on with so much enthusiasm.

Many controversies have been raised about the diverse etymologies attributed to the word alchemy. Pierre-Jean Fabre in his



Summary of Chemical Secrets claims it recalls the name of Cham, son of Noah, supposed to have been the first alchemical artisan, and he writes it alchamie. The anonymous author of a curious manuscript (1) thinks that "the word alchemy is derived from als which means salt in Greek and from chymie which means fusion, and it is thus well named, since salt which is so admirable has been usurped". But if salt is named [\*39-1 ] (als) in the Greek language, [\*39-2] (cheimeia) standing for [\*39-3] (chymeia), alchemy, has no other meaning than that of sap or secretion. Others find its origin in the first renomination of the land of Egypt, native land of the sacred Art, Kymie or Chemi. Napoleon Landais finds no difference between the two words chimie and alchimie (chemistry and alchemy); he simply adds that the prefix al should not be mixed up with the Arabic article al and simply means marvelous virtue. Those who hold the opposite hypothesis, using the article al and the noun chimie, understand it to mean chemistry par excellence or the hyperchemistry of modern occultists. If we had to bring in our personal opinion in this debate, we would say that phonetic cabala recognizes a close relationship between the Greek words [\*40-1 ] (Cheimeia), [\*40-2] (Chymeia), and [\*40-3] (Cheuma), which indicates that which runs down, streams, flows, and particularly indicates molten metal, the fusion itself, as well as any work made from molten metal. This would be a brief and succinct definition of alchemy as a metallurgical technique (2). But we know, on the other hand, that the name and the thing are based on the permutation of form by light, fire or spirit; such is in any case the true meaning indicated by the Language of the Birds.

Born in the Orient, land of the mysterious and the marvelous, the alchemical science spread in the West through three great roads of penetration: Byzantine, Mediterranean, and Hispanic. It was above all the result of Arabic conquests. This curious, studious people, avidly interested in philosophy and culture, a civilizing people par excellence, forms the connecting link, the chain which connects oriental antiquity to the occidental Middle Ages. It plays in the history of human progress a role comparable to that exercised by the Phoenician merchants between Egypt and Assyria. The Arabs, educators of the Greeks and Persians, transmitted to Europe the science of Egypt and Babylon, augmented by their own acquisitions, throughout the European continent (the Byzantine Road) around the 8th century of our era. Furthermore, the Arab influence exercised its action in our countries upon the return of the expeditions to Palestine (Mediterranean Road) and it is the Crusaders of the 12th century who imported most of the ancient knowledge. Finally, closer to us, at the dawn of the 13th century, new elements of civilization, science, and art, coming around the 8th century from Northern Africa spread into Spain (the Hispanic Road) and increased the first contributions of the Greek-Byzantine center of learning.

At first timid, hesitant, alchemy progressively woke up, and it was not long before it became stronger. It tended to take the lead, and thus the exotic science transplanted to our soil acclimatized itself wonderfully to it with such vigor that it soon bloomed into an exuberant flowering. Its development, its progress was prodigious. It was barely cultivated --exclusively in the shadows of monastic cells --in the 12th century; by the 14th, it had propagated everywhere, radiating upon all social classes, shining everywhere with the brightest glow. Every country gave to the mysterious science a nursery of fervent disciples, and each social condition devoted itself to it. Nobility and the upper middle class practiced it. Scholars, monks, princes, prelates professed it; even master craftsmen, minor artisans, goldsmiths, gentle glassmakers, enamellers, apothecaries, experienced the irresistible desire to handle the retort. And if no one worked it it openly --royal authority hunted down the puffers and the Popes fulminated against them (3) --no one failed to study it undercover. The company of philosophers, true ones or pretenders, was avidly sought after. These philosophers undertook long trips with the intention of augmenting their knowledge, or they wrote one another from country to country, kingdom to kingdom, using a cipher. People fought over the manuscripts of the great Adepts, those of the cosmopolitan Zosimus, Ostanes, Synesius, over copies of Geber, Rhazes, Artpehius. The books of Morien, Mary the prophet, the fragments of Hermes were traded at an exorbitant price. Intellectuals were seized by the fever, and thanks to the help of fraternities, lodges, initiation centers, the puffers grew and multiplied. Few families escaped the pernicious attraction of the golden chimera; very rare were those who did not count in their midst some practicing alchemist, some hunter of the impossible. Imagination was given free reign. The auri sacra fames (accursed hunger for gold) ruined the nobleman, caused despair in the common man, starved anyone who let himself be caught, and profited only the charlatans. Lenglet Dufresnoy (4) writes: "Abbots, bishops, doctors, recluses, all made it their occupation; it was the folly of the time, and everyone knows that every century has one which is its own; but unfortunately, this one lasted longer than the others and is not even completely over".

With what passion, what spirit, what hopes the cursed science envelops the Gothic cities sleeping under the stars! Subterranean and secret fermentation which, as soon as night has come, fills the deep cellars with strange pulsations, emitted from ventilation grills in intermittent bursts, and climbs in sulphurous volutes to the top of the gables!

After the famous name of Artepheus (around 1130), the renown of the masters who succeeded him consecrates the hermetic reality and stimulated the ardor of the candidates to Adepthood. In the 13th century, there is the illustrious English monk, Roger Bacon, whom his disciples nickname Doctor admirabilis (1214-1292) and whose enormous reputation becomes universal; next comes France, with Alain de l'Isle, doctor of Paris and monk of Citeaux (who died around 1298); Christopher the Parisian (around 1260); and Master Arnold of Villanova (1245-1310), while in Italy Thomas Aquinas ---



Doctor angelicus ---(1225) and the monk Ferrari (1280) shine.

The 14th century sees a whole new pleiad of artists emerge. Raymond Lully ---Doctor illuminatus ---a Spanish Franciscan monk (1235-1315); John Dastin, an English philosopher; John Cremer, Abbot of Westminster; Richard nicknamed Robert the Englishman, author of *Correctum alchymiae* (around 1330); the Italian Petrus Bonus of Lombardy; the French Pope John XXII (1244-1317); William of Paris, inventor of the hermetic bas-reliefs on the porch of Notre-Dame; Jehan de Mehun, called Clopinel, one of the authors of the *Romance of the Rose* (1280-1364); Grasseus, nicknamed Hortulanus, commentator on the Emerald Table (1358); finally, the most famous and the most popular philosopher of our country, the alchemist Nicholas Flamel (1330-1417).

The 15th century marks the glorious period of the science and surpasses even the preceding ones as much by the value as by the number of the masters who rendered it illustrious. Among them, Basil Valentine should be quoted first, a Benedictine monk from the abbey of St Peter's at Erfurt, in the electorate of Mainz (about 1413), perhaps the most significant artist the hermetic art has ever produced; one ought to also cite his compatriot, the abbot Trithemius; Isaac Hollandus (1408); the two Englishmen, Thomas Norton and George Ripley; Lampsprinck; George Aurach of Strasbourg (1415); the Calabrian monk Lacinius (1459); and the noble Bernard Trevisan (106-1490) who spent 56 years of his life pursuing the Great Work, and whose name will remain in the history of alchemy as a symbol of constancy, unshakable perseverance and obstinacy.

From that moment on, hermetism falls into discredit. Its very supporters, embittered by failure, turn against it. Attacked from all sides, its prestige disappears; enthusiasm decreases, opinion is modified. Practical operations, which had been collected, gathered after being unveiled and taught, allow dissidents to support the thesis of the alchemical void, to ruin philosophy while building the basis of our chemistry. Seton, Wenceslas Lavinius of Moravia, Zacharius, and Paracelsus are, in the 16th century, the only known heirs to the Egyptian esotericism, which the Renaissance rejected after corrupting it. Let us, in passing, pay a supreme tribute to the passionate defender of antique truths ---Paracelsus; the great tribune deserves from us eternal gratitude for his ultimate and courageous intervention. Although it was in vain, his intervention is nonetheless one of his highest titles to fame.

The hermetic art prolongs its agony until the 17th century and finally passes away, after having given to the occidental world three offsprings of great influence: Lascaris, President d'Espagnet, and the mysterious Eirenaeus Philalethes, a living enigma whose true identity has never been uncovered.

(1) *L'Interruption du Somneil cabalistique ou le Devoilement des Tableaux de l'Antiquite* (The Interruption of Cabalistic Sleep, or Unveiling of Paintings from Antiquity), 18th century manuscripts with drawing ---Bibliotheque de Arsenal # 2520 (175 S.A.F.), Bibl. Nat., old French funds, # 670 (7123), 17th Cty., Bibl. St Genevieve, #2267, treatise II, 18th cty. (2) And still this definition would be more appropriate for archimyy or voarchadumy, a branch of the science which teaches the transmutation of metals into one or another rather than alchemy proper. (3) Cf. Papal bull *Spondet pariter*, issued against alchemists by Pope John XXII in 1317, who nonetheless had written a very singular *Ars Transmutatoria Metallorum*. (4) Lenglet-Dufresnoy, *Histoire de la Philosophie Hermetique* (History of Hermetic Philosophy), Paris Coustelier, 1742.

#### **IV. THE LEGENDARY LABORATORY**

With its following of mystery and the unknown, behind its veil of illuminism and marvel, alchemy evokes a past full of distant stories, wonderful tales, and surprising testimonies. Its singular theories, its strange recipes, the time-honored reputation of its great masters, the passionate arguments it aroused, the favor it enjoyed in the Middle Ages, its obscure, enigmatic and paradoxical literature, seem to give off today the smell of mustiness, of rarified air acquired over long years by empty tombs, dead flowers, abandoned dwellings, yellowed parchments.

The Alchemist? ---A meditative elderly man, with a grave forehead, crowned with white hair, a pale and wasted silhouette, an original character from a long gone humanity and a forgotten world, an obstinate recluse, stooped by years of study, late nights, persevering research and unscrambling of the enigmas of the high science. Such is the philosopher that the poet's imagination or the painter's brush like to depict for us.

His laboratory ---cave, cell, or ancient crypt ---is dimly lit by gloomy daylight diffused through the myriad dusty spider webs. Yet, it is there, amidst the silence, that the prodigy is slowly accomplished. Untiring nature works ---better than in the rocky abysses ---under the prudent attention of man, with the help of the stars and the grace of God. Occult labor, Cyclopean and thankless task, as vast as a nightmare! At the center of this in pace ---in peace, a being, a scholar for whom nothing else exists any more, watches, attentive and patient, over the successive stages of the Great Work...

As our eyes become accustomed to the darkness, thousands of things emerge from the shadow, are revealed, and take on a precise shape. Good Lord, where are we? Could it be Polyphemus' den or Vulcan's cave?

Near us, an extinguished forge, covered with dust and metal scales; the anvil, hammer, tongs, shears, clamp irons; rusted ingot molds; the rough and powerful tools of the metallurgist ended up there. In a corner, thick books heavily bound with iron ---such as antiphonals ---with signets sealed with antiquated leads; ashy manuscripts, mysterious books piled up; yellowed volumes filled with notes and formulas, stained from the incipit to the text. Flasks, bulging like good monks, filled with opalescent emulsions, pale green, blue-green, or flesh- colored liquids, exhale these stale acid odors whose sharpness contradicts the throat and stings the nose.

On the hood of the furnace strange oblong vessels are aligned, with short pipes, caulked and covered with wax; mattresses, with spheres, rainbowed by metallic deposits, extend their necks, sometimes cylindrical and slender, sometimes widened or inflated; greenish homed vessels, retorts, and pottery dishes sit next to crucibles made of red and flame-like earth. In the far corner, placed on their straw baskets all along a stone cornice, philosophical eggs, in transparent and elegant contrast to the massive and rounded cucurbit ---praegnans cucurbita.

Damnation! Here are now some anatomical specimens, skeletal fragments: blackened, toothless skulls, repugnant with their beyond-the-grave grin; suspended human fetuses, desiccated and shriveled, miserable remnants showing their minute bodies, their parchment heads, sneering and pitiful. These round, vitreous and golden eyes are those of an owl with dull feathers, which stands next to the alligator, giant salamander, another important symbol of the practice. The fearsome reptile emerges from an obscure recess, stretches the chain of his vertebrae on his stout legs and directs the bony abyss of his frightful jaws towards the arched ceiling.

Placed randomly, in case of need, on the bed-plate of the furnace, notice these vitrified pots, aludels, and sublimatories; these pelicans with thick walls; these infemal vessels similar to large eggs whose chalazas are visible, these olive-colored bottles buried in the middle of the sand against the athanor, with its light fumes climbing over the ribbed vault. Here is the copper alembic ---homo galeatus (1) ---stained with green smudges; there the descensories, the cucurbits and their antenos, the two brothers or twins of the cohobation; coiled receivers; heavy cast-iron and marble mortars; a large bellows with its wrinkled leather sides, near a pile of muffles, tiles, cupels, and evaporators...

A chaotic conglomeration of archaic instruments, bizarre materials and out-of-date utensils; a confusion of all sciences, a tangle of impressive faunas! And, looking down upon this disorder, affixed to the keystone of the vault, a pendant with spread wings, the great raven, hieroglyph of material death and its decompositions, the mysterious emblem of the mysterious operations.

Curious a well is the wall, or at least what is left of it. Some inscriptions of mystical meaning fill the voids: *Hic lapis est subtus te, supra te, erga te et circa te* (2), mnemonic verses entangle themselves, whimsically engraved with a stiletto on soft stone; one of them dominates, carved in Gothic cursive writing: *Azoth et ignis tibi sufficient*(3), Hebrew characters; circles intersected with triangles, interspersed with quadrilateral figures in the manner of Gnostic signatures. Here, a thought based on the dogma of unity summarizes all of philosophy: *Omnia ab uno et in unum omnia* (4). Elsewhere, the image of the scythe, emblem of the 13th Arcanum and the house of Saturn; the Star of Solomon; the symbol of Cancer, supplication of the evil spirit; a few passages from Zoroaster, witness to the great antiquity of the accursed sciences. Finally, bathing in the light field of the basement window and more legible in this labyrinth of imprecisions, the hermetic ternary: Salt, Sulphur, Mercury...

Such is the legendary painting of the alchemist and his laboratory. Fantastic vision, lacking truth, sprung from popular imagination and reproduced in the old almanacs, treasures of the peddler's trade.

Puffers, magicians, sorcerers, astrologers, necromancers?

Anathema and malediction!

(1) Translator's Note: Helmeted man. (2) Translator's Note: This stone is directly beneath you, above you, in you, all around you. (3) Translator's Note: Nitrogen and fire will suffice. (4) Translator's Note: All from one and in one all.

## **V. CHEMISTRY AND PHILOSOPHY**

Chemistry, incontestably, is the science of facts, just as alchemy is that of causes. The first, confined to the material domain, is supported by experiment. The second preferably takes its directives from philosophy. While the object of the first is the study of natural bodies, the other tries to penetrate the mysterious dynamics which preside over their transformations. Therein lies their essential difference, enabling us to say that alchemy, compared with our positive science, the only one permitted and taught today, is a spiritualistic chemistry, for it allows us to catch a glimpse of God through the darkness of

substance.

Furthermore, in our opinion, it seems insufficient to know how to recognize and classify facts exactly; one must still question nature, and learn from her in what conditions and under the control of what will her manifold productions can take place. Indeed, the philosophical mind will not be content with the mere possibility of identifying bodies. It demands the knowledge of the secret of their elaborations. To open ajar the door of the laboratory where nature mixes the elements, is good; to discover the occult force under whose influence her work is accomplished, is better. We are obviously far from knowing all natural bodies and their combinations, since we discover new ones daily; but we know enough to temporarily leave aside the study of inert matter and direct our researches towards the unknown animator, agent of so many marvels.

To say, for example, that two volumes of hydrogen combined with one volume of oxygen yield water, states a chemical banality. And yet, who will teach us why the result of this combination presents, in a special state, characteristics which the gases that produced it do not possess? What then is the agent which imposes its new specificity upon the compound and forces the water, solidified by cold, always to crystallize in the same system? Furthermore, if the fact is undeniable and rigorously controlled, why is it that it is impossible for us to reproduce it simply by reading the formula charged with explaining its mechanism? For, in the notation  $H_2O$ , the essential agent, capable of provoking the intimate union of the gaseous elements is missing --i.e., fire. Yet, we challenge the most skilled chemist to manufacture synthetic water by mixing oxygen and hydrogen in the indicated volumes: the two gases will always refuse to combine with one another. To succeed in the experiment, it is essential to introduce fire, either in the form of a spark, or in the form of an ignited body or still a body liable to be brought to the point of incandescence (platinum sponge). So one recognizes, without being able to oppose the least serious argument to our thesis, that the chemical formula of water is, if not false, at least incomplete and truncated. And the elemental agent fire, without which no combination can be effected, being excluded from the chemical notation, the entire science proves to be filled with gaps and incapable of providing through its formulas a logical and true explanation of the studied phenomena. "Physical chemistry", writes A. Etard (1), "lures the majority of research minds. It is the one which touches most closely on profound truths and which will slowly give us laws capable of changing all of our systems and our formulas. However, by its very importance, this kind of chemistry is the most abstract and the most mysterious that exists. During the short moments of a creative thought, the best minds cannot succeed in applying and comparing all the great well-known facts. Faced with this impossibility, they resort to mathematical representations. These representations are most often perfect in their methods and results; but in their application to what is deeply unknown, we cannot make mathematics reveal truths whose elements we have not given them, The most gifted man presents the problem badly which he does not understand. If these problems could be correctly formulated in an equation, we could have the hope of resolving them. But, in our present state of ignorance, we are fatally compelled to introduce numerous constants, to neglect certain terms, and to apply hypotheses. Putting the problem into an equation is perhaps no longer altogether correct. Even so, we console ourselves because it leads to a solution; but, it is a temporary arrest of the progress of science when such solutions are imposed for years on good minds as a scientific demonstration. A lot of work is done in this direction which takes time and which leads to contradictory theories, destined to be forgotten".

These famous theories, which were long evoked and opposed to hermetic conceptions, see their solidity strongly compromised today. Sincere scientists, belonging to the creative schools of the same hypotheses ---considered to be certainties ---only grant them a very relative value; their field of action diminishes concurrently with the decrease of their power of investigation. Monsieur Emile Picard in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* expresses this state of affairs with a frankness revealing of the true scientific spirit. "As for theories", he writes, "they do not even propose to provide a casual explanation for the reality itself, but only to translate it into images or mathematical symbols. We ask of theories, which are tools of the trade, to coordinate, at least for a while, known phenomena and to predict new ones. When their fecundity is exhausted, we try to make them undergo transformations which the discovery of new facts have rendered necessary". And so, contrary to philosophy which precedes facts, ensures the direction of ideas, and their practical connection; theories, conceived after the fact and modified according to the results of experiments as new acquisitions are made, always reflect the uncertainty of provisional things, and give modern science a character to perpetual empiricism. Numerous chemical facts, seriously observed, resist logic and defy all reason. "For example", J. Duclaux (2) says, "bivalent copper iodide spontaneously decomposes into iodine and monovalent copper iodide. Since iodine is an oxidizer and copper salts are reducing agents, this decomposition cannot be explained. The formation of extremely unstable compounds, such as nitrogen trichloride, is equally inexplicable. We can no more understand why gold, which is resistant to acids and alkalies, even when concentrated and hot, dissolves in a cold dilute solution of potassium cyanide; why hydrogen sulfide is more volatile than water; why sulphur chloride, composed of two elements each of which combine with potassium forming incandescence, is itself without action on this metal".

We have just spoken of fire; and yet, we only envisage it in its common form and not in its spiritual essence, which introduces itself in bodies at the very moment of their appearance on the physical plane. What we want to demonstrate

without leaving the alchemical domain, is the grave error which dominates all of modern science and which prevents it from recognizing this universal principle which animates substance, to whatever kingdom it belongs. Yet it manifests itself all around us, under our very eyes, either by the new properties which matter inherits from it or by the phenomena which accompany its liberation. Light ---rarified and spiritualized fire ---possesses the same chemical virtues and power as elementary crude fire. An experiment, with the object of synthetically creating hydrochloric acid (HCl) from its components, amply demonstrates it. If we put equal volumes of chlorine and hydrogen gas in a glass flask, the two gases will keep their own individuality as long as the flask that contains them is kept in darkness. With some diffused light, they progressively combine. But if we expose the vessel to direct solar rays, it explodes and shatters violently.

The objection will be raised that fire, considered a mere catalyst, is not an integral part of the substance and therefore cannot be indicated in the expression of chemical formulas. The argument is more fallacious than true, since the experiment itself belies it. Here is a piece of sugar in whose equation there is no equivalent for fire; if we break it in darkness, we will see a blue spark shoot out from it. Where does it come from? Where would it be contained if not in the crystalline structure of the saccharose? We mentioned water; let us throw on its surface a fragment of potassium: it spontaneously bursts into flame and burns energetically. Where is this visible flame hiding? It matters little whether it be in water, air, or metal; the essential point is that it potentially exists inside one or the other of these bodies, perhaps in the three. What is phosphorus, the light-bearer and generator of fire? How do noctilucas, glowworms and fireflies transform part of their vital energy into light? What compels the salts of uranium, cerium, and zirconium to become fluorescent when they have been submitted to the action of sunlight? By what mysterious synchronism does barium platinum cyanide shine when in contact with Roentgen rays?

Let no one come and talk to us about oxidation being in the normal order of igneous phenomena. It would be deferring the question rather than resolving it. Oxidation is a result, not a cause. It is a combination, subject to an active principle, to an agent. If some energetic oxidations disengage heat or fire, it is most certainly because this fire was already engaged in it. The electrical fluid, silent, obscure, and cold runs through its metallic conductor without otherwise influencing it nor revealing its passage. But if it meets with resistance, the energy immediately reveals itself with the qualities and in the form of fire. A lamp filament becomes incandescent, the charcoal of a retort ignites, the most refractory metallic wire melts at once. So, isn't electricity indeed fire or a potential fire? Where does it draw its origin if not from decomposition (batteries), or from the disintegration of metals (dynamos), bodies highly charged with the igneous principle? Let us detach a particle of steel or of iron by grinding it on a stone or by striking it against a flint and we will see a spark shining, thus freed. We know the pneumatic lighter well enough, based on the property possessed by atmospheric air being ignited by simple compression. Liquids themselves are often genuine reservoirs of fire. It suffices to pour a few drops of concentrated nitric acid on oil of turpentine to provoke its inflammation. In the category of salts let us mention in passing fulminate, nitrocellulose, potassium picrate, etc.

Without further multiplying examples, we see that it would be childish to maintain that fire, because we do not directly perceive it in matter, does not really exist there in a latent state. Ancient alchemists, who had, according to traditional sources, more knowledge than we are willing to grant them, assured us that the sun is a cold star and that its rays are dark (3). Nothing would seem more paradoxical nor more contrary to appearances, and yet nothing is truer. A few moments of reflection allow us to become convinced. If the sun were a globe of fire, as we are taught, it would be enough to approach it, even a little, to experience the effect of a growing heat. Precisely the opposite occurs. High mountains remain crowded with snow despite the heat of summer. In the elevated regions of the atmosphere when the sun reaches its zenith, the cupolas of hot-air balloons are covered with frost and the passengers suffer from intense cold. So, experience demonstrates that temperature goes down as altitude increases. Even light is only visible to us in as much as we are placed in its field of radiation. If we are outside the radiant beam, its action ceases for our eyes. It is a well-known fact that an observer looking at the sky from the bottom of a well at noon sees the starry night sky.

Whence, then, do heat and light come? From the simple shock of cold and dark vibrations against the gaseous molecules of our atmosphere. And since resistance increases in direct proportion to the density of the environment, heat and light are stronger on the surface of the earth than at great altitudes because the strata of air are also denser. Such is, at least, the physical explanation of the phenomenon. In fact, and according to hermetic theory, the opposition of the vibratory movement, the reactions are nothing more than the first causes of an effect which translates into the liberation of luminous and fiery atoms from atmospheric air. Under the action of the vibratory bombardment, the spirit, freed from the body, takes on, for our senses, physical qualities characteristic of its active phase: luminosity, brilliance, heat.

Thus, the only approach that we can address to chemical science is that it does not take into account the igneous agent, spiritual principle and basis of energetics, under whose influence all material transformations occur. It is the systematic exclusion of this spirit, higher will, and hidden dynamism of things, which deprives modern chemistry of the philosophical

character alchemy possesses. "You believe", writes Monsieur Henri Helier to Monsieur L. Olivier (4) , "in the indefinite fruitfulness of experience. Indeed, but experimentation has always been led by a preconceived idea, by a philosophy. An idea often almost absurd in appearance, a philosophy sometimes bizarre and disconcerting in its signs. 'If I told you how I make my discoveries', Faraday used to say, 'you would take me for an imbecile'. All the great chemists thus had ideas in the back of their heads which they never revealed... It is from their work that we have extracted our methods and our present theories; they are the most precious result, but they were not the origin".

"The alembic, with its serious and sedate airs", says an anonymous (5) philosopher, "has gathered an enormous clientele in chemistry. Just try to trust it; it is an unfaithful depository, a usurer. You entrust it with a perfectly healthy object, endowed with incontestable natural properties, having a form which constitutes its existence. It returns to you shapeless, in powder form or in gaseous form. It pretends to give you everything back when it has kept everything, minus the weight, which is nothing since it comes from a cause independent of the body itself. And the union of scientists sanctions this horrible usury! You give it wine, it gives you back tannin, alcohol and water in equal weights. What is missing there? The taste, that is the only thing which makes wine what it is, and so on with everything else. Because you have extracted three things from wine, gentlemen chemists, you say: wine is made of three things. Turn them back into wine or else I will say to you: these are three things which are made from the wine. You can undo what you have done, but you will never remake that which you have undone in nature. Bodies only resist you in proportion to how strongly they are compounded, and you call simple bodies all those that resist you: vanity!

"I like the microscope; it simply shows us things as they are, merely extending our perception, therefore it is the scientists who attribute opinions to it. But when, deeply immersed in the smallest details, these gentlemen come to bring to the microscope the smallest grain or the smallest droplet, the sarcastic instrument seems to say to them by showing them live animals there: Analyze those for me. So, what is the analysis? Vanity, vanity!

"Finally, when a learned doctor cuts into a cadaver with his scalpel to find the causes of the illness that killed the victim, using a microscope he can only find the results. For the cause of death is in that of life, and true medicine, that which Christ naturally practiced, and which is being scientifically reborn with homeopathy, the medicine of similarities, can only be studied on life. And, as far as life is concerned, since there is nothing which resembles a living being less than a dead one, anatomy is the most pitiful of vanities.

"So are all instruments a cause of error? Far from it; but they indicate truth within limits that are so restricted that their truth is nothing but a vanity. Therefore, it is impossible to attach absolute truth to it. This is what I call the impossible of the real and which I make note of in order to affirm the possible of the marvelous".

Positive in its facts, chemistry remains negative in its spirit. And this precisely differentiates it from the hermetic science, whose proper domain consists above all in the study of efficient causes, of their influences, and of the modalities which they take on according to the settings and conditions. This study, exclusively philosophical, allows man to penetrate the mystery of facts, to grasp its vastness, and to finally identify it with the Supreme Intelligence, soul of the Universe, Light, God. And so, alchemy, making its way from the concrete to the abstract, from material positivism to pure spiritualism, broadens the field of human consciousness, of possibilities of action, and realizes the union of God with Nature, of Creation with the Creator, of Science with Religion.

Let no one see in this argument any unfair or tendentious criticism directed against chemists. We respect all workers of whatever profession they may belong, and we personally profess the deepest admiration for the great scientists whose discoveries have so magnificently enriched modern science. But the thing which, along with us, men of good faith will regret is not so much differences of opinion freely expressed as the unfortunate intentions of a narrow sectarianism, injecting discord between the partisans of one doctrine and another. Life is too short, too precious to waste in vain polemics, and it does not honor oneself to despise the knowledge of others. Furthermore, it matters little that so many seekers go astray, if they are sincere and if their error itself leads them to useful acquisitions; *errare humanum est*, to err is human, says the old proverb and illusion often adorns itself with the diadem of truth. Those who persevere in spite of failure have a right to our regard. Unfortunately, scientific spirit is a rare quality in men of science, and we can trace this lack back to the origin of the strife we mentioned. From the fact that a truth is neither demonstrated nor demonstrable using the means at the disposal of science, we cannot infer that it will never be so. "The word impossible is not French", said Arago; we add that it is contrary to the true scientific spirit. To call a thing impossible because its present possibility remains doubtful, is to lack confidence in the future and to deny progress. Doesn't Lemery (6) commit a serious indiscretion when he dares to write about the alkahest or universal solvent: "As for me, I believe it to be imaginary, because I do not know of any". It will be agreed that our chemist overestimated the value and extent of his knowledge. Harrys, a mind refractory to hermetic thought, thus defined alchemy without ever having desired to study it: *Ars sine arte, cujus principium est menuri, medium laborare et*

finis mendicare(7) .

Next to these scientists locked up in their ivory tower, next to these men of incontestable merit it is true, yet others, the slaves of tenacious prejudices, did not hesitate to grant civil rights to the old science. Spinoza and Leibnitz believed in the Philosophers' Stone, the chrysopea; Pascal became certain of it (8). Nearer to us, a few celebrated minds, among others Sir Humphrey Davy, thought that hermetic research could lead to unexpected results. Jean- Baptiste Dumas, in his Lessons on Chemical Philosophy, expresses himself in these terms: "Would it be possible to admit the existence of simple isomeric bodies? This question comes very close to the transmutation of metals. Resolved affirmatively, it would give chances of success to the search for the Philosophers' Stone... We must therefore consult experimentation, and experimentation, it must be said, is until now not in opposition the possibility of the transmutation of simple bodies... It is even opposed to rejecting this idea as an absurdity which could be demonstrated by the present state of our knowledge". Francois- Vincent Raspail was a convinced alchemist and the works of the classical alchemist and the works of the classical philosophers occupied a prominent place among his other books. Ernest Bosc (9) tells us that Auguste Cahours, member of the Academy of Sciences, had told him that his venerated master, Chevreul, professed the greatest esteem for our old alchemists, and his rich library contained almost all the important works of the hermetic philosophers (10). It even appears that the dean of the students of France, as Chevreul called himself, had learned a great deal from these old books, and he owed them part of his beautiful discoveries. The illustrious Chevreul knew how to read between the lines much of the information that had not been noticed before him. One of the most famous of the masters of the chemical science, Marcellin Berthelot, was not content to adopt the opinion of the college. Contrary to a number of his colleagues who spoke boldly of alchemy without knowing it, he devoted more than 20 years to a patient study of original Greek and Arabic texts. And from this long contact with the ancient masters, the conviction was born in him that "hermetic principles as a whole are as tenable as the best modern theories". If we are not held by the promise that we had made to them, we could add to these scientists the names of certain scientific leaders, entirely given to the Art of Hermes, but whose very situation forces them to practice it only in secret.

Today, although the unity of substance ---basis of the doctrine taught since antiquity by all alchemists ---is received and officially sanctioned, it does not seem that the idea of transmutation has followed the same progression. This fact is all the more surprising because we could not agree with the one without conceiving the possibility of the other. Furthermore, given the great antiquity of the hermetic thesis, we would have some reason to think that in the course of centuries it could possible have been confirmed by experimentation. It is true that scientists usually do not pay much attention to this kind of argument; testimonies most worthy of faith and best supported seem suspect to them, either they ignore them or they prefer not to be interested in them. So as not to be accused of showing ill will by distorting their thought, and so as to allow the reader to exercise his judgment in all freedom, we submit to his appreciation the opinions of modern scientists and philosophers on the subject that concerns us. Jean Finot (11), having called upon competent men, asked them the following question: In the present state of science is metallic transmutation possible or realizable? Can it even be considered as realized in the condition of our knowledge? Here are the answers that he received:

Dr Max Nordeau ---"Allow me to abstain from all discussions about the transmutation of matter. I adopt the dogma (it is one) of the unity of matter, the hypothesis of the evolution of chemical elements from the lightest to the heaviest atomic weight, and even the theory --imprudently called law of periodicity ---of Mendeleev. I do not deny the theoretical possibility of artificially recreating, through laboratory means, a part of this evolution naturally produced in billions or trillions of years by cosmic forces and to transform lighter metals into gold. But I do not believe our century will witness the realization of the dream of the alchemists".

Henri Poincare ---"Science cannot, and must not say never! It is possible that one day we will discover the principle of fabricating gold. But for now, the problem does not seem to be resolved". Madame Marie Curie ---"Though it is true that spontaneous atomic transformations have been observed in radioactive bodies, (the production of helium by these bodies you mention and which is perfectly correct), we can, on the other hand, affirm that no transformation of a simple body has yet been obtained by the effort of man or due to the devices imagined by him. It is therefore at present totally useless to consider the possible consequences of the fabrication of gold".

Gustave Le Bon ---"It is possible to transform steel into gold, as we transform, it is said, uranium into radium and helium --- but these transformations will most likely be on the scale of billionths of a milligram, and it would be then much more economical to extract gold from the sea which contains tons of it".

Ten years later, a popular scientific journal (12), devoted to the same inquiry, published the following opinions:

Charles Richet, professor at the Faculty of Medicine, member of the Institute, holder of the Nobel Prize ---"I admit that I have no opinion on this question".

Urabin and Jules Perrin ---"Unless there were a revolution in the art of exploiting natural forces, synthetic gold ---if it is not just a fantasy ---will not be worth being industrially exploited".

Charles Moureu ---"The fabrication of gold is not an absurd hypothesis! It is about the only affirmation that a true scientist can make... A scientist declares nothing a priori... Transmutation is a fact that we notice every day".

To this thought so courageously expressed, thought of a bold mind, gifted with the most noble scientific spirit and with a profound sense of truth, we will oppose another one very different in quality. It is the estimation of Henry Le Chatelier, member of the Institute, professor of chemistry at the Faculty of Sciences, "I absolutely refuse any interview on the topic of synthetic gold. I consider that it must come from some attempt of fraud, like the famous diamonds of Lemoine".

In truth, it would be difficult to use fewer words and less amenities to show how much contempt for the old Adepts, venerated masters of present alchemists. For our author, who has probably never opened a hermetic book, transmutation is synonymous with charlatanism. As the disciple of these great vanished men, it seems rather natural that we should inherit their unfortunate reputation. Who cares; there is our glory, the only one, by the way, which academic ignorance, proud of its gadgets: crosses, seals, palms, and parchments, condescends to grant us when it finds the opportunity. But let us allow the donkey to gravely carry its relics and let us resume our topic.

The responses that we have just read, except for that of Charles Moureu, are similar in content. They spring from the same source. Academic spirit has dictated them. Our scientists accept the theoretical possibility of transmutation; they refuse to believe in its material reality. They deny after having affirmed it. It is a convenient way to wait and see, to not compromise oneself nor to leave the domain of the relative.

Can we take atomic transformations into account when they concern a few molecules of a substance? How can we acknowledge them an absolute value when we can only control them indirectly through indirect means? Is that a mere concession the moderns are making to the ancients? We have never heard the hermetic science had asked for alms. We know it to be wealthy enough in observations and positive facts not to be reduced to begging. Besides, the theoretical idea that our chemists are defending today belongs without dispute to the alchemists. It is their property, and no one could refuse them the privilege of an admitted priority of fifteen centuries. They are the men who first demonstrated its effective realization, issuing from the unity of substance, the invulnerable basis of their philosophy. Furthermore, we ask why modern science, gifted with multiple and powerful means, rigorous methods served by precise and perfected tools, took so long to recognize the veracity of the hermetic principle? Then are we entitled to conclude that the ancient alchemists, using very simple processes, had nevertheless experimentally discovered the formal proof capable of imposing the concept of metallic transmutation as an absolute truth. Our predecessors were neither insane nor impostors, and the mother idea which guided their works, the very one which infiltrates scientific spheres of our times, is foreign to the hypothetical principles, whose fluctuation and vicissitudes of which our rimes have no idea.

We assert therefore, without taking sides, that the great scientists whose opinions we have quoted are mistaken when they negate the lucrative result of transmutation. They are mistaken about the constitution and the profound qualities of matter, though they believe they have fathomed all its mysteries. Alas, the complexity of their theories, amount of words created to explain the inexplicable, and above all, the pernicious influence of materialistic education, pushes them to search far away for that which is within their reach. Mathematicians for the most part, lose in simplicity and common sense that which they gain in human logic and numerical rigor. They dream of imprisoning nature into a formula, of putting life into an equation. So, by successive deviations they unconsciously succeed in getting so far from simple truth that they justify the harsh words of the Gospel: "They have eyes not to see and minds not to understand!".

Would it be possible to bring these men back to a less complicated conception of things, to guide these lost ones towards the light of spirituality which they are lacking? We shall attempt it, and shall first say, addressing those who are willing to follow us, that living nature is not to be studied outside of its activity. The analysis of the molecule and the atom teaches nothing: It is incapable of resolving the most elevated problem that a scientist is capable of presenting: What is the essence of this invisible and mysterious dynamism which animates substance? For what do we know of life, except that we find its physical consequence in the phenomenon of movement. Everything is life and movement on this earth. Vital activity, very apparent in animals and vegetables, is no less apparent in the mineral kingdom, although it requires sharper attention by the observer. Metals are indeed living and sensitive bodies. Proofs are: the mercury thermometer, silver salts, fluorides, etc. What is dilation and contraction if not two effects of metallic dynamism, two manifestations of mineral life? Yet, it is not enough for the philosopher to only notice the elongation of an iron bar submitted to heat, he must know that metal under the influence of caloric radiations opens its pores, distends its molecules, and increases its surface and volume. It 'blooms' in a manner of speaking, as we ourselves do under the action of the benevolent solar effluvia. It cannot therefore be denied

that such a reaction has a profound non material cause, for we would not know how to explain without this impulse what other force would oblige crystalline particles to leave their apparent inertia. This metallic will, the very soul of metal, is clearly made evident in one of the beautiful experiments by Ch.-Ed. Guillaume. A calibrated steel bar is submitted to a continuous and progressive traction whose power is measured with the aid of a dynamograph. When the bar is about to give, it shows a constriction, and the exact spot is marked. The extension ceases, and the bar is restored to its original dimensions, then the experiment is begun again. This time the constriction occurs in a point different from the first. By following the same technique, we will notice that all points on the bar have been successively treated, giving in one after the other to the same traction. And, if we calibrate the steel bar one last time, starting the experiment again from the very beginning, we verify that we need to use a much greater force than the one used first in order to provoke the return of the rupture symptoms. Ch.-Ed. Guillaume concludes from these experiments, with much reason, that the metal behaved as an organic body would have done. It has successively reinforced all its weak parts and purposefully increased its coherence to better defend its integrity. An analogous teaching can be derived from the study of saline crystallized compounds. If the angle of intersection of any crystal is broken and if its is plunged thus mutilated back into the mother liquor which produced it, not only does it immediately repair its wound, but it also grows with a greater speed than that of intact crystals which had remained in the same solution. We discover yet another evident proof of metallic vitality in the fact that in the United States, the tracks of railroads show without any apparent reason the effects of an unusual evolution. Nowhere are the derailings more frequent or the catastrophes more inexplicable. Engineers charged with the study of the cause of these multiple ruptures attribute them to "premature aging" of the steel. Under the probable influence of special climatic conditions, the metal ages quickly, early; it loses its elasticity, malleability, resistance; its tenacity and cohesion seem lessened, to the extent that it becomes dry and brittle. Moreover, this metallic degeneration is not uniquely limited to rails. It also extends its ravages to the armor plates of battleships which are generally taken out of service after a few months of usage. Upon testing, we are surprised to see them break into several pieces under the shock of a mere drop ball. The weakening of the vital energy, normal and characteristic phase of decrepitude, of the senility of the metal, is the precursor sign of its coming death. Since death, corollary of life, is the direct consequence of birth, it follows that metals and minerals manifest their subjection to the law of predestination which rules all created beings. To be born, to live, to die, or to transform oneself are the three stages of a unique period embracing all physical activity. And since this essential function of this activity is to renew, to continue oneself, and to produce oneself through regeneration we are brought to believe that metals as well as animals and vegetables, bear in themselves the faculty of multiplying their species.

Such is the analogical truth that alchemy has tried to practice. And, such is also the hermetic idea, which it has seemed necessary to us to emphasize first of all. So, philosophy teaches and experimentation demonstrates that metals, thanks to their own "seed", can be reproduced and developed in quantity. Anyway, this is what the word of God reveals in Genesis, when the Creator transmits a particle of His activity to creatures issued from His very substance. For the divine logos, grow and multiply does not apply uniquely and only to man. It is meant for the entirety of living beings spread throughout nature.

(1) A. Etard; *Revue Annuelle de Chimie pure (Annual Review of Pure Chemistry)*, in *Revue des Sciences*, Sept. 30, 1896, p. 775. (2) J. Duclaux; *La Chimie de la Matière vivante (Chemistry of Living Matter)*, Paris, Alcan, 1910, p. 14. (3) See *The Cosmopolite or Nouvelle Lumière Chymique (New Chemical Light)*, Paris, 1669, p. 50 (4) *Lettre sur la Philosophie Chimique (Letter on Chemical Philosophy)* in *Revue des Sciences*, Dec. 30, 1896, p. 1227. (5) *Comment l'Esprit vient aux tables (How the Spirit Comes to Tables)*, by a man who has not lost his mind/spirit; Paris, Libr. Nouvelle, 1854, p. 150. (6) Lemery; *Cours de Chymie (Chemistry Course)*, Paris, d'Houry, 1757. (7) "An artless art, of which the beginning is to lie, the middle is to labor, and the end is to beg". (8) Was Pascal an alchemist? Nothing allows us to claim that he was. What is more certain is that he must have realized the transmutation himself, unless he saw it accomplished before his eyes in the laboratory of an Adept. The operation lasted two hours. This is what comes out of a curious document, on paper, handwritten by him in mystical style and which was found sewn in his garment at the time of his burial. Here is the beginning of it, which is the essential part: "The Year of Grace, 1654; Monday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November, day of St Clement, pope and martyr and of others in the martyrology, Vigil of St Chrysogonus, martyr, and others, from around ten-thirty in the evening until approximately twelve-thirty after midnight, Fire. God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not of Philosophers and of Savants. Certainty, Certainty, Feeling, Joy, peace".

We have purposefully underlined, although it was not so in the original text, the word Chrysogonus which the author uses to refer to the transmutation; it is formed of two Greek words: [\*57-1] (Chrysos), gold, and [\*57-2](gone), generation. Death, which usually takes away men's secret, had to deliver up that of Pascal, philosophus per ignem (Philosopher by fire).

(9) Ernest Bosc; *Dictionnaire d'Orientalisme, d'occultisme et de Psychologie (Dictionary of Orientalism, Occultism, and Psychology)*, Vol. 1. (10) Chevreul left his hermetic library to the *Museum d'Histoire Naturelle (Museum of Natural History)* (11) Cf. *La Revue*, #18, Sept. 15, 1912, p. 162, et seq. (12) "Je sais tout". *Le fabrication synthétique de l'or est-elle*



Alchemy is obscure only because it is hidden. The philosophers who wanted to transmit the exposition of their doctrine and the fruit of their labors to posterity took great care not to divulge the art by presenting it under a common form such that the layman could not misuse it. Thus, because of the difficulty one has of understanding it, because of the mystery of its enigmas and of the opacity of its parables, the science has come to be shut up among reveries, illusions, and chimeras.

In fact these sepia-toned old books are not easily penetrated. To try to read them the way we read ours would be a mistake. Nevertheless, the first impression we receive from them, as strange and confusing as it may seem, remains vibrant and persuasive. Beyond the allegorical language and the abundance of ambiguous nomenclature, we fathom in them this ray of truth, this profound conviction born from certain facts, duly observed, and which owe nothing to the whimsical speculations of pure imagination.

You may probably object that the best hermetic works contain many gaps, accumulate contradictions, are embellished with false recipes; you may say that the *modus operandi* varies from one author to the next and that, if the theoretical development is the same with all, descriptions of the bodies used, on the other hand, rarely show a rigorous similarity among themselves. We shall answer that the philosophers had no other means at their disposal to steal from the ones what they wanted to expose to the others, but this confusion of metaphors, of diverse symbols, this prolixity of terms, of capricious formulas traced by the flow of a pen, expressed in clear language for the use of the greedy or the foolish. As for the argument about practice, it falls by itself for the simple reason that since the initial matter can be considered under any one of the multiple appearances which it takes during the course of the work, and since the artists never describe more than one part of the technique, as many distinct processes appear to exist as there are writers of the genre.

After all we should not forget that the treatises which have reached us were composed during the most beautiful alchemical period, the one which embraces the last three centuries of the Middle Ages. And at that time, folk mentality, totally impregnated with oriental mysticism, was fond of riddles, symbolic veils, allegorical expressions. This disguise flattered the rebellious instinct of the masses and provided the nobles with a new source for satiric verve. In this manner, it conquered general favor and was encountered everywhere, firmly established at the different levels of the social ladder. It shined in clever words during conversations among cultivated people, aristocrats and bourgeois, and it was vulgarized among vagrants in naive puns. It adorned shopkeepers' signboards with picturesque riddles and took hold of heraldry whose exoteric rules and protocol it established; it forced its multicolored costume of images, enigmas, and emblems on art, literature, and especially on esotericism.

To it we owe the variety of curious street signs whose number and singularity still add to the clearly original character of French medieval productions. Nothing shocks our modern sense more than these tavern placards oscillating on a wrought iron axis. We recognize, on one of them, the letter O capitalized followed by a K which has been struck out (1); but the drunkard of the 14th century was not deceived and entered the great tavern without hesitation. Hostelrys often put up a golden lion fixed in heraldic pose, which for the traveler seeking out accommodation meant that "one could sleep there", because of the double meaning and pun of the image (2). Edouard Fournier (3) explains that "la rue du Bout-du-Monde" (the street at the End of the World) existed in Paris in the 17th century. "This name", adds the author, "which came from the fact that it had for a long time been near the walls of the city, had been represented in a rebus on the tavern sign. It had been represented by a bone (os), a he-goat (bouc), a horned owl (duc) and a world (monde)" (4). Next to the blazon of the hereditary nobility's heraldry, we discover another form of blazonry whose armorial bearings are merely expressive tributaries of the rebus. The latter describe commoners, arrived by fortune at the rank of persons of quality. Francois Myron, Parisian magistrate in 1604, thus wore one "of gules a round mirror", (Myre-rond) (5). A nouveau riche of the same kind, head of the monastery of St Bartholomew in London, Prior Bolton, who occupied the office from 1532 to 1539, had his coat of arms carved in the bow window of the triforium from where he watched over the pious exercises of his monks. We can see an arrow (bolt) piercing a little barrel (tun), hence Bolton (Plate III). In his *Enigmas of the Streets of Paris*, Edouard Fournier, whom we have just quoted, after having initiated us into the disputes between Louis XIV and Louvois during the building of the Hotel des Invalides in Paris, the latter wanting to place his coat of arms next to that of the King, thereby contravening the orders of the King, tells us that Louvois arranged in some manner to affix his memory on the Invalides in an immutable and very obvious manner.

"Enter the Court of Honor of the Hotel, look at the garret windows which crown the facades of the quadrilateral monument; when you look at the fifth of these garret windows which are aligned at the summit of the eastern bay near the church, examine it well. Its ornamentation is very unusual. You find a wolf sculpted up to the waist; its paws falling on the opening of a bull's-eye window which they surround; the head is half hidden under a clump of palm leaves and the eyes are firmly fixed on the courtyard ground. There is here, without your suspecting it, a monumental pun ---the kind often made through

imagery of heraldry ---and in this stone pun lies the conceited minister's revenge and satisfaction. This wolf looks, this wolf sees (6). It is his emblem! So that no one could doubt it, on the next garret window to the right, he had sculpted an exploding barrel of powder, a symbol of war, whose impetuous minister he was; on the left hand window, a panache of ostrich feathers, attributes of a high and powerful lord, as he claimed to be; and on the other two garret windows of the same bay, an owl and a bat, birds of vigilance, his great virtue. Colbert (another minister), whose fortune had the same origin as that of Louvois, and who had no less vainglorious pretensions to nobility, had taken as his emblem the grass snake (7), just as Louvois had chosen the wolf".

The fondness for the rebus, last echo of the sacred language, has considerably weakened in our day. It is barely cultivated and it scarcely interests school children of the present generation. By ceasing to give the science of blazonry the means to decipher its enigmas, the rebus has lost the esoteric value it once possessed. We find it today list in the last pages of magazines, where, as a recreational pastime, its role is confined to the expressive image of a few proverbs. Barely do we notice, once in a great while, a proper application of this fallen art, frequently directed to advertising purposes. Thus a large modern firm, specializing in the manufacture of sewing machines, adopted for its publicity a well-known poster. It represents a seated woman working at the sewing machine in the center of a majestic S. People see above all the initial of the manufacturer, although the rebus, is clear with its transparent meaning: this woman sews in her pregnancy (8), which is an allusion to the softness of the mechanism.

Time, which ruins and devours human work, has not spread the old hermetic language. Indifference, ignorance, and oblivion have completed the disintegrating action of centuries. Nevertheless, one could not maintain that it has been lost completely; a few initiates preserve its rules and know how to make advantage of the resources it offers in the transmission of secret truths or use it as a mnemonic key to teaching.

In the year 1843, conscripts assigned to the 46th Infantry Regiment in garrison in Paris could every week meet a rather unusual professor crossing the courtyard of the Louis-Philippe barracks. According to an eyewitness ---one of our relatives, a non-commissioned officer at the time, who assiduously followed his lessons ---he was a man still young, carelessly dressed, with long hair falling in curls on his shoulders, who very expressive physiognomy bore the imprint of a remarkable intelligence. In the evening he taught the soldiers who desired it the history of France for a small sum, and he used a method which he insisted was known since the oldest antiquity. In reality, this class, so seductive for its students, was based on the traditional phonetic cabala (9) .

A few examples, chosen among the ones that we remember, will give a rough idea of the process.

After a short preamble on approximately ten conventional signs, destined by their form and their grouping to help retrieve all historical dates, the professor drew on the blackboard a very simplified drawing. This image, which was easily engraved on the memory, was in a way the complete symbol of the reign studied.

The first of these drawings showed a man standing up in top of a tower and holding a torch in his hand. On a horizontal line representing the ground, three accessories were placed next to each other: a chair, a cross, a plate. The explanation of the drawing was simple. That which the man was raising in his hand was used as a beacon ---beacon in hand or in French, phare a mains, phonetically identical to the name Pharamond (10). The tower supporting him signified the number 1: Pharamond was, it is said, the first King of France. Finally, the chair, a hieroglyph of the number 4, the cross, that of the number 2, and the plate, sign of zero, gives the number 420, presume date of the crowning of the legendary king.

Clovis, we did not know it, was one of those scamps who could only be controlled with strong means Turbulent, aggressive, bellicose, quick to break everything, he thought of nothing but mischief and fights. His good parents, as much to subdue him as to give a measure of prudence, had screwed him onto his chair. The entire court knew that he was held by a screw (11). The chair and the two hunting horns placed on the ground provided the date 466.

Clotaire, of an indolent nature, promenaded his melancholy in a field surrounded by walls; the unfortunate was thus closed in his land (12) ---Clotaire.

Chilperic ---we don't know why ---was writhing in a frying pan like a simple catfish, screaming out of breath: I am dying here! (13), hence Chilperic.

Dagobert, putting on the bellicose appearance of a warrior, brandished a dagger and was clothed in a mail, hence Dagobert (14) .

Saint Louis ---who would have thought? ---highly esteemed the polish and shine of freshly minted golden coins; he spent his free time melting his old louis (the coin of the period) in order to have new ones (15) which also stands for Louis Neuf:

Louis IX.

And as for the little corporal ---grandeur and decadence ---his blazon needed no character. A table covered with a tablecloth and supporting an ordinary saucepan were enough to identify him ---Napolean (16) .

These puns, these plays on words, associated or not with the rebus, were used by the initiates as subterfuges for their verbal conversations. In acroamatic works, anagrams were reserved, sometimes to disguise the title, removing from the layman the directing thought of the work. It is the case in particular of a small and curious book so cleverly closed that it is impossible to know what the subject of it is. It is attributed to Tiphaigne de la Roche, and it bears the unusual title of Amilec ou la graine d'hommes (17). It is an assemblage of anagrams and puns. One should read instead, Alcmie, ou la crème d'Aum (Alchemy, or the Cream of Aum). Neophytes will learn that it is an authentic alchemical treatise, since in the 13th century alchemy was written alkimie, alkemie, or alkmie; that the point of science revealed by the author pertains to the extraction of the spirit enclosed in the material prima, a philosophical virgin, which bears the same sign as the celestial Virgin, the monogram AUM; and that finally this extraction must be accomplished using a process analogous to that which allows us to separate cream from milk, which was also taught by Basil Valentine, Tollius, Philalethes, and the characters of the Liber Mutus. By removing the veil from the title, one can see how suggestive this one is, since it announces the revelation the revelation of the secret means suitable to obtain this cream of the milk of the Virgin which few researchers have had the fortune of possessing. Tiphaigne de la Roche, who is almost totally unknown, was nevertheless one of the most learned Adepts of the 18th century. In another treatise entitled Giphantie (an anagram of Tiphaigne), he perfectly describes the photographic process, and shows that he knew the chemical manipulations concerning the developing and fixing of the image one century before its discovery by Daguerre and Niepce de Saint-Victor.

Among the anagrams destined to cover up the names of their authors, we will indicate the one of Limojon de Saint-Didier: Dives sicut ardens(18), which is to say: Sanctus Didireus; and the motto of President d'Espagnet: Spes mea est in agno (19). Other philosophers preferred to clothe themselves in cabalistic pseudonyms more directly related to the science that they professed. Basil Valentine mixes the Greek [ \*73-1 ] (Basileus), King, with the Latin Valens, powerful, to indicate the surprising power of the philosophers' stone. The word Eirenaeus Philalethes appears to be composed of three Greek words: [ \*73-2 ] (Eirenaios), peaceful, [ \*73-3 ] (philos), friend, and [ \*73-4 ] (aletheia), truth; Philalethes thus introduces himself as the pacific friend of truth. Grassaeus signed his works Hortulanus, signifying the gardener (Hortulanus) ---of maritime gardens, he carefully stressed. Ferrari is a blacksmith monk (ferrarius), working with metals. Musa, disciple of Calid, is [ \*73-5 ] (Mystes), the Initiate, while his master ---master if us all ---is the heat produced by the athanor (Latin calidus, burning). Haly means salt, in Greek [ \*73-6 ] (als), and the Metamorphoses of Ovid are those of the philosophers' egg (ovum, ovi). Arcahelauis is rather the title of a book than the name of an author, i.e., the principle of the stone, from the Greek word [ \*73-7 ] (Arche), principle, and [ \*73-8 ], stone. Marcel Palingene combines Mars, iron, [ \*73-9 ] (helios), the sun, and Palingenesia, regeneration, to designate that he was realizing the regeneration of the sun, or gold, through iron. Jean Austri, Gratian, Etienne divide among themselves the winds (austri), grace (gratia), and the crown [ \*73-10, Stephanos). Famanus takes as his emblem the famous chestnut, so renowned among the wise men: Fama-nux, the famous nut, and Jean de Sacrobosco (20) is especially thinking of the mysterious consecrated wood. Cyliani is the equivalent of Cyllenous (of Cyllene), a mountain of Mercury, which gave its name to the Cyllenien god. As for the modest Gallinarius (21), he is content with the hen house and poultry yard where the yellow chick, born from the egg of a black hen, will soon become our wonderful hen (22) that laid the golden eggs.

Without completely abandoning these linguistic artifices, the old masters, in the composition of their treatises, used hermetic cabala above all, which they also called the language of the birds, of the gods, the gay science, or the gay knowledge (23). In this manner they were able to hide from the common people the principles of their science by clothing them with a cabalistic cloak. This is an indisputable and well-known fact. But what people are generally unaware of is that the idiom from which the authors borrowed their terms is archaic Greek, the mother tongue according to the majority of Hermes disciples. The reason why we do not notice the cabalistic intervention owes precisely to the fact that French comes directly from the Greek. Consequently, all the words chosen in our language to define certain secrets have their orthographic or phonetic Greek equivalents, and it suffices to know them well to immediately discover their exact reestablished meanings. For, if French is truly Hellenic as to its basis, its meaning became modified in the course of centuries as it went further from its source and before the radical transformation that the Renaissance had it undergo ---decadence hidden under the name of reform.

The imposition of hidden Greek words under corresponding French terms of a similar texture but of amore or less corrupted meaning allows the investigator to easily penetrate the intimate thought of the masters and gives him the key to the hermetic sanctuary. We have used this means after the example of the ancients, and we will frequently have recourse to it in the analysis of the symbolic works, bequeathed to us by our ancestors.

Many philologists no doubt will not share our opinion and will remain convinced, along with the popular masses, that our language is of Latin origin only because they received that first notion on school benches. We ourselves believed and for a long time accepted what was taught by our teachers as the expression of truth. Only later, in researching the proofs of this purely conventional filiation, we had to recognize the vanity of our efforts and to reject the error born from classical prejudice. Today nothing could undermine our conviction confirmed many times by the success obtained in the realm of material phenomena and of scientific results. That is why we resolutely assert, without denying the introduction of Latin elements into our idiom since the Roman conquest, that our language is Greek, that we are Hellenes, or more exactly, Pelagians.

To defenders of Neo-Latinism such as Gaston Paris, Littré, Menage, presently more clear-sighted, open-minded and free masters such as Hins, J. Lefebvre, Louis de Fourcand, Granier de Cassagnac, Abbot Espagnolle (J.-L. Dartois), etc., oppose themselves. And we willingly take side with them, because we know that in spite of appearances they saw accurately, they judged soundly, and that they follow the simple and straight way of truth, the only one capable of leading to great discoveries.

"In 1872", wrote J.L. Dartois (24), "Granier de Cassagnac, in a marvelously erudite and pleasantly styled work entitled: History of the Origins of the French Language, pointed out the inanity of the neo-Latinism thesis which pretends to prove that French is evolved Latin. He showed that it was not defensible and that it shocked history, logic, and common sense, and that, finally, our idiom refused it (25)". A few years later, M. Hins in turn proved in a very well documented study published in the Review of Linguistics that all the works of Neo-Latinism only allowed us to conclude a kinship with it, not a direct connection with the so-called Neo-Latin languages. Finally, Monsieur J. Lefebvre in two remarkable and much read articles published in June 1982 in The New Review, demolished the Neo-Latinism thesis from beginning to end by proving that Abbot Espagnolle in his book The Origin of French was indeed right; that our language, as the greatest scholar of the 16th century had guessed, was Greek; that Roman domination in Gaul had only covered our language with a thin layer of Latin, in no way altering its genius". The author further adds: "If we ask Neo-Latinism to explain how the Gallic people, which counted at least seven million inhabitants, could forget their national language and learn another one, or rather change the Latin language into the Gallic language which is more difficult; how the Roman legionaries, who themselves for the most part did not speak Latin and were stationed in fortified camps separated from each other by vast spaces, were nevertheless able to become the teachers of the Gaulish tribes and teach them the language of Rome, that is to say, to accomplish among the Gauls alone a miracle that the other Roman legions were not able to accomplish anywhere else, neither in Asia, nor in Greece, nor in the British Isles; how, finally, the Basques and the Bretons succeeded in maintaining their languages while their neighbors, the inhabitants of Beam, Maine and Anjou lost theirs and were forced to speak Latin. What would Neo-Latinism tell us?". This objection is so serious that it is Gaston Paris, the head of the School of Neo-Latinism, who is charged with answering it. "We Neo-Latins", he says in substance, "are not obliged to resolve the difficulties that logic and history may raise; we are only concerned with the philological fact and this fact dominates the question, since it proves, alone, the Latin origin of French, Italian, and Spanish"... "Assuredly", answers Monsieur J. Lefebvre, "the philological fact would be decisive if it were properly established, but it is not so at all. With all the possible subtleties of the world Neo-Latinism in fact only succeeds to observe this very banal truth, that there is a great quantity of Latin words in our language. This has never been contested by anyone".

As for the philological fact invoked but in no way proven by Gaston Paris, in order to attempt to justify his thesis, J.L. Dartois shows its lack of existence based upon the works of Petit-Radel. "To the pretended Latin philological fact", he writes, "we can oppose the evident Greek philological fact. This new philological fact, the only true one, the only demonstrable one, has a capital significance, since it proves without doubt that the tribes which came to people Western Europe were Pelagian colonies, and it confirms the beautiful discovery of Petit-Radel. We know that the modest, humble scholar read in 1802 before the Institute a remarkable work in order to prove that the polyhedral block monuments which are found in Greece, Italy, and France, and even in the heart of Spain and which were attributed to the Cyclops, are the work of the Pelagians. This demonstration convinced the Institute and no doubt has been raised since about the origin of these monuments. The language of the Pelagians was archaic Greek, above all made up of the Aeolian and Doric dialects, and it is exactly this form of Greek which is found everywhere in France, even in Parisian slang (Argot d'Paris)".

The language of the birds is a phonetic idiom solely based on assonance. Therefore, spelling, whose very rigorousness serves as a check for curious minds and which renders unacceptable any speculation realized outside the rules of grammar, is not taken into account. "I am only attached to useful things", says St Gregory in the 6th century in a letter which serves as a preface to his Morals, "without caring about style or the use of prepositions or endings, since it is not worthy of a Christian to subject the words of the Scriptures to the rules of grammar". This means that the sense of sacred books is not literal and that it is essential to know how to recover their spirit through cabalistic interpretation, as is the custom for understanding

alchemical works. The rare authors who have spoken of the language of the birds give it first place in the origin of languages. Its antiquity would go back to Adam who, according to the command of god, would have used it to impose suitable names, appropriate to define the characteristics of created beings and things. De Cyrano Bergerac (26) gives an account of this tradition when, as a new inhabitant of a world near the sun, hermetic cabala is explained to him by "a naked little man seated on a stone", an expressive figure of simple, naked truth seated on the natural stone of the philosophers.

"I do not remember if I spoke to him first", says the great Initiate, "or if he was the one who questioned me; but I have a very fresh memory, as if I were still hearing him, of how he talked to me for three long hours in a language which I know I had never heard and which bears no relationship with any language of this world, but which I understand more quickly and more intelligibly than that of my wet nurse. He explained to me, when I inquired about such a marvelous thing, that in sciences there was a truth, beyond which we always found ourselves away from simplicity, and that the more an idiom strayed from this truth the more it went below our conception and became more difficult to understand. Similarly", he continued, "in music this truth is never encountered without our soul, immediately elevated, blindly going for it. We don't see it but we sense that Nature sees it; without being able to understand how it absorbs us, it cannot but delight us, although we cannot know where it is. And it is the same thing with languages. Whoever encounters this truth of letters, of words, and of continuity can never, while expressing himself, fall below conception: his speech is always equal to his thoughts; and because you do not have knowledge of this perfect language, you do not know what to say, not knowing the order or the words which could express what you imagine". I told him that the first man of our world indubitably used this language, since each name that he imposed on each thing declared its essence. He interrupted me and continued: "This language is not simply necessary to express everything that the mind conceives, but without it we cannot be understood by all. Since this idiom is the instinct or the voice of Nature, it must be understandable by everything that lives in the midst of Nature. This is why, if you knew it, you could communicate and disclose all your thoughts to animals, and animals to you all of theirs (27), because it is the very language of Nature by which she makes herself understood by all animals. Therefore be no longer surprised by the ease with which you understand the meaning of a language which your ears have never heard. When I speak, your soul encounters, with each one of my words, the Truth that is gropingly looking for; and although its reason does not understand it, it has within it a nature which cannot but understand it".

However, this secret, universal, indefinite language, in spite of the importance and the truth of its expression, is in reality of Greek origin and genius, as our author teaches us in his *History of the Birds*. He has some very old oak trees speak ---an allusion to the language which the Druids used ([\*78-1] ---Druidai, from [\*78-2] ---Drys, oak) ---in this manner: "Think of the oak trees which we feel you are looking at: it is we who are speaking to you, and if you are astonished that we speak the language used in the world whence you come, know that our first fathers are natives of it. They lived in Epire, in the forest of Dodona, where their natural goodness moved them to give oracles to the afflicted people who consulted them. For this purpose, they had learned the Greek language, the most universal then in existence, so as to be understood". Hermetic cabala was known in Egypt, at least by the priestly caste, as shown by the invocation of the Leyden Papyrus: "I invoke you, the most powerful of gods who has created everything, you born of yourself, who sees everything, without being seen... I invoke you under the name you possess in the language of the birds, in that of hieroglyphics, in that of the Jews, in that of the Egyptians, in that of the cynocephales... in that of the sparrow hawks, in the hieratic language". We also find this idiom among the Incas, sovereigns of Peru until the time of the Spanish conquest; the ancient writers called it *lengua general* (universal language), and *lengua cortesana* (language of the court), that is, diplomatic language, since it contains a double meaning corresponding to a double science, one apparent, the other profound ([\*78-3] *diple*, double, and [\*78-4], *mathe*, science). "The cabala", says Abbot Perroquet (28), "was an introduction to the study of all sciences".

In presenting us the powerful figure of Roger Bacon, whose genius shines in the intellectual firmament of the 13th century like a star of the first magnitude, Armand Parrot (29) describes by what labor he was able to acquire the synthesis of ancient languages and how he possessed such a wide practice of the mother language that he was capable of using its techniques to teach in a very short time languages reputed to be the most difficult. One will admit that therein lies a truly marvelous particularly of this universal language which appears to us to be both the best key to the sciences and the most perfect method of humanism. "Bacon", the author writes, "knew Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Arabic; thereby putting himself in a position to draw a rich education from ancient literature, he had acquired a reasoned knowledge of the two common languages which he needed to know, that of his native country and that of France. From these specific grammars a mind such as his could not but ascend to a general theory of language; he had opened for himself the two sources for which they flow and which are, on the other hand, a positive composition of several idioms and, on the one hand, the philosophical analysis of human understanding, the natural history of its faculties and concepts. Thus we find him almost alone in his century, applying himself to comparing vocabularies, bringing syntaxes together, looking for the relationships of language with thought, measuring the influence that character, movements, and such varied forms of discourses exert on the habits and the opinions of people. In this manner, he traced it back to the origins of all the simple or complex, fixed or variable, true or

erroneous notions which the spoken word expressed. This universal grammar seemed to him to be true logic and the best philosophy; he attributed so much power to it that with the aid of such a science he believed he was capable to teach his young disciple, Jean de Paris, in one year what had taken him forty".

"Striking speed of education of common sense! Strange power", said Michelet, "to draw out, along with the electric spark, the preexisting science from man's brain".

(1) OK: O grand K barre which phonetically reads Au grand cabaret, at the great tavern (2) To the Golden Lion, in French Au Lion d'or but also phonetically au lit au dort: in bed we sleep. (3) Edouard Fournier, *Enigmes des rues de Paris* (Enigmas of the Streets of Paris), Paris, E. Dentu, 1860. (4) Bone-he-goat-horned owl-world, this list phonetically reads in French: au bout du monde, or At the End of the World. (5) A pun on the man's name: Myron or Myre-rond phonetically in French can be read as round mirror. (6) Louvois in French is phonetically identical with Loup voit, or wolf sees (7) Latin: coluber for Colbert and in French: couleuvre (8) Capital S ---in French gros S, phonetically close to grossesse meaning pregnancy (9) The word cabala is a deformation of the Greek [\*\*\*] (karbau), one who jabbers or speaks a barbaric language. (10) There is here absolute identity of figuration and meaning with the cabala expressed in prints from old works, in particular *The Dream of Polyphilo*. In it King Solomon is always represented by a hand holding a willow branch (in French willow in hand: saule a main is phonetically close to Solomon. A daisy in French marguerite sounds like I am missed. It is in this manner that one should analyze Pantagruel's and Gargantua's saying and ways of speech, if one wants to understand all that is inherent in the work of the powerful initiate that Rabelais was. (11) Held by a screw, in French, "clos-a-vis", which sound very much like Clovis. (12) Enclosed in his land, in French "clos dans sa terre", or Clotaire. (13) I am dying here, in French "j'y peris" which sounds close to Chilperic (14) Dagger and mail, in French dague and haubert sound like Dagobert. (15) Louis the Ninth can sound in French both like new louis (coins) or Louis Nine. (16) Tablecloth and saucepan in French, nappe et poelon ---Napoleon. (17) Amilec or the Seed of Men ---This very well written little book was published around 1753. It bears no indication as to where it was published or as to the name of the publisher. (18) Rich as well as fiery. (19) My hope is in the lamb. (20) Sacrobosco ---sacro sounds like Latin for sacred, and bosco sounds like the French for shrub hence: consecrated wood for Sacrobosco. (21) Gallinarius recalls the Latin word for hen: gallus. (22) Translator's note: In French fairy tales it is the hen and not the goose that lays the golden eggs, hence the pun. (23) Translator's note: Reference to Rabelais' and later to Nietzsche's writings. (24) J.L. Dartois: *Le Neo-Latinisme* (Neo-Latinism), Paris, Societe des Auteurs-Editeurs, 1909, p. 6. (25) "Latin, a shameless synthesis of the rudimentary languages of Asia, but a simple intermediary linguistically speaking, a sort of curtain drawn over the world scene, was nothing but a vast swindle favored by a phonetic system different from ours which covered its thefts from it, and which must have been created after the Allia during the Senonaise occupation (390-345 BC)" ---quoted from A. Champrosay, *Les Illumines de Cabarose* (The Enlightened of Cabarose), Paris, 1920, p. 54. (26) De Cyrano Bergerac, *L'Autre Monde. Histoire comique des Etats et Empires du Soleil* (The Other World, Comical History of the States and Empires of the Sun), Paris, Bauche, 1910. J.J. Pauvert publisher, Paris, 1962, p. 170. (27) The famous founder of the Order of Franciscans, to which the illustrious Adept Roger Bacon belonged, knew hermetic cabala perfectly well; St Francis of Assisi knew how to speak with birds. (28) Perroquet, priest. *La Vie et le Martyre du Docteur Illumine, le Bienheureux Raymond Lulle* (Life and Martyrdom of the Illumined Doctor, the blessed Raymond Lully), Vendome, 1667. (29) Armand Parrot: *Roger Bacon, sa personne, son genie, ses oeuvres et ses contemporains*, Paris, A. Picard, 1894, p. 48, 49. (30) Cf. *Epistle De Laude Sacrae Scripturae, ad Clement IV* (In Praise of the Sacred Scriptures, to Clement IV) ---De Gerando. *Histoire compareedes systemes de Philosophie*, vol. 4, Ch. 27, p. 541; *Histoire litteraire de la France*, vol. XX, p. 233-234.

## VII. ALCHEMY AND SPAGYRICS

It is to be expected that a good number of chemists ---and some alchemists as well ---will not share our point of view. This will not stop us. Should we be regarded as the most resolute partisan of the most subversive theories, we would still not be afraid to develop our thought here, deeming truth to be endowed with many more attractions than a vulgar prejudice and that it remains preferable, in its very nakedness, to the most made-up and sumptuously dressed error.

Since Lavoisier, all the authors who have written on the history of chemistry agree to profess that our chemistry comes by direct affiliation from old alchemy. Consequently, the origin of the one is confused with that of the other, to such an extent that modern science would owe the positive facts on which it is built to the patient labor of the ancient alchemists.

This hypothesis, to which we could only have given a relative and conventional value, being regarded today as demonstrated truth, alchemical science, stripped of its own foundation, loses everything liable to motivate its existence, justify its reason for being. Thus, seen from a distance, under legendary mists and the veil of centuries, it only offers a vague, nebulous form, without consistency. An imprecise ghost, a lying specter, the marvelous and deceiving chimera indeed deserves to be relegated to the rank of illusions of yesteryear, of false sciences, as a very eminent professor notes (1)

But where proofs would be necessary, where facts prove indispensable, people are content to oppose to hermetic "pretenses" a *petitio principii*. The School peremptorily does not discuss, it decides. Well, we in turn certify, proposing to prove it, that learned men who have in good faith espoused or propagated this hypothesis deluded themselves by ignorance or a lack of penetration. Understanding only in part the books they studied, they mistook appearance for reality. Let us clearly state, since so many educated and sincere people seem unaware of the fact, that the real ancestor of our modern chemistry is ancient spagyrics and not the hermetic science itself. There is indeed a profound abyss between spagyrics and alchemy. This is precisely what we will now try to demonstrate, in as much as it is expedient to do without exceeding the boundaries allowed. Nevertheless, we hope to extend our analysis far enough and to bring out sufficiently precise details to nourish our thesis. Furthermore, happy to provide the chemists, enemies of preconceived ideas, with a testimony of our good will and of our solicitude.

There was in the Middle Ages and possibly even in Greek antiquity, if we refer to the works of Zosimos and Ostanos ---two degrees, two orders of research in chemical science: spagyry and archemy. These two branches of the same exoteric art spread throughout the working class by means of laboratory practice. Metallurgists, goldsmiths, painters, ceramic artists, glassmakers, dyers, distillers, enamellers, potters, etc., had, as much as apothecaries, to be provided with sufficient spagyric knowledge. They perfected this knowledge themselves later on in the exercise of their profession. As for alchemists, they formed a special category, more restricted, more obscure also, among the ancient chemists. The aim which they pursued presented some analogy with that of the alchemists, but the materials and the means which they had at their disposal were uniquely chemical materials and means. To transmute metals into one another, to produce gold and silver from coarse minerals, or from saline metallic compounds, to force the gold potentially contained in silver and the silver potentially contained in tin to become real and extractable, was what the alchemist had in mind. In the final analysis, he was a spagyrist confined to the mineral realm and who voluntarily neglected animal quintessences and vegetable alkaloids. And since medieval laws forbade private possession of furnaces and chemical utensils without preliminary permission, many artisans, their work once finished, studied, manipulated, and secretly experimented in their cellars or their attics. They cultivated the science of the little particulars, according to the somewhat disdainful expression of the alchemists for these side activities unworthy of the philosopher. Without scolding these useful researchers, let us recognize that very often the most fortunate among them only obtained mediocre benefits, and that the same process, at first successful, later led to nil or uncertain results.

Nevertheless, in spite of their errors ---or rather because of them ---it is they, the alchemists, who provided first the spagyrists and later modern chemistry with the facts, methods, and operations they needed. These men, tormented with a desire to search everywhere and to learn everything, are the true founders of a splendid and perfect science to which they bestowed accurate observations, exact reactions, skillful manipulations, and painfully acquired techniques. Let us humbly salute these pioneers, these precursors, these great workers, and let us never forget what they did for us.

However, we repeat, alchemy has nothing to do with these successive contributions. Hermetic writings alone, misunderstood by profane investigators, were the indirect cause of discoveries which the authors had never anticipated. It is in this manner that Blaise de Vigenere obtained benzoic acid by sublimating benzoin; that Brandt could extract phosphorus by seeking the alkahest in urine; that Basil Valentine, a prestigious Adept who did not despise spagyric experiments, established the entire series of antimonial salts and the colloid of ruby gold (2); that Raymond Lully prepared acetone, and Cassius the purple of gold; that Glauber obtained sodium sulphate and Van Helmont recognized the existence of gases. But, with the exception of Lully and of Basil Valentine, all these researchers, wrongly classified among alchemists, were simple alchemists or learned spagyrists. This is why a famous Adept, author of a classical work (3), can say with much reason: "If Hermes, the Father of philosophers, was resurrected today, along with subtle Geber, and the profound Raymond Lully, our vulgar chemists (4) would not regard them as Philosophers, and would practically not condescend to number them among their disciples, because the latter would not know the manner of operating all these distillations, circulations, calcinations, and all these innumerable operations which our vulgar chemists invented for having misunderstood the allegorical writings of these Philosophers".

With their confused texts, sprinkled with cabalistic expressions, the books remain the efficient and genuine cause of the gross mistake that we indicate. For, in spite of the warnings, the objurations of their authors, students persisted in reading them according to the meaning that they hold in ordinary language. They do not know that these texts are reserved for initiates, and that is essential, in order to understand them, to be in possession of their secret key. One must first work at discovering this key. Most certainly these old treatises contain, if not the entire science, at least its philosophy, its principles, and the art of applying them in conformity with natural laws. But if we are unaware of the hidden meaning of the terms --for example, the meaning of Ares, which is different from Aries and is closer to Arles, Armet, and Albait ---strange

qualifications purposely used in the composition of such works, we will understand nothing of them or we will be infallibly led into error. We must not forget that it is an esoteric science. Consequently, a keen intelligence, an excellent memory, work, and attention aided by a strong will are not sufficient qualities to hope to become learned in this subject. Nicolas Grosparmy writes, "Such people truly delude themselves who think that we have only made our books for them, but we have made them to keep out all those who are not of our sect" (5). Batsdorff, in the beginning of his treatise (6), charitably warns the reader in these terms, "Every prudent man", he says, "must first acquire the Science if he can; that is to say, the principles and the means to operate. Otherwise he should stop there, without foolishly using his time and his wealth. And so, I beg those who will read this little book to credit my words. I say to them once more, that they will never learn this sublime science by means of books, and that it can only be learned through divine revelation, hence it is called Divine Art, or through the means of a good and faithful master; and since there are very few of them to whom God has granted this grace, there are also very few who teach it". Finally, an anonymous author of the 18th century (7) gives other reasons for the difficulty that we encounter in deciphering the enigma: "Here is", he writes, "the first and true cause why nature has hidden this open and royal palace from so many philosophers, even those gifted with a very subtle mind. Because, straying since their youth away from the simple path of nature through conclusions of logic and metaphysics, although ingenuous nature advances in a straight and very simple step in this path as in all the others".

Such are the opinions of the philosophers about their own works. How can we be surprised then, that so many excellent chemists took the wrong path, and that they deluded themselves by inquiring into a science whose most elementary notions they were incapable of assimilating? And would it not be a great service to render unto others, unto neophytes, to advise them to meditate upon this great truth which the Imitation (Book III, Ch. II, v.2) proclaims, when it says, speaking of the sealed books:

"They can make the sound of their words resound, but they do not provide any understanding at all. They give the letter, but it is the lord who unveils the meaning of them; they propose mysteries, but it is He who explains them. They show the path that must be followed, but He gives the strength for walking on it".

It is the stumbling block against which our chemists have tripped. And we can affirm that, if our scientists had understood the language of the ancient alchemists, the laws of the practice of Hermes would be known to them, and the philosophers' stone would long have ceased to be considered a chimera. We have stated earlier that alchemists regulated their works according to hermetic theory --at least as they understood it ---and that this was the point of departure for fertile experiments with purely chemical results. Thus they prepared the acid solvents which we use, and through the action of these on metallic bases they obtained the saline series well known to us. By afterwards reducing these salts, either with other metals, with alkalis, coal, sugar or fatty bodies, they recovered, without transformation, the basic elements which they had previously combined. But these attempts as well as the methods which appeal to it showed no difference with those practiced today in our laboratories. A few researchers, nevertheless, pushed their investigations much further; they remarkably extended the field of chemical possibilities even to such a point that their results seem doubtful, if not imaginary, to us. It is true that these processes are often incomplete and enveloped in mystery almost as dense as that of the Great Work. Our intention being ---as we have announced ---to be useful to students, we will enter into this subject in some detail and show that these puffers' recipes offer more experimental certainty than we would be inclined to attribute to them. May the philosophers, our brothers whose indulgence we claim, condescend to forgive us these divulgations. However, besides the fact that our oath is only answerable to alchemy and that we intend to remain strictly in the spagyric domain, on the other hand, we wish to keep the promise we made, of demonstrating by real and controllable facts, that our chemistry owes everything to spagyrists and alchemists and nothing, absolutely nothing, to hermetic Philosophy.

The simplest alchemic process consists in using the effect of violent reactions ---that of acids on bases ---so as to provoke, in the midst of the effervescence, the reunion of the pure parts, their irreducible combination under the form of new bodies. It is then possible, from a metal close to gold ---silver preferably ---to produce a small quantity of the precious metal. Here is, in this order of experiments, an elementary operation whose success we certify provided our instructions are closely followed.

Pour into a tall tubular glass retort a third of its capacity of pure nitric acid. Attach to it a receiver with an exhaust tube and set the apparatus on a sand bath. Operate under a fume hood. Heat the apparatus gently without reaching the boiling point of the acid. Then stop the heat, open the neck and introduce a thin fraction of virgin or cupelled silver that contains no traces of gold. When the emission of nitric peroxide ceases and the effervescence has calmed down, allow a second portion of pure silver to fall into the liquor. Thus repeat the introduction of the metal, without haste, until the boiling and emission of red fumes manifest only little energy, signs of approaching saturation. Add nothing more, Let it settle for a half hour, then cautiously decant your clear, still-warm solution into a beaker. You will find at the bottom of the retort a thin deposit in the form of fine black sand. Wash it with lukewarm distilled water and let it drop into a small porcelain capsule. You will



find out through testing that this precipitate is insoluble in hydrochloric acid, as it is in nitric acid. Aqua regia dissolves it and yields a magnificent yellow solution, absolutely similar to that of gold trichloride. Dilute this liquor with distilled water; precipitate it with a sliver of zinc; an amorphous powder, very fine, dull, of reddish-brown coloration will be deposited, identical with that given by natural gold reduced in the same manner. Properly wash, and then dry this powdery precipitate. By pressing it on a sheet of glass or marble, you will get a brilliant, coherent lamina, of a beautiful yellow shine in reflection, of a green color in transparency, having the appearance and the superficial characteristics of the purest gold.

In order to augment your minute deposit with a new quantity, you can do this operation as many times as you wish. In this case, take again the clear silver nitrate solution, diluted by the waters of the first washing; reduce the metal with zinc or copper; decant and abundantly wash when the reduction is complete. Dry this powdery silver and use it for your second dissolution. By continuing in this manner, you will amass enough metal to render the analysis much easier. Furthermore, you will be assured of its true production ---even if the silver that you originally used had some traces of gold.

But this simple body, so easily obtained, although in a very small proportion, is it truly gold? Our sincerity compels us to say no or, at least, not yet. For even if it shows the most perfect outer analogy to gold, and even most of its properties and chemical reactions, still one essential physical characteristic is missing: density. This gold is less heavy than natural gold, although its own density is already greater than that of silver. We can therefore regard it as, not the representative of a more or less unstable allotropic state of silver, but rather as a young, or nascent gold, which further reveals its recent formation. Moreover, the newly produced metal remains capable of taking and keeping, by contraction, the increased density that the adult metal possesses. Alchemists used a process which ensured nascent gold all the specific qualities of adult gold; they called this technique maturation or firming up, and we know that mercury was its principle agent. We find it mentioned in some ancient Latin manuscripts under the expression of *Confirmatio*.

It would be easy to make a few useful and consequential remarks about the operation just mentioned and to show on what philosophical principles lies the direct production of metal in this experiment. We could also give some variant likely to increase the yield, but we would thereby overstep the limits that we have voluntarily imposed on ourselves. We will therefore leave to researchers the task of discovering them for themselves and of submitting the deduction of the control of experiments. Our role is confined to presenting facts; it is for modern alchemists, spagyricists, and chemists to conclude (8).

But alchemy has other methods, whose results bring the proof of philosophical affirmations. They allow us to achieve the decomposition of metallic bodies, long considered to be simple elements. These processes, which alchemists know well, although they don't have to use them in the elaboration of the Great Work, aim at extracting one of the two metallic roots, sulphur and mercury.

Hermetic philosophy teaches us that bodies have no action on bodies and that only spirits are active and penetrating (9). It is they, these spirits, these natural agents, that provoke in the midst of matter the transformations which we observe there, yet wisdom demonstrates through experimentation that bodies cannot form among themselves anything but easily reducible, temporary combinations. Such is the case of alloys, some of which are liquefied by simple fusion, and of all saline compounds. Similarly, alloyed metals maintain their specific qualities in spite of the diverse properties which they take on in the state of association. We can then understand of what usefulness the spirits can be in releasing the metallic sulphur or mercury when we know that they alone are capable of overcoming the strong cohesion which tightly binds these two principles between themselves.

It is essential first to understand what the Ancients meant by the generic and rather vague term of spirits.

For the alchemists, the spirits are real influences, although they are physically almost immaterial or imponderable. They act in a mysterious, inexplicable, unknowable but efficacious manner on substances submitted to their action and prepared to receive them. Lunar radiation is one of these hermetic spirits. As for alchemists, their conception proves to be of a more concrete and substantial nature. Our old chemists embraced all bodies under the same heading, simple or complex, solid or liquid, having a volatile quality liable to make them entirely sublimable. Metals, metalloids, salts, hydrogen carbides, etc., bring to alchemists their contingency of spirits: mercury, arsenic, antimony and some of their compounds: sulphur, sal ammoniac, alcohol, ether, vegetable essences, etc.

The favorite technique to extract the metallic sulphur is the one which uses sublimation. Here are a few procedures given as indications.

Dissolve some pure silver in hot nitric acid according to the manipulation previously described, and then dilute this solution with hot distilled water. Decant the clear liquor so as to separate, if need be, the slight black deposit, mentioned earlier. Let it cool down in a dark laboratory and pour into the liquor little by little either a filtered solution of sodium

chloride or pure hydrochloric acid. The silver chloride will precipitate to the bottom of the vessel in the form of a curdled white mass. After letting it sit for 24 hours, decant the acidulated supernatant water, wash it rapidly with cold water, and dry it spontaneously in a room where no light penetrates. Then weigh your silver salt, with which you will intimately mix three times as much of pure ammonium chloride. Put everything into a tall glass retort of such capacity that only the bottom of it is covered by the saline mixture. Give it a gentle heat in a sand bath and increase it by degrees. When the temperature is sufficient, the sal ammoniac will rise up and cover the top and the neck of the apparatus with a firm layer. This snow-white, rarely yellowish sublimate might lead you to believe that it contains nothing special. Skillfully break the retort, carefully detach this white sublimate, dissolve it in distilled water, hot or cold. Once the dissolution has been achieved, you will find at the bottom a very fine, bright red powder; it is a part of the sulphur of silver or lunar sulphur, detached from the metal and volatilized by the sal ammoniac during its sublimation.

However, in spite of its simplicity, this operation does not proceed without some big problems. Although it seems simple, it demands great skill, a lot of prudence in the management of the heat. If you do not want to lose half and more of the metal, you must first and above all avoid the fusion of the salts. Yet, if the temperature does not reach the required degree to cause and maintain the fluidity of the mixture, no sublimation occurs. Furthermore, as soon as the temperature is established, the silver chloride, already very penetrating by itself, acquires such a bite in contact with the sal ammoniac, that it will pass through the glass walls (10) and escape outside. The artist cannot even resort to using stoneware, earthenware or porcelain retorts, which are even more porous than those of glass, all the more because he must constantly be able to observe the progress of the reactions if he wishes to be in a position to intervene at the right moment. Therefore, there are in this method, as in many others of the same order, certain secrets of practice which the alchemists have prudently reserved for themselves. One of the best ones consists in dividing the mixture of chlorides by interposing an inert body capable of impasting the salts and hindering their liquefaction. This matter must possess neither reducing qualities nor catalytic virtues; it is also essential that it can easily be separated from the *caput mortuum*. Formerly, pulverized brick was used and a variety of absorbents such as putty powder, pumice stone, pulverized flint, etc. Unfortunately, these substances yield a very impure sublimate. We give preference to a certain product which has no affinity for silver or ammonium chloride, which we extract from Judean bitumen. In addition to the purity of the sulphur obtained, the technique becomes very easy. We can easily reduce the residue into a metallic silver and reiterate the sublimations until the complete extraction of the sulphur. The residual mass is then no longer reducible and presents itself in the shape of a gray, soft, very sweet ash, greasy to the touch, which retains fingerprints and loses in a short time half of its weight of specific mercury.

This technique applies equally to lead. Less expensive, it offers the advantage of yielding salts that are insensitive to light, which eliminates the need for the artist to operate in darkness; impastation is then no longer necessary; finally, since lead is less fixed than silver, the yield of red sublimate is better and the duration shortened. The only fortunate aspect of the operation comes from the fact that the sal ammoniac forms with lead sulphur, a saline compact layer which is so tenacious that one could believe that it had melted with the glass. It becomes laborious to detach it without pounding. As for the extract itself, it is a beautiful red, covered by a brightly colored yellow sublimate, but very impure compared to that of silver. It is therefore necessary to purify it before using it. Its maturity too is less perfect, an important consideration if one's researches are oriented towards the obtaining of particular tinctures.

All metals do not yield to the same chemical agents. The process that is suitable for silver or lead cannot be applied to tin, copper, iron or gold. Further, the spirit capable of detaching and isolating the sulphur of a given metal will exercise its action with another metal on the mercurial principle of the latter. In the first case, the mercury will be strongly held while the sulphur will be sublimated; in the second case, the reverse phenomenon will occur. Hence the diversity of methods and variety of techniques of metallic decomposition. Moreover, it is above all the affinity that bodies manifest for other bodies and the latter for spirits that regulates their application. It is known that silver and lead have a very marked affinity for one another; silvery lead ores prove it well enough. Therefore the affinity establishing the profound chemical identity of these bodies, it is logical to think that the same spirit, used in the same conditions, will bring about the same effects. This is what happens with iron and gold which are bound by a close affinity. When Mexican prospectors come to discover a sandy, very red earth composed mostly of iron oxide, they conclude that gold is not very far away. Consequently they regard this red earth as the matrix and the mother of gold, and the best indication of a nearby gold vein. This fact seems rather unusual, given the physical differences of these metals. In the category of common metallic bodies, gold is the rarest among them; iron, by contrast, is certainly the most common, the one that is found everywhere, not only in mines where it forms enormous and numerous deposits but also disseminated on the very surface of the ground. Clay owes to iron its special coloration, sometimes yellow when iron is found divided as a hydrate, sometimes red when it is in the form of sesquioxide, a color which is further intensified by baking (as in bricks, tiles and pottery). Of all the classified ores, iron pyrite is the most common and the best known. The black ferruginous masses in variously sized balls, in shell-like agglomerations, in nodules, are often encountered in fields, on the sides of paths, in chalky terrain. Country children often play with these

marcasites which show a fibrous crystalline radiating texture when they are broken. Sometimes they contain small quantities of gold. Meteorites, chiefly composed of molten magnetic iron, prove that the interplanetary masses from which they come primarily owe their structure to iron. Certain vegetables contain assimilable iron (wheat, watercress, lentils, beans, potatoes). Man and vertebrates owe to iron and to gold the red coloration of their blood. Indeed, iron salts constitute the active element of hemoglobin. They are even so necessary to organic vitality that medicine and pharmacopoeia have at all times sought for ways to give impoverished blood the metallic compounds needed for its reconstitution (iron peptonate and carbonate). Common people still use water rendered ferruginous by the immersion of oxidized nails. Finally, iron salts present such a variety of colorations that we can be assured that they would suffice to reproduce all the tonalities of the spectrum, from violet which is the actual color of the our metal, all the way to intense red, the color that it gives to silica in various kinds of rubies and garnets.

This was enough to convince alchemists to work on iron with the purpose of discovering therein the components of their tinctures. Moreover, this metal easily allows the extraction of its sulphurous and mercurial constituents in one single manipulations, which is already very advantageous. The great, the enormous difficulty resides in the reunion of these elements which, in spite of their purification, energetically refuse to combine to form a new body. We shall continue without analyzing or resolving this problem, since our topic is simply to establish the proof that alchemists always used chemical materials set in motion by means of chemical operations.

In the spagyric treatment of iron, the energetic reaction of acids with a similar affinity for the metal is used to conquer its cohesion. Ordinarily, one starts with iron pyrites or with metal reduced to filings. In this last case we recommend prudence and precautions. If one uses pyrites, it will suffice to crush it as finely as possible and to redden it with fire once, while mixing it vigorously. Once it is cooled down, it is introduced into a large flask with four times its weight of aqua regia and the mixture is brought to a boil. After an hour or two it is allowed to rest, the liquid is decanted; then one pours onto the magma a similar quantity of fresh aqua regia, which is made to boil as before. It is necessary to continue the boiling and the decanting until the pyrites appear white at the bottom of the container. Then take all the extracts, filter them on fibreglass, and concentrate them through a slow distillation in a tubular retort. When only about one-third of the original volume is left, open the tubulature and pour in successive fractions a certain quantity of pure 66% sulphuric acid (60 grams for a total volume of extract coming from 500 grams of pyrite). It is then distilled until dry and, after having changed receivers, the temperature is progressively increased. You will see some oily drops distill, red as blood, which represent the sulphurous tincture, and later a beautiful white sublimate which clings to the top and the neck in the form of a crystalline down. The sublimate is an authentic mercury salt ---called by certain alchemists mercury of vitriol---which is easily reduced to liquid mercury through the agency of iron filings, quick lime, or anhydrous potassium carbonate. Furthermore, it is easy to immediately ensure that this sublimate contains the specific mercury of iron by rubbing its crystals on a sliver of copper: the amalgam immediately appears and the metal seems silvery.

As for iron filings, they yield a golden rather than red colored sulphur instead of being red, and some ---a very little bit ---of mercury sublimate. The process is the same but with the slight difference, that it is necessary to throw into the previously heated aqua regia pinches of filings and to wait for each one of them until the effervescence has stopped. It is good to mix up the bottom with an agitator to prevent the filings from becoming one mass. After filtration and reduction in half one adds ---very little at a time because the reaction is violent and the perturbation furious ---some sulphuric acid equal in weight to half of the concentrated liquid. This is the dangerous part of the manipulation since it is rather common to see the retort explode or crack at the level of the acids.

Here we conclude the description of the processes used on iron, deeming that they are amply sufficient to uphold our thesis, and we will end the exposition of spagyric processes by that of gold, which is, according to the opinion of all philosophers, the body the most refractory to dissociation. It is a common axiom in spagyrics that it is easier to make gold than to destroy it. But here we must add a brief remark. Limiting our desire to simply prove the chemical reality of alchemical research, we will be wary of teaching in clear language how one can fabricate gold. The aim that we pursue is of a much higher order. We prefer to remain in the purely alchemical domain rather than engage the researcher in following thorn-covered paths lined with potholes. For the application of these methods confirming the chemical principles of direct transmutation would not being the least testimony in favor of the Great Work, whose elaboration remains completely foreign to the same principle. Having said this, let us resume our topic.

An old spagyric proverb claims that the seed of gold is in gold itself; we will not contradict it, provided it is understood what kind of gold is meant and how it is appropriate to grasp this "seed" disengaged from common gold. If we do not know the latter of these secrets we will necessarily have to be content with witnessing the production of the phenomenon, without receiving any benefits from it except for an objective certainty. So, observe attentively what occurs in the following operation, whose execution presents no difficulty.

Dissolve pure gold in aqua regia; pour sulphuric acid onto it equal in weight to half the weight of the gold. Only a slight contraction will occur. Agitate the solution and pour it into a glass retort without tubing, set on a sand bath. First give it a moderate heat, so that the distillation of the acids can take place slowly without boiling. When the distillation is over and the gold appears at the bottom in the form of a yellow, dull, dry, cavernous mass, change the receiver and progressively increase the heat of the flame. You will see some white, opaque vapors rise, light at first and then heavier. First it condenses into a beautiful yellow oil which flows into the receiver; second, the sublimate covers the top and the beginning of the neck with fine crystals, imitating the down of birds. Their color, a magnificent blood-red, takes on the brightness of ruby when a sun beam or some bright light comes to strike it. These crystals, very deliquescent in the manner of other gold salts, disintegrate into a yellow liquid as soon as the temperature goes down...

We will not pursue the study of sublimations any further. As for the archemical processes known under the name of Little Particulars, they are most of the time risky techniques. The best of these processes starts with metallic products extracted in the manner we have described. A profusion of them will be found in a quantity of second-rate works and in puffers' manuscripts. For your information, we will only reproduce "the particular" which Basil Valentine (11) mentions because, unlike the others, it is backed up by solid and pertinent philosophical reasons. The great Adept assures us in this passage that it is possible to obtain a particular tincture by uniting the mercury with the sulphur of copper through the agency of an iron salt. "The Moon", he says, "has in it a fixed mercury thereby it can bear the violence of fire longer than other imperfect metals; and the victory which it gains shows very well how fixed it is, since ravenous Saturn cannot take anything from it or diminish any of it. Lascivious Venus is well-colored and her entire body is almost nothing but tincture and color similar to that of the Sun. It approaches the color red because of its abundance. But since her body is leprous and ill, the fixed tincture cannot dwell there, and as the body flies away, the tincture must necessarily follow. The former having perished, the soul cannot remain; its domicile has been consumed by fire. No seat or refuge appears to it or is left to it. If, on the contrary, the latter is accompanied, it remains entirely with a fixed body. The fixed salt provides the warrior Mars a hard, strong, solid and robust body, wherefrom he gets his magnanimity and great courage. For this reason, it is very difficult to overcome this valorous captain, for his body is so hard that it can hardly be wounded. But if someone mixes his strength and hardness with the constancy of the Moon and the beauty of Venus, and harmonizes them through spiritual means, he will create in this manner a sweet harmony. After this, the poor man, having used for this purpose a few of the keys of our Art, after having climbed to the top of this ladder, and after having reached the completion of this Work, will be able to particularly earn his life. For the phlegmatic and humid nature of the Moon can be heated and dried by the hot and choleric blood of Venus and its great blackness corrected by the salt of Mars".

Among the archemists who used gold to augment it, making use of formulas which led them to success, we will note the Venetian priest Pantheus (12); Naxagorus, author of *Alchymia Denudata* (1715); de Locques; Duclos; Bernard de Labadye; Joseph du Chesne, baron of Morance, appointed physician to King Henry IV of France; Blaise de Vigenere; Bardin, of Le Havre (1638); Mlle. De Martinville (1610); Yardley, the English inventor of a process which he transmitted to Monsieur Garden, glover in London, in 1716, and later communicated by Monsieur Ferdinand Hockley to Dr Sigismond Bacstrom (13), and which became the object of a letter from the latter to M. L. Sand in 1804; finally, the pious philanthropist, St Vincent de Paul, founder of Les Peres de la Mission (The Fathers of the Mission ---1625) and of the congregation of les Soeurs de la Charite (The Sisters of Charity ---1634), etc.

Please allow us to stop for a moment to describe this great and noble figure, as well as his occult labor, which is generally unknown.

It is known that in the course of a voyage which he undertook from Marseilles to Narbonne, St Vincent de Paul was captured by Barbary pirates and brought as a captive to Tunis. He was at that time 24 years of age (14). We are also told that he succeeded in bringing back his last master, a renegade, into the lap of the Church; that he came back to France and that he stayed in Rome, where Pope Paul V received him with a great deal of respect. From this moment on he began his pious foundations and his charitable institutions. Yet what one took care not to mention is that the Father of lost children, as he was called during his life, had learned archemy during his captivity. Thus we understand how, without the need for miraculous intervention, the great apostle of Christian charity had the means to realize his numerous philanthropic works (15). He was, furthermore, a practical, positive, resolute man who in no way neglected his practical affairs; in no way a dreamer or inclined to mysticism. He was a deeply human soul underneath the harsh appearance of an active, tenacious, and ambitious man.

Of him, we possess two very suggestive letters from the point of view of his chemical works. The first, written to Monsieur de comet, barrister of the provincial appellate court of Dax, was published several times and analyzed by Monsieur Georges Bois, in *The Occult Menace* (Paris, Victor Retaux, n.d.). It was written from Avignon and dated the 24th of June, 1607. We

take this rather long document from the moment when Vincent de Paul, having completed the mission for which he was in Marseille, was preparing to return to Toulouse.

"And being about to leave by land", he says, "I was persuaded by a gentleman with whom I had stayed to embark with him as far as Narbonne, because of the fortunate weather conditions; which I did to get there earlier and save money, or better said, to never reach this place and to lose everything. The wind was a good as needed to bring us that day to Narbonne, which was 50 leagues away, if God had not allowed three Turkish brigantines that were cruising in the Gulf of Lions (to catch boats coming from Beaucaire, where a fair was taking place still regarded as the most beautiful of Christendom), to have hunted us down and attacked us so forcefully that two or three of our people were killed and all of the others wounded, including myself who was hit by an arrow, which I would have been able to use as a clock for the remainder of my days, if we then had not been forced to surrender to the scoundrels, worse than tigers; the first manifestation of their rage was to hack our pilot into a thousand pieces for the crime of having lost one of their head men besides four or five criminals whom our people had killed. This done, they chained us up, after having coarsely bandaged us. They continued their voyage committing a thousand thefts, nevertheless freeing those who surrendered without fighting, having robbed them; and finally, loaded down with merchandise, after seven or eight days, they sailed back to Barbary, den of the faithless thieves of the great Turk king, where having arrived, they put us for sale after having recounted our capture, which they said had been made on a Spanish ship, since without this lie we would have been freed by the King's consul who was there to make free trade possible for Frenchmen. For our sale, their procedure was, once having us stripped totally, to give us each a pair of shorts, a linen jacket, and a cap; they paraded us in the city of Tunis where they had come to sell us. After having been made to go round the city five or six times, chains around our necks, they brought us back to the ship so that the merchants could see which ones of us could eat and which could not, so as to show that our wounds were not mortal. This done, they brought us back to the market place where the merchants came to look at us in the same manner that is used when one purchases a horse or a cow, having us open our mouths to look at our teeth, feeling our ribs, probing our wounds, having us walk, trot, or run, and then having us carry heavy burdens and then fight one another to see the strength of each, and a thousand other kinds of brutalities.

"I was sold to a fisherman, who was forced to get rid of me very soon since no one agrees less with the sea than I do, and from the fisherman to an old man, a spagyric doctor, sovereign tyrant of quintessences, a very human and tractable man who, from what he told me, had worked for 50 years in search of the philosophers' stone, and in vain as far as the stone, but with good results as far as other transmutations of metals. In proof of which, I often saw him melt as much gold as silver together, putting them in little flakes and then introducing a layer of some powder, and then other flakes and then another layer of powder in a crucible or in a goldsmith's smelting vessel, keep it in the fire for 24 hours, and then open it and find the silver turned into gold; and more often still, I saw him congeal or fix quicksilver into fine silver, which he sold to give to the poor. My job was to keep the fire in ten or twelve furnaces, in which, tank God, I had more pleasure than pain. He liked me quite a lot, and he liked to talk to me about alchemy, and more about its law, to which he made every effort to attract me, promising me great wealth and all his knowledge. God always kept in me a belief that I would be freed by the fervent prayers I addressed to him and to the Virgin Mary by whose unique intercession I firmly believe I was freed. Since I firmly hoped and believed that I would see you again, sir, I constantly asked him to teach me how to cure lithiasis, a miracle which I saw him perform daily; he did so, going so far as making me prepare and administer the ingredients...

"I stayed with this old man from the month of September, 1605, until the following August, when he was taken and brought before the Grand Sultan, so as to work him; but in vain, since he died of sorrow on the way. He left me to his nephew, true anthropomorphist, who sold me, too, soon after the death of his uncle, since he had heard that Monsieur de Breve, ambassador for the King in Turkey, was coming with good and authentic documents from the Grand Turk to recover Christian slaves. A renegade of Nice en Savoye, enemy of nature, purchased me and brought me to his temat (that is the Arabic name of the parcel of land which share croppers held from the great landlord since the people had nothing; everything belonged to the Sultan). The temat of this man was in the mountains, where the country is extremely hot and desert-like". After having converted this man, Vincent left with him ten months later, "at the end of which", continues the writer, "we escaped on a skiff and we arrived on June 28 in Aigues- Mortes and soon thereafter, at Avignon, where Monsignor the Vice-Legate publicly received the renegade, teary-eyed and tears choking his throat, in the church of St Peter, for the glory of God and the edification of the spectators. The said Monsignor honored me with great love and fondness, because of the few secrets of alchemy that I taught him, which he made more of, he says, than si io gli avessi dato un monte di oro (16), because he has worked all his life for no other contentment..." ---Vincent Depaul (17) .

In January, 1608, a second letter, addressed from Rome to the same addressee, shows Vincent de Paul initiating the vice-legate of Avignon, mentioned above, who was very well appreciated in court because of his spagyric secrets. "My condition is thus the following, in a word, that I am in this city of Rome, where I continue my studies supported by Monsignor the Vice-Legate, who comes from Avignon and who honors me with his love, and a desire for my advancement, since I have

shown him many and beautiful and curious things which I had learned while I was a slave to the old Turk and to whom, as I wrote to you, I was sold, things among which is the beginning but not the total perfection of the mirror of Archimedes; an artificial trick to make a skull speak, by which this unfortunate man seduced the people, telling them that his god Mohammed let him know his will by this skull, and a thousand other beautiful, geometric things which I have learned from him, and about which Monsignor is so jealous that he does not even want me to talk to anyone, for fear that I teach someone else what I taught him, wishing to be the only one with the reputation of knowing these things which he occasionally likes to show off to the Pope and the Cardinals".

In spite of the lack of credence which George Bois gives to alchemists and their science, he nevertheless recognizes that one cannot suspect the sincerity of the narrator, or the reality of the experiments which he saw being practiced. "He is a witness", he writes, "who combines all the guarantees that can be expected from an eyewitness, a condition which we cannot find in the same degree among researchers who give accounts of their own agreements and who are always preoccupied by their experiments and who are always preoccupied by their own particular point of view. He is a good witness, but he is a man: he is not infallible. He was perhaps wrong and mistook for gold what was only an alloy of gold and silver. This is what we tend to believe, according to our present ideas and the habit which we owe to our education of classifying transmutation among fables. Yet, if we simply limit ourselves to the weighing of the testimony that we are examining, error is not possible. It is clearly stated that the alchemist melted together as much gold as silver; here then is the alloy well-defined (18). This alloy is laminated. Then, the laminae are arranged in layers, separated by layers of a certain powder which is not otherwise described. This powder is not the philosophers' stone but it possesses one of its properties: it operates the transmutation. The mixture is heated for 24 hours, and the silver which partly composed the alloy is transformed into gold. This gold is then sold and so on and so forth. There is no mistake possible about the distinction between the metals. It is furthermore unbelievable, since the operation was frequent and the gold sold to merchants, that such an enormous error was produced so easily. For at this time everyone believes in alchemy; goldsmiths, bankers, and merchants know quite well how to distinguish pure gold from gold alloyed with other metals. Since Archimedes, everyone knows how to identify gold by the ratio existing between its volume and its weight. Counterfeiting princes fool their subjects, but they do not fool the scales and balance of bankers, or the art of the assayers. One did not trade in gold by selling for gold what was not gold. We are speaking of a time in 1605 in Tunis which was then one of the best known markets of international trade, and such a fraud would be as difficult and as perilous as it would be today, for example, in London, Amsterdam, New York, or Paris, where heavy gold payments are made in ingots. This is, in our opinion, one of the most demonstrative facts that we have been able to gather to support the opinion of alchemists about the reality of transmutation".

As for the operation itself, it partakes exclusively from alchemy and is very close to that taught by Pantheus in his Voarchadumia, and whose result he calls gold of the two cementations. For, if Vincent de Paul gave us a broad description of the process, on the other hand, he was careful not to describe the order and the manner of operating. Anyone today who would try to realize it, even if he had a perfect knowledge of this special cement, would only witness its failure. Because gold, in order to acquire the faculty of transmuting the silver alloyed to it, must first be prepared, as the cement only acts on the silver. Without this initial disposition, the gold would remain inert in the midst of the electrum and could not transmit to silver that which it does not possess in a natural state (19). Spagyrist call this preliminary work exaltation or transfusion and it is also performed with the aid of a cement applied by stratification. Consequently, since the composition of this first cement is different from that of the second, the name given by Pantheus to the metal thus obtained is found to be fully justified.

The secret of exaltation, without whose knowledge one cannot succeed, consists in increasing ---in one burst or gradually --the normal color of pure gold by the sulphur of an imperfect metal, ordinarily copper. The latter gives precious metal its own blood through a sort of chemical transfusion. The gold, overfilled with the tincture, takes on the red color of coral and can thus give to the specific mercury of silver the sulphur which it lacks, owing to the agency of the mineral spirits emanating from the cement during the work. This transmission of the excess sulphur held by the exalted gold takes place gradually under the effect of heat; it takes from 24 to 40 hours according to the skill of the artisan and the volume of the treated matters. It is necessary to pay much attention to the regulation of the heat, which must be constant and strong enough without ever reaching the point of fusion or melting of the alloy. By overheating, one would risk volatilizing the silver and dissipating the sulphur introduced into the gold, since this sulphur has not yet reached a perfect fixity.

Finally, a third manipulation, purposely omitted since an enlightened alchemist has no need for so much direction, includes the brushing of the extracted laminae, their fusion and cupellation. Upon being weighed, the pure gold residue will show a more or less perceptible decrease, which varies generally between one-fifth and one-fourth of the alloyed silver. Be that as it may, and in spite of this loss, the process still leaves us with a remunerating profit.

We will point out here, about the process of exaltation, that coralline gold obtained by one or the other of the diverse

methods advocated remains capable of transmuting directly, that is, without the help of the later cementation, a certain quantity of the silver: about one-fourth of its weight. Yet, since it is impossible to determine the exact value of the coefficient of auriferous power, one goes around the difficulty by melting the red gold with a triple proportion of silver, (called in quartation) and by submitting the laminated alloy to the beginning operation.

After having said that the exaltation, based in the absorption of a certain portion of the metallic sulphur by the mercury of gold, considerably reinforces the very coloration of the metal, we will give a few indications about the processes used to this end. The processes use the property that solar mercury possesses of strongly retaining a fraction of pure sulphur, when one operates on the metallic mass, so as to dissociate the previously formed alloy. Thus, gold melted with copper, if it comes to be separated from it, never completely abandons a portion of the tincture that it stole from it. So that, by often repeating the same action, gold gradually enriches itself and can then give of its excess tincture to the metal which is closest to it, i.e., silver.

An experienced chemist, points out Naxagoras, knows well enough that if gold is purified up to 24 times or more by the sulphur of antimony, it acquires a remarkable color, brightness, and fineness. There is a loss of metal, contrary to what occurs with copper, because during the purification, the mercury of gold abandons a part of its substance to antimony, and the sulphur becomes overabundant through an imbalance of natural proportions. This renders the process useless and only permits a mere satisfaction of one's curiosity.

The exaltation of gold is also achieved by first melting it with three times its weight in copper, then decomposing the alloy turned into filings by boiling nitric acid. Although this technique is very laborious and costly, in view of the volume of acid required, it is nevertheless one of the best and one of the surest that we know.

However, if one possesses an energetic reducing agent, and if one knows how to use it during the fusion of the gold and copper itself, the operation will be greatly simplified and one does not need fear a loss of material or excessive labor, in spite of the indispensable repetitions which this method still requires. Finally, the artist, by studying these different methods, will be able to discover better and even more efficient ones. For example, he only has to call upon sulphur directly extracted from lead to incinerate it back to a crude state and to project it little by little into molten gold which will keep its pure parts; unless you prefer to use iron, whose specific sulphur is, of all the metals, the one for which gold manifests the greatest affinity.

But this is enough. Let whoever wants to work, work; we care little whether one maintains his opinion, follows or despises our advice. We will repeat one last time that of all the operations benevolently described in these pages, none can be related in any way to traditional alchemy; none can be compared to its own operations. A thick wall separates the two sciences, an insurmountable obstacle for those who are familiar with the methods and formulas of chemistry. We do not want to make anyone despair, but truth compels us to say that those who keep on performing spagyric research will never come out of the ways of official chemistry. Many modern chemists believe in good faith that they are resolutely going far from chemical science, because they explain its phenomena in a special manner without using any other technique besides that of the learned men whom they criticize. Alas, there have always been many of these erring and self-deluded people, and it perhaps for them that Jacques Tesson (20) wrote these words of truth: "Those who want to accomplish our Work through digestions, through common distillations, and similar sublimations, and others by triturations, all these people are off the good path, in great error and difficulty, and they will never succeed because all these names, words, and manners of operation are names, words, and manners of metaphor".

We believe that we have fulfilled our purpose and demonstrated, as much as it has been possible to do so, that the ancestor of modern chemistry is not the old and simple alchemy but ancient spagyrics, enriched with successive contributions from Greek, Arabic, and medieval alchemy.

If one wants to have some idea of the secret science, let him bring his thoughts back to the work of the farmer and that of the microbiologist, since ours is placed under the dependence of analogous conditions. For, as Nature gives the farmer the earth and the grain, and the microbiologist the agar-agar and the spore, similarly she gives the alchemist the proper metallic terrain and the appropriate seed. If all the circumstances favorable to the regular process of this special culture are rigorously observed, the harvest cannot but be abundant...

In summary, alchemical science, of an extreme simplicity in its materials and its formula, nevertheless remains the most unrewarding, the most obscure of all, by reason of the exact knowledge of the required conditions and the required influences. There is its mysterious side, and it is towards resolution of this most difficult problem that the efforts of all the sons of Hermes converge.

(1) Cf. *L'illusion et les Fausses Sciences* (Illusion and the False Sciences), by Prof. EdmondMarie- Leopold Bouty, in the journal *Science et Vie*, December, 1913. (2) Starting with pure gold trichloride from the chlorauric acid and slowly precipitated by a salt of zinc united to potassium carbonate in a "certain kind of rain water". Rain water alone collected at a given time of the year into a zinc container is sufficient to form the ruby colloid which is separated from the crystalloids by dialysis, as we have many times demonstrated by experiment and always with equal success. (3) *The Cosmopolite or Nouvelle Lumiere Chymique* (New Chemical Light), Paris, Jean d'Houry, 1669 (4) Under the general epithet of vulgar chemists, the author designates here alchemists and spagyrist to differentiate them from genuine alchemists, also called Adepts (Adeptus, who has acquired) or Chemical Philosophers. (5) Nicholas Grosparmy, *L'Abrege de theorique et le Secret des Secrets* (Summary of the Theory and the Secret of Secrets) manuscripts of the Bibliotheque Nationale, #12246, 12298, 12299, 14789, 19072. Bibliothequ de l'Arsenal, #2516 (166 SAF). Rennes, 160, 161. (6) Batsdorff, *Le Filet d'Ariadne* (Ariadne's Thread), Paris, Laurent d'Houry, 1695, p. 2. (7) *Clavicula Hermetica Scientiae, ad hyperbores quodam horis subsecivis consignata*; Amstelodami, Petrus Mortieri, 1751, p. 51. (8) It is interesting to note a curious fact, which makes it impossible to use this experiment on an industrial scale. The result indeed varies in inverse ratio to the quantity of the metal used. The larger the masses we operate on, the less product we collect. The same phenomenon can be observed with metallic and saline mixtures from which only small quantities of gold are generally extracted. If the experiment usually succeeds by operating on a few grams of initial matter, by working with a much larger mass, it is frequently a total failure. Before we discovered it, we long searched for the cause of this oddity, which resides in the manner in which solvents behave as they become saturated. The precipitate appears shortly after the beginning and until the middle of the attack; it is redissolved partly or totally later on according to the greater or lesser volume of acid. (9) Geber, in his *Sum of Perfection of the Magistry*, speaks of the power that spirits have on the bodies, "O sons of the doctrine", he exclaims, "if you want to cause certain changes in bodies, you will only succeed in doing so with spirits (per spiritus ipsos fieri necesse est). When these spirits fix themselves in the bodies, they lose their form and their nature; they are not what they once were. When we cause a separation, here is what happens: either these spirits escape by themselves and the bodies where they were fixed remain, or the spirits and the bodies escape together at the same time". (10) In the mass it colors them red when seen in transparency and green when seen in reflection. (11) *Les Douze Clefs de Philosophie*, Paris, P. Moet, 1659, vol. 1, p. 34; Editions de Minuit, 1956, p. 85. (12) J.-A. Pantheus: *Ars et Theoria Transmutationis Metallica cum Voarchadumia*; Venuent, *Vivantium Gautheriorium*, 1550. (13) Dr S. Bacstrom was affiliated with the Hermetic Society founded by the Adept de Chazal, who lived on the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean at the time of the French Revolution. (14) Born in Poux near Dax in 1581, biographers say that he was born in 1576, although he himself gives his exact age, several times, in his correspondence. This error can be explained by the fact that with the complicity of prelates acting against the decision of the Council of Trent, he was fraudulently represented to be 24 years of age, while he really was only 19, when he was ordained priest, in the year 1600. (15) He founded, says Father Petin (*Dictionnaire hagiographique* in the *Encyclopedie de Migne*, Paris, 1850), a hospital for galley slaves in Marseilles, the houses of Orphelins (orphans) in Paris, of the Filles de la Providence (Daughters of Providence) and of the Filles de la Croix (Daughters of the Cross); the Hospitals of Jesus, of les Enfants-Trouves (Lost Children), the general hospital of the Salpetriere. "Without mentioning the Hospital of Sainte-Renne, which he founded in Burgundy; he came to the rescue of several provinces ravaged by famine and pestilence; and the alms which he sent to Lorraine and Champagne amounted to nearly two millions". (16) "If I had given him a mountain of gold"... (17) We do not know why historians and biographers continue to maintain the fanciful spelling of Vincent de Paul. The man has no need of the noble particle to be noble among the nobles. All his letters are signed Depaul. One finds his name written on a Masonic invitation reproduced in the *Dictionnaire d'Occultisme* of E. Desormes and Adriene Basile (Angers, Lachese, 1897). It is not surprising, furthermore, that a lodge obeying the code of charity and high fraternity which ruled the Masonry of the 18th century placed itself under the nominal protection of the powerful philanthropist. The document in question, dated February 14, 1835, emanates from the lodge Salut, Force, union (Salvation, Strength, Union), of the Chapitre des Disciples de Saint-Vincent Depaul, linked to the East of Paris and founded in 1777. (18) It is all the more unlikely to be mistaken about the nature of this alloy because silver provokes in gold such discoloration that it would not go unnoticed. It is here almost complete, since the metals are alloyed in equal weight and the alloy appears white. (19) Basil Valentine insists on the necessity of giving to gold an overabundance of sulphur. "Gold does not dye", he says, "if it has not previously been dyed". (20) Jacques Tesson or Le Tesson, *Le grand et Excellent Oeuvre des Sages, contenant trois traits ou dialogues: Dialogues du Lyon verd, du grand theriaque et du Regime*. Ms. Of the 17th century; Lyon Library, #971, p. 900.

## BOOK TWO

### THE SALAMANDER OF LISIEUX

#### I

A small town in Normandy, which owes the picturesquely medieval appearance, that we know, to its many wooden houses



and overhanging gables, Lisieux, respectful oftimes past, offers us, among so many other curiosities, a pretty and quite interesting alchemist's dwelling.

A humble house, in truth, but which betrays its builder's concern for humility, that the fortunate beneficiaries of the hermetic treasure vowed to abide by throughout their entire life. It is generally known under the name of Manor of the Salamander, and occupies Number 19 of rue Fevres (Plate IV)

In spite of our research, obtaining the least information about its first owners has been impossible. No one knows them. No one knows, in Lisieux or anywhere else, who built it in the 16th century, nor who the artists were who decorated it. Probably not to fall short of tradition, the Salamander jealously guards its secret and that of the alchemist. Yet in 1834 the house was the subject of an article (1), however merely a pure and simple description of the sculpted figures that the tourist can admire on its façade. This notice and a few lines inserted in the *Statistique monumentale du Calvados* by Monsieur de Caumont (Lisieux, vol. 5) represent all the published material relating to the Manor of the Salamander. It is little and we regret it. For the small and delightful residence erected by the will of a true Adept and decorated with motifs borrowed from hermetic symbolism and traditional allegory, deserves better. Well known by the inhabitants of Lisieux, it is not known by the public at large, nor even perhaps by many lovers of art, although its decoration, as much by its abundance and variety, as by its fair preservation allows to place it in the first rank of the best buildings of the style. There is an unfortunate gap and we will try to fill it by emphasizing the artistic value of this elegant dwelling as well as the initiatory teachings expressed by its sculptures.

A study of the motifs of the façade allows us to affirm, with a conviction borne from a patient analysis, that the builder of the Manor was a learned alchemist, having given the measure of his talent, in other words, an Adept, possessor of the philosophers' stone. We also certify that his affiliation with some esoteric center that had many points of contact with the dispersed order of the Templars, proves unquestionable. But what could have been this secret fraternity which prided itself to count among its members the learned philosopher of Lisieux? We must admit our ignorance and leave the question unanswered. However, although we unyieldingly loathe this hypothesis, the probability, the relevance of dates and the proximity of places suggest certain conjunctures, which we will mention as a suggestion, without committing ourselves.

Approximately a century before the Manor of Lisieux had been built, three alchemist companions labored in Flers (Orne) and accomplished the Great Work there in the year 1420. They were Nicolas de Grosparmy, a gentleman, Nicolas or Noel Valois, also called Le Vallois, and a priest by the name of Pierre Vicot or Vitecoq. The latter calls himself "chaplain and domestic servant of the Lord de Grosparmy" (2). Alone, de Grosparmy possessed some wealth along with the title of Lord and Count of Flers. Yet it was Valois who first discovered the practice of the Work and who taught it to his companions, as he gives us to understand in his *Cinq Livres* (Five Books). He was then 45 years old, subsequently his birthdate must have been 1375. The three Adepts wrote different works between the years 1440-1450 (3). None of these books have been printed. From a note added to the Manuscript #158 (125) of the Library of Rennes, a gentleman of Normandy, Monsieur Bois Jeuffroy, would have inherited all the original treatises by Nicolas de Grosparmy, Valois, and Vicot. He sold the entire copy to the "late Count of Flers for 1500 pounds and a prize horse". This Count of Flers and Baron of Tracy is Louis de Pelleve, who died in 1660 and who was the great-grandson on the women's side of the author Grosparmy (4).

However these three Adepts who lived and worked in Flers in the first half of the 15th century, were quoted without the least reason as belonging to the 16th century. In the copy owned by the Library of Rennes, it is nonetheless very clearly stated that they resided in the Castle of Flers, whose owner was Grosparmy, "where they accomplished the philosophers' Work and wrote their books". The original error, conscious or not, comes from an anonym, author of the notes, entitled *Remarques*, written in the margins of a few manuscript copies of the works of Grosparmy, and which belonged to the chemist Chevreul. The latter, without further verifying the whimsical chronology of these notes, mentioned the dates, systematically extended by one century by the anonymous scrivener, and all the authors after him outdid each other in propagating this unforgivable error. We shall briefly reestablish the truth. Alfred de Caix (5), after having said that Louis de Pelleve had died in poverty in 1660, adds: "According to the document which precedes, the land of Flers would have been acquired from Nicolas de Grosparmy; but the author of the *Remarques* here contradicts Monsieur de la Ferriere (6) who quotes in the date of 1404 a certain Raoul de Grosparmy as Lord of the place". Nothing is truer, although, on the other hand, Alfred de Caix seems to accept the falsified chronology of the unknown annotator. In 1404 Raoul de Grosparmy was indeed Lord of Beuville and of Flers (7), and although we do not know how he became its owner, this fact cannot be called into question. "Raoul de Grosparmy", writes Count Hector de La Ferriere, "must be the father of Nicolas de Grosparmy, to whom Marie de Roeux gave three sons --- Jehan de Grosparmy, Guillaume, and Mathurin de Grosparmy, and a daughter, Guillemette de Grosparmy, married on January 8, 1496 to Germain de Grimouville. At that date Nicolas de Grosparmy was dead and Jehan de Grosparmy, Baron of Flers, his eldest son, and Guillaume de Grosparmy, his second son, gave their sister as a consideration for her marriage 300 livres tournois (8) in cash, and a yearly pension of 20 pounds which could be

bought back for the price of 400 livres tournois" (9) . It is here perfectly established: the dates appearing on the copies of the various manuscripts of Grosparmy and Valois are rigorously exact and absolutely authentic. From this point on, we could dispense with searching for the biographical and chronological concordance of Nicolas Valois since it has been proven that he was the companion and the regular guest of the Lord Count of Flers. But it is advisable to discover the origin of the error attributable to the so- poorly informed commentator of the manuscripts of Chevreul. Let us immediately say that it could have arisen from an unfortunate homonymy, unless our anonymous author, by faking all the dates, had wanted to honor Nicolas Valois with the sumptuous Mansion of Caen, which was built by one of his successors.

It is thought that toward the end of his life Nicolas Valois acquired the four lands of Escoville, Fontaines, Mesnil-Guillaume, and Manneville. Nevertheless, this fact is on no way proved; no document confirms it, if not for the unfounded and unreliable assertion of the author of the above-mentioned Remarks. The old alchemist, artisan of the wealth of the Le Vallois family and Lords of Escoville, lived as a wise man, in accordance with the precepts of philosophical discipline and ethics. He who wrote, in 1445, for his son that "patience is the ladder of philosophers, and humility the gate to their garden", could not very well follow the example or lead the life of the powerful without failing his convictions. Very likely, at the age of 70, with no other concerns but his writings, he completed in the Castle of Flers a life of work, calm and simplicity, in the company of his two friends with whom he had accomplished the Great Work. His last years were devoted to the writing of the books destined to perfect the scientific education of his son, known only under the epithet of "the pious and noble knight" (10), and to whom Pierre Vicot was giving oral initiatory instruction. This passage from the manuscript of Valois actually points to the priest Vicot: "In the name of God Almighty, know, my beloved son, the intention of nature by the teachings declared hereafter. When, during the last days of my life, my body, ready to abandon my soul, was doing nothing more than awaiting the hour of the Lord and the last breath, the desire took me to leave you as my Testament and Last Will these words by which you will be taught several beautiful things concerning the subject of the most worthy metallic transmutation... This is why I had the principles of natural Philosophy taught to you, so as to make you more capable of this holy Science" (11) .

Nicolas Valois' Cinq Livres, at the beginning of which this passage is found, bears the date of 1445 ---probably the date of completion ---which would lead us to believe that the alchemist, contrary to the account of the author of the Remarques, died at a very advanced age. We can imagine that his son, raised and instructed according to the principles of hermetic wisdom, had to content himself with the acquisition of the lands of Escoville, or with collecting their revenues if he had inherited them from Nicolas Valois. However that may be, and although no written testimony has come to help us in filling this gap, one thing remains certain: the alchemist's son, himself an Adept, never did build this domain, in all or in part; nor did he take any further measures for the ratification of the title attached to it; finally, no one knows whether he lived at Flers like his father or if he dwelled in Caen. We probably owe the building project of the Mansion of the Great Horse, a project realized in the city of Caen by Nicolas Le Vallois, his eldest son, to the first recognized owner of the titles of Esquire and Lord of Escoville, of Mesnil-Guillaume, and of other places. In any case, we know from reliable sources that Jean Le Vallois, first of the name, grandson of Nicolas, "appeared March 24, 1511, wearing the brigandine and a sallet, to show himself to the noblemen of the district of Caen, according to a certificate from the Lieutenant-General of the said district, dated the same day". He left as his heir Nicolas Le Vallois, Lord of Escoville and of Mesmil- Guillaume, born in the year 1494 and married on April 7, 1534 to Marie du Val, who gave him a son, Louis de Vallois, Esquire, Lord of Escoville, born in Caen on September 18, 1536, who later on became counselor-secretary to the king.

So Nicolas Le Vallois, great-grandson of the alchemist of Flers, undertook the work on the house of Escoville, which required approximately ten years, from 1530 to 1540 (12). To this same Nicolas Le Vallois, our anonymous author, perhaps misled by the similarity of names, attributes the work of Nicolas Valois, his ancestor, by transposing in Caen what had happened in Fleers. According to the report of de Bras, (*Les Recherches et antiquitez de la ville de Caen*,

p. 132), Nicolas le Vallois is supposed to have died young, in the year 1541. "Friday, Day of Epiphany, 1541", writes the old historian, "Nicolas Le Vallois, Lord of Escoville, Fontaines, Mesnil-Guillaume and Manneville, then the most opulent in the city: while he was about to be seated at his table in a room of the Pavilion of the beautiful and superb dwelling near the St Peter Intersection, which he had built the preceding year, while eating an oyster in the shell, being approximately 47 years of age, all of a sudden fell dead of a stroke which suffocated him". In the neighborhood, the House of Escoville was called Mansion of the Great Horse (13) . According to Vauquelin des Yveteaux' testimony, Nicolas Le Vallois, its owner, would have accomplished the great Work there, "in the city where the hieroglyphs of the house he had built and that can still be seen in St Peter's Square facing the great church of the same name, bear witness to his science". Adds Robillard de Beupaire, "There could be hieroglyphs in the sculptures of the Mansion of the Great Horse; then all these seemingly incoherent details could possibly have a very precise meaning for its builder and for all the adepts of the hermetic science, well versed in the mysterious formulae of the ancient philosophers, mages, brahmans, and cabalists". Unfortunately, of all the statues which decorated this elegant dwelling, the principal piece from the alchemical standpoint, "the one placed

above the door which first struck the eyes of passersby and which had given the dwelling its name, the Great Horse, described and celebrated by all contemporary authors, no longer exists today. It was mercilessly broken in 1793. In his work entitled *Les Origines de Caen*, Daniel Huet maintains that the equestrian statue pertained to a scene of the Book of Revelation (Chap. 19, v. 2), against Bardou's opinion, the priest of Cornelles, who saw Pegasus in it, and de la Roque's who recognized in it the very effigy of Hercules. In a letter addressed to Daniel Huet by Father de la Ducquerie, the latter writes that "the figure of the great horse which is on the main façade of the house of Monsieur Le Valois d'Escoville's house is not, as Monsieur de la Roque believed, and after his many others, a Hercules; it is a vision of the Apocalypse. This is confirmed by the inscription underneath it. On the thigh of the horseman are written these words from The Apocalypse: Rex Regum et Dominus Dominantium ---King of Kings and Lord of Lords". Another correspondent of the learned prelate of Avranches, the physician Dubourg, provides yet more specific details. "In answer to your letter", he wrote, "let me begin by telling you that there are two representations in bas-relief, one on top where this great horse is represented in the air, with clouds beneath its front feet. The man who rides it had a sword in front of him, but it is no longer there; in his right hand he holds a long iron rod; above and in front of him an angel in the sun. Beneath the round part of the door, there is yet another smaller representation of a riding man, on a pile of dead bodies and horses, which birds are eating. It is facing east, as opposed to the other one, and in front of him, are represented the false prophet, the several-headed dragon, and the horsemen against whom this horseman appears to be riding. His head is turned backwards, as if to see the representation of the false prophet and the dragon entering an old castle, out of which flames emerge, and by which this false prophet is already half engulfed. There is writing on the thigh of the great horseman and in several places such as King of Kings, Lord of Lords, and others taken from Chapter 19 of The Book of Revelation. As these letters were not engraved, I believe that they were not written so long ago, but there is a marble slab up and above upon which is written: It was his name, the Word of God" (14).

We did not intend here to undertake the study of the symbolic statues designed to express or expose the principal arcane of the science. This philosopher's dwelling, very well known, often described, can lend itself to the personal interpretations of enthusiasts of the sacred Art. We will simply point out a few particularly instructive figures worthy of interest. There is first the dragon of the mutilated tympanum of the entry door, on the left, under the peristyle which precedes the turret staircase. On the lateral facade, two beautiful statues representing David and Judith must attract our attention; the latter is accompanied by six verses from that period:

Here is seen the portrait Of the virtuous Judith, Who by proud deed Cut off the smoky head Of Holohernes, that otherwise Would have defeated blessed Jerusalem.

Above these great figures, two other scenes can be contemplated, one recounting Europa's kidnapping and the other the freeing of Andromeda by Perseus, both with a similar meaning to the legendary kidnapping of Deianira, followed by the death of Nessus, that we shall analyze later when speaking of the myth of Adam and Eve. In another pavilion we can read on the interior frieze of a window, *Marsyas victus obmutescit* (15). Robillard de Beaupaire says, "It is an allusion to the musical duel between Apollo and Marsyas in which figure as companions the bearers of instruments (16) that we can see above. Finally, to crown the whole thing, above the small turret, there is a little figure, today very worn, and in which Monsieur Sauvageon several years ago thought to recognize Apollo, god of the day and of light; and below the cupola of the large turret, in a sort of little temple, without columns, is the very recognizable statue of Priapus. We would be at great loss", adds the author, "if we had to explain what precise meaning should be attributed to the character with the grave, severe physiognomy, wearing a Hebrew turban; and to the one who emerges so vigorously from a painted bull's eye window, while his arm pierces the thickness of the entablature; and to a rather beautiful representation of St Cecile playing the therobo; to the blacksmiths whose hammers, at the bottom of the pilasters, strike a missing anvil; to the very original exterior decorations, and which are the decorations of the service stairs, with the motto, *Labor improbus omnia vincit...* (17). It would perhaps not have been totally useless, in order to penetrate the meaning of all these sculptures, to inquire about the mental tendencies and the habitual occupations of the one who so lavished them on his dwelling. It is known that the Lord of Escoville was one of the wealthiest men of Normandy; what is less known is that he had always devoted himself with a passionate fervor to the mysterious researches of alchemy".

From this succinct presentation we must above all remember that there existed in Flers, in the 15th century, a nucleus of hermetic philosophers; that they may have formed disciples --which is confirmed by the science transmitted to the successors of Nicolas Valois, the Lords of Escoville ---and may have created an initiation center; and the city of Caen, being about equally distant from Flers and Lisieux, it would be possible that the unknown Adept, retired in the Manor of the Salamander, had received his first instruction from some master belonging to the occult group of Flers or Caen. There is in this hypothesis neither material impossibility nor improbability, yet we cannot give it any more value than can be expected from this kind of supposition. And so we beg the reader to receive it as we offer it, that is, with all the desirable circumspection and only as a simple probability.

(1) Cf. de Formeville: Notice sur une maison du XVIeme siecle a Lisieux (Notice on a 16th Century House in Lisieux), drawn and lithographed by Challamel, Paris, Janet et Koeplin; Lisieux, Pigeon, 1834. (2) Cf. Bibliotheque Nationale ms. 14789 (3032): La Clef des Secrets de Philosophie (The Key of the Secrets of Philosophy) by Pierre Vicot, priest; 18th century. (3) At the end of his Abrege de Theorique (Theoretical Summary), Nicolas de Grosparmy gives the exact date at which he completed this work: "which", he wrote, "I have compiled and caused to be written and was perfected the 29th day of December of the year 1449". Cf. Rennes Library, ms 158 (125), p. III. (4) Cf. Charles Verel: Les Alchimistes de Flers (The Alchemists of Flers); Alencon, 1889, in the Bulletin de la Societe Historique et Archeologique de l'Orne (Bulletin of the Historical and Archaeological Society of Orne). (5) Alfred de Caix: Notice sur quelques alchimistes normands (Notice on Some Norman Alchemists); Caen, F. LeBlanc-Hardel, 1868. (6) Comte Hector de la Ferriere: Histoire de Flers, ses seigneurs, son industrie (History of Flers, Its Lords, Its Industry). Paris, Dumoulin, 1855. (7) Laroque: Histoire de la Maison d'Harcourt (History of the Harcourt House), vol. II, p. 1148. (8) Translator's note: livre toumois was the currency of the time. (9) Charterer of Flers Castle. (10) Oeuvres Manuscrites de Grosparmy, Valois, and Vicot. Library of Rennes, ms 160 (124) Folio 90, Second Book by Master Pierre de Vitecoq, priest: "To you, noble and valorous knight, I address and entrust in your hands the greatest secret ever perceived by anyone alive..." Folio 139, Recapitulation de Maitre. Pierre Vicot (Recapitulation of Master Pierre Vicot), with a preface addressed to "the Noble and pious knight", son of Nicolas Valois. (11) Oeuvres de Grosparmy, Valois et Vicot (Works of Grosparmy, Valois, and Vicot), Bibliotheque Nationale (Paris) mss # 12246 (2526), 12298 and 12299 (435), 17th century --Library of Rennes, ms. 160 (124), folio 139: "There follows a recapitulation of M. Pierre Vicot, priest... on the writings which precede, which he wrote to instruct the son of the Lord Le Vallois in this Science after the death of the said Le Vallois, his father". (12) Eugene de Robillard de Beurepaire. Caen illustre, son histoire, ses monuments (Caen Illustrated, Its History, Its Monuments). Caen, F. Leblanc-Hardel, 1896, p. 436. (13) An inscription, engraved on the beautiful southern façade which forms the far end of the courtyard, bears the date 1535. (14) This Word of God, which is the Verbum Dismissum of Trevisan and the Lost Word of the medieval Freemasons, points to the material secret of the Work, whose revelation constitutes the Gift of God, and about whose nature, common name, or use, all philosophers maintain an impenetrable silence. It is therefore evident that the bas-relief which accompanied the inscription must have been connected with the subject of the sages, and probably also with the manner in which to work it. And so it is that one entered into the Work, just as one enters the house of Escoville through the symbolic gate of the Great Horse. (15) Marsyas (a satyr, a famous flute player) vanquished remains silent. (16) One frequently encounters on the dwellings of alchemists, among many other hermetic symbols, musicians or musical instruments. Among the disciples of Hermes, the alchemical science (and we will say why in the course of this book) was named the Art of Music. (17) "Despised, work triumphs over all". THE SALAMANDER OF LISIEUX II

We find ourselves here at the entrance, closed long ago, of the pretty manor.

The beauty of the style, the successful choice of motifs, the delicacy of execution, make this little door one of the most delightful specimens of 16th century wood sculpture. This hermetic paradigm, exclusively devoted to the symbolism of the dry way, the only one which authors reserved without providing any explanation about it, is a joy to the artist as well as a treasure to the alchemist (Plate V)

In order to make the students more responsive to the particular value of the emblems analyzed, we shall respect the order of the work without allowing ourselves to be guided by considerations of architectural logic or aesthetic nature.

On the tympanum of the door with carved panels, we notice an interesting allegorical group composed of a lion and a lioness facing each other, They are holding in their forepaws a human mask which personifies the sun, encircled by a liana carved into a mirror handle. Lion and lioness, male principle and female virtue, reflect the physical expression of the two natures, of similar form but opposite properties, that the art must choose at the beginning of the practice. From their union, accomplished according to certain secret rules, comes this double nature, mixed matter that the sages have named androgyne, their hemaphrodite, or Mirror of the Art. This substance, at once positive and negative, passive containing its own active agent, is the basis, the foundation of the Great Work. Of these two natures, taken separately, the one which plays the role of the feminine matter is the only one indicated and alchemically named on the corbel bearing the overhand of a second-story beam. The figure of a winged dragon can be seen, its tail curled into a ringlet. The dragon is an image and symbol of the primitive and volatile body, true and unique subject upon which one must first work. The philosophers have given it a multitude of diverse names besides the one under which it is commonly known. This has caused and still causes so much difficulty, so much confusion, to beginners, and especially to those who are little concerned with principles and do not know how far the possibility of nature can be expanded. In spite of the general opinion averring that our subject had never been named, we assert on the contrary that many books name it and that all describe it. However, while it is mentioned by the good authors, it cannot be said that it is underlined or expressly shown; it is often classified among the bodies that have been rejected as improper or alien to the Work. This is a traditional technique used by Adepts to divert the

lay people and to hide from them the secret entrance to their garden.

Its traditional name, the stone of the philosophers, is descriptive enough of the body to serve as a useful basis for its identification. It is, indeed, genuinely a stone, for, out of the mine, it shows the external characteristics common to all ores. It is the chaos of the sages, in which the four elements are contained, but in a confused, disorganized manner. It is our old man and the father of metals which owe their origin to it, as it represents the first earthly metallic manifestation. It is our arsenic, cadmia, antimony, blende, galena, cinnabar, tutia, tartar, etc. All ores, through the hermetic voice, rendered homage to it with their name. It is still called black dragon covered with scales, venomous serpent, daughter of Saturn, and "the most beloved of its children". This primal substance has seen its evolution interrupted by the interposition of a filthy combustible sulphur, which coats its pure mercury, holds it back, and coagulates it. And, though it is entirely volatile, this primitive mercury, materialized by the drying action of the arsenical sulphur, takes the shape of a solid, black, dense, fibrous, brittle, crushable mass rendered, by its lack of utility, vile, abject, and despicable in the eyes of man, Yet, in this subject --poor relative of the metal family --the enlightened artist finds everything that he needs to begin and perfect his Great Work, since it is present, say the authors, at the beginning, the middle, and the end of the Work. Therefore the Ancients have compared it to the Chaos of Creation, where elements and principles, the darkness and the light, were on and the other confounded, intermixed, and unable to mutually interact. For this reason they symbolically depicted their matter in its first being as the image of the world which contained in itself the materials of our hermetic globe (1), or microcosm, assembled without order, without form, without rhythm or measure.

Our globe, reflection and mirror of the microcosm, is therefore nothing but a small part of the primordial Chaos, destined by divine will for elementary renewal in the three kingdoms, but which sets of mysterious circumstances have oriented and directed toward the mineral kingdom. Thus given form and specified, subjected to the laws ruling the evolution and the progression of minerals, this chaos, which has become a body, contains in a confused manner the purest seed and the closest substance there is to minerals and metals. The philosopher's matter is therefore of mineral and metallic origin. Hence, one must only seek it in the mineral and metallic root, which, says, Basil Valentine in the book, *The Twelve Keys*, was reserved by the Creator and intended only for the generation of metals. Consequently, anyone who seeks the sacred stone of the philosophers with the hope of encountering this little world in substances alien to the mineral and metallic kingdoms, will never reach his goals. To turn the apprentice away from the path of error the ancient authors teach him to always follow nature. Because nature only acts within its own appropriate species, only develops and perfects itself within itself and by itself, free from any heterogeneous thing occurring to hinder its progress or to oppose the effects of its generating power.

On a post of the frame on the left side of the door that we are studying, a subject in high relief calls and holds our attention. It shows a richly dressed man wearing a sleeved doublet and a mortarboard hat, his chest emblazoned with a shield showing a six-pointed star. This man of means, standing on the cover of an urn with embossed sides, serves to indicate the content of the container, according to the custom of the Middle Ages. It is the substance which during sublimations rises above the water, floating like an oil on its surface; it is Basil Valentine's Hyperion and Vitriol, Ripley's and Jacques Tesson's green lion, in a word, the real unknown of the great problem. This knight of beautiful bearing and heavenly lineage is no stranger to us: several hermetic etchings have acquainted us with him. Salomon Trismosin, in *The Golden Fleece*, shows him standing up, his feet planted on the edges of two water-filled vases, which reveal the origin and the source of this mysterious fountain; water of dual nature and virtue, issued from the milk of the virgin and the blood of Christ; igneous water and aqueous fire, virtue of the two baptism mentioned in the Gospels: "I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable" (2). Philosopher Solidonius' manuscript reproduces the same subject in the image of a chalice filled with water, out of which two characters are half-emerging in the center of a rather busy composition summing up the entire work. As for the treatise of Azoth, it is a huge angel --that of the parable of St John in the Book of Revelation --who treads the earth with one foot and the sea with the other, while raising a burning torch with his right hand and compressing an air-inflated goatskin with the left one, clear images of the quaternary of the primal elements: earth, water, air, fire. The body of this angel, whose two wings replace the head, is covered by the seal of the open book, ornamented by the cabalistic star, and the seven words, emblem of Vitriol: *Visita Interiora Terrae, Rectificandoque, Invenies Occultum Lapidem* (3). "I then saw", writes St John (4), "another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud: and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was, as it were, the sun, and his feet were as pillars of fire. He had in his hand a little open book, and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth. And cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth; and when he had cried out, seven thunders uttered their voices. And when the seven thunders had resounded their voices, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me: Keep under seal the words of the seven thunders, and write them not... And the voice which I heard from heaven spake unto me again, and said: Go and take the little open book which is in the hand of the angel who standeth upon the sea and upon the earth. And he

said unto me: Take it and eat it; it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey".

This product, allegorically expressed by an angel or by a man ---the attribute of the evangelist St Matthew ---is none other than the Mercury of the Philosophers, double in nature and quality, partly fixed and material, partly volatile and spiritual, which suffices to begin, achieve and multiply the work. It is the unique and only matter that we need, without having to worry about finding any other; but we must know, so as not to err, that authors generally begin their treatises with this mercury and how to acquire it. This Mercury definitely is the matrix and the root of gold, and not the precious metal which is absolutely useless and without function in the way we are studying. Eirenaeus Philalethes says with much truth, that our Mercury, barely mineral, is even less metallic because it only contains the spirit or metallic seed, while the body tends to move away from the mineral quality. It is nevertheless the spirit of gold, contained in a transparent oil, easily coagulable; the salt of metals, since all stone is salt, and the salt of our stone, since the stone of the philosophers, which is this mercury of which we speak, is the subject of the Philosophers' Stone. Hence several Adepts, intending to create confusion, called it nitre or saltpeter (sal petri, salt of stone), and copied the sign of the one onto the image of the other. Further, its crystalline structure, its physical resemblance to melted salt, its transparency, have allowed it to be compared to salts and caused it to be given all their names. According to the will or whim of writers, it has been described in turn as sea salt, rock salt, sal alembroth, oleu vitri which Pantheus describes as being chrysocolia, and others as borax or atincar; Roman vitriol, because [\*\*\*-123-1] (Rome), Greek name of the Eternal City, means strength, vigor, power, domination; the mineral of Pierre-Jean Fabre because he says gold lives in it (vitriol) (5). It is also called Proteus because of its metamorphoses in the course of the work, and Chameleon ([\*\*\*-123-2], (rampant lion), because it takes on, in sequence, all the colors of the spectrum.

Now here is the last decorative subject of our door. It is a salamander serving as capital to the small twisted column of the right jamb. It appears to be, in a fashion, the protecting corbel of the median pillar, located on the ground floor, and as far as on the attic window. It would even seem, given the deliberate repetition of the symbol, that our alchemist had a marked preference for this heraldic reptile. We do not want to insinuate here that he meant to give it the erotic and vulgar meaning which Francis I valued so much; it would be insulting artisan, dishonoring science, and outraging truth in the manner of this high-bred debauchee with low intellectuality to whom we regret owing the paradoxical name of Renaissance (6). However an unusual feature of human disposition prompts man to cherish more that for which he has suffered and toiled most; this reason would probably allow us to explain the triple usage of the salamander, hieroglyph of the secret fire of the sages. It is so indeed, because, among the secondary products entering into the work as helpers or servants, none is more difficult to discover, none is more laborious to identify. It is yet possible, in accessory preparations, to use instead and place of the required additives certain substitutes capable of a similar result; however, in the elaboration of Mercury, nothing could be substituted for the secret fire, this spirit likely to animate it, exalt it and blend with it after having extracted it out of filthy matter. "I would feel very sorry for you", wrote Limojon de Saint-Didier (7), "if, like myself, after having known the true matter, you had spent fifteen years entirely in work, study, and meditation without being able to extract from the stone the precious juice it contains in its midst, for want of knowing the secret fire of the sages, which from this apparently dry and arid plant, causes to flow a water that doesn't wet the hands". Without it, without this fire hidden in a saline form, the prepared matter could not be tested or fulfill its function of mother, and our labor would remain forever chimeric and vain. Every generation requires the help of a specific agent, determined for the realm in which nature has placed it. And everything bears seed. Animals are born from an egg or fertilized ovum; vegetables come from a seed that has been rendered prolific; similarly, minerals and metals have for seed a metallic liquid fertilized by the mineral fire. The latter then is the active agent introduced by the art into the mineral seed and Philalethes tells us, "it is the first to make the axle turn and the wheel move". Hence it is easy to understand to use of this invisible and mysterious metallic light, and the care with which we must seek to know it and to distinguish it by its specific, essential, and occult qualities.

Salamander, in Latin salamandra, comes from sal, salt, and mandra, which means stable and also rock hollow, solitude, hermitage. Salamandra then is the name of the salt of the stable, salt of the rock, or solitary slat. In the Greek language this word takes another meaning, revealing the action that provokes: the Greek word [\*\*\*-125-1] (Salamandra) appears formed from [\*\*\*-125-2] (Sala) meaning agitation, perturbation, used probably for [\*\*\*-125-3] (salos) or [\*\*\*-125-4] (zale), agitated water, tempest, fluctuation, and from [\*\*\*-125-5] (mandra) which has the same meaning as in Latin. From these etymologies we can draw the conclusion that the salt, spirit or fire takes birth in a stable, a rock hollow, a grotto... That is enough. Lying on the straw of his manger in the grotto of Bethlehem, is Jesus not the new sun bringing light to the world? Is he not God himself in his carnal and perishable shell? Who the has said: "I am the Spirit and I am the Life; and I have come to set fire unto things?".

This spiritual fire, given form and materialized in salt, is the hidden sulphur, since during its operation it is never made manifest or perceptible to our eyes. And yet this sulphur, as invisible as it may be, is not an ingenious abstraction or a doctrine stratagem. We know how to isolate it, how to extract it from the body that conceals it, by an occult means and in the appearance of a dry powder which, when it is in that state, becomes improper and without effect for the philosopher's

art. This pure fire, of the same essence as the specific sulphur of gold but less digested, is, on the other hand, more abundant than that of the precious metal. This is why it easily unites with the mercury of minerals and imperfect metals. Philalethes affirms that it is found hidden in the belly of Aries, or the Ram, constellation which the sun crosses in the month of April. Finally, to even better designate it, we will add that this Ram, "which hides within itself the magical steel", ostensibly bears on its shield the image of the hermetic seal, the star with six rays. So it is in this very common matter, which may seem merely useful to us, that we must look for the mysterious solar fire, a subtle salt and spiritual sulphur, a celestial light diffused in the darkness of the body, without which nothing can be done and which nothing could replace.

Among the emblematic subjects of the small mansion of Lisieux, we have mentioned earlier the important place occupied by the salamander, specific emblem of its modest and learned owner. We were saying that it can be found as far as the attic window of the roof, almost inaccessible and rising up against the open sky. It embraces the kingpost of the gable between two parallel dragons sculpted on the exposed wooden sides of the gable (Plate VI). These two dragons, one apterous ([\*126-1], without wings), the other chrysopterous ([\*126-2], with golden wings), are those about which Nicolas Flamel speaks in his Hieroglyphic Figures, and which Michael Maier (*Symbola aurea mensae*, Frankfurt, 1617) considers to be, along with the globe surmounted with the cross, specific symbols of the style of the celebrated Adept. This simple declaration demonstrates the wide knowledge that the artist from Lisieux had of philosophical texts and of the symbolism specific to each of his predecessors. On the other hand, the very choice of the salamander leads us to believe that our alchemist must have searched for a long time and spent many years to discover the secret fire. The hieroglyph in fact hides the physicochemical nature of the fruit of the garden of Hesperia, fruit whose late maturity can only rejoice the sage in his old age, at the sunset ([\*126-3] (Hesperis) of a laborious and painful career. Each piece of fruit is the result of a progressive condensation of the solar fire by the secret fire, a word incarnate, a celestial spirit embodied in all things of this world. And the assembled and concentrated rays of this double fire color and animate a pure, diaphanous, clarified, regenerated body of brilliant brightness and admirable virtue.

Once it has reached this point of exaltation, the igneous principle, material and spiritual, by the universality of its action becomes assimilable to bodies contained in the three kingdoms of nature; it is as efficient with animals and plants as it is within mineral and metallic bodies. It is the magical ruby, agent endowed with igneous energy and subtlety and clothed in the color and the multiple properties of fire. Again the Oil of Christ or of crystal, the heraldic lizard, attracts, devours, vomits and feeds the flame, resting on his patience like the old phoenix on his immortality. (1) Cf. Basil Valentine, *Les Douze Clefs de Philosophie* (The Twelve Keys of Philosophy), ninth figure. (2) St Luke 3:16-17; Mark 1:6-8; John 1:32-34 (3) Visit the Interior of the Earth, purify it and you'll find the hidden stone. (4) Revelation, Chapter 10: 1-4,8-9. This very instructive parable is reproduced with several variants specifying its hermetic meaning in the Vision that came to dreaming Ben Adam in the time of the reign of the King of Adama, and brought to light by Floretus in Bethabor. Library of the Arsenal, ms. 3022 (168, S.A.F.), p. 14. Here is the part of the text which is liable to interest us: "I then heard a voice from the sky speaking to me which said: 'Go and take this open book from the hand of the angel who is standing on the sea and the earth'. ---And I went to the angel and told him: 'Give me this book'. ---And I took this small book from the hand of the angel and gave it to him to gulp down; and when he had eaten it, he had furrows in his belly that were so strong that he became all black as coal; and while he was in that blackness, the sun was shining clearly as in bright noon, and then he turned his black form to a kind of white marble, until finally the sun was at its highest and he became totally red like fire. And then everything vanished...

"And from the place where the angel was speaking, a hand came up holding a glass, in which there seemed to be a powder of a reddish-pink color... And I heard a great echo saying: 'Follow nature, follow nature!'"

(5) The French translation of gold lives in it ---l'or y vit ---is an anagram of the term vitriol. (6) "Francis I is called the Father of Letters because of some favors he granted to three or four writers; but one forgets that this Father of Letter issued a royal decree in 1535 by which he prohibited printing under penalty of the gallows; and that after having prohibited printing, he established censoring to prevent the publication and the sale of books previously printed; that he gave the Sorbonne the right of inquisition on consciences; and that after the royal edict, possession of an ancient condemned book prohibited by the Sorbonne endangered its possessors of the death penalty if the book was found in his domicile where the police of Sorbonne were entitled to search; that he showed himself during his entire reign the implacable enemy of the independence of spirit and the progress of enlightenment, as well as the fanatical protector of the most ardent theologians and scholastic absurdities standing against the true spirit of Christian religion. What encouragement for science and for literature! One can only see in Francis I a brilliant madman, who caused the unhappiness and the shame of France". ---Abbot of Montgaillard, *Histoire de France* (History of France), Paris, Moutardier, 1827, vol. 1, p. 183. (7) Limojon de Saint-Didier, *Lettre aux vrais Disciples d'Hermes* (Letter to the True Disciples of Hermes) in *Triomphe Hermetique* (The Hermetic Triumph), Amsterdam, Henry Wetstein, 1699, p. 150. THE SALAMANDER OF LISIEUX III On the median pillar of the ground floor the visitor discovers a curious bas-relief. A monkey is carefully eating the fruit of a young apple tree, barely higher than itself (Plate

VII).

Facing this subject, which or the initiate translates perfect realization, we are looking at the completed Work. The brilliant flowers, whose vivid and glistening colors were the joy of our artisan, have become wilted, and burned out one after the other one; the fruits grew and, from green, which they were at the beginning, they now appear adorned with a brilliant purple envelope, a sure clue to their maturity and excellence.

For, in his patient work, the alchemist must be the scrupulous imitator of nature, the monkey of creation, according to the genuine expression of several masters. Guided by the analogy, he realizes on a small scale with his feeble means and in a restricted domain, what God did on a large scale in the cosmic universe. Here is the immense; there the miniscule. On these two poles, same thought, same effort, a will similar in its relativity. God makes everything from nothing” He creates, Man takes a parcel of that everything from nothing: He creates. Man takes a parcel of that everything and multiplies it; he prolongs and continues. Thus the microcosm amplifies the macrocosm. Such is his goal, his reason to be; such seems to be, in our eyes, his true earthly mission and the cause of his own salvation. Above, God; below, man. Between the immortal Creator and his perishable creature, all of created Nature. Lo: you will find nothing more, and you will discover nothing less than the Author of the first effort connected to the mass of beneficiaries of the divine example, subjected to the mass of beneficiaries of the divine example, subjected to the same imperious will of constant activity, of eternal labor.

All classical authors are unanimous in recognizing that the Great Work is an abridgement, reduced to human proportions and possibilities, of the divine Work. Since the Adept must contribute the best of his qualities if he wants to succeed, it appears just and equitable that he should collect the fruit the fruit o the Tree of Life and profit fro the marvelous apples of the garden of the Hesperides.

However, as we are compelled, obeying the desire or the whim of our philosopher, to begin at the very point where art and nature completed their concerted piece of work, would we be acting like blind men if we were to concern ourselves first with knowing what it is that we are looking for? And is not, in spite of the paradox, the method excellent which begins with the end? He who clearly knows what he wants to obtain will more easily find what he needs. In the occult circles of our time, people often speak of the philosophers’ stone without knowing what it is in reality. Many educated people call the hermetic gem a ‘mysterious body’; they share, about it, the opinion of certain spagyrist of the 17th and 18th centuries, who classified it among abstract entities, styled non-beings or rational beings. Let is therefore inquire so as to obtain, about this unknown body, an idea as close as possible to truth: let us study the descriptions, rare and too brief for our liking, that certain philosophers have left us, and let us see what certain learned people and faithful witnesses have reported.

First, let us say that, according to the sacred language, the term philosopher’s stone, means the stone which bears the sign of the sun. The solar sign is characterized by its red coloration, which can vary in intensity, as Basil Valentine (1) says, “Its color ranges from rosy red to crimson red, or from ruby to pomegranate red; as for its weight, it weighs much more than it has quantity”. So much for color and density. The Cosmopolite (2), whom Louis Figuier believes to be the alchemist known under the name of Seton, and others under the name of Michael Sendivogius, describes in this passage its translucent appearance, its crystalline form, and its fusibility: “If one were to find”, he said, “our subject in its last state of perfection, made and composed by nature; if it were fusible, like wax or butter, and its redness, its diaphanous nature or clarity appeared on the outside; it would be in truth our blessed stone” Its fusibility is such, indeed, that all authors have compared it to that of wax (64 C); it melts in the flame of a candle”, they repeat; some, for this reason, have even given it in the name of great red wax (3). With these physical characteristics the stone combines some powerful chemical properties ---the power of penetration or ingress, absolute fixity, inability to be oxidized, which makes it incalcinable, and extreme resistance to fire; finally, is irreducibility and its perfect indifference to chemical reagents. We hear the same from Heinrich Khunrath when he writes in his *Ampitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae*, “At last, when the Work will have passed from ashy color to pure white, then to yellow, you will see the philosophers stone, our King raised above the dominators, come out of his glassy sepulcher, arise from his bed and come onto our worldly scene in is glorified body, that is to say, regenerated and more than perfect; in other words, the brilliant carbuncle of a greatly shining splendor, whose parts, very subtle and very purified by the peaceful and harmonious union of the blend are inseparably bound and assembled into one; constant and diaphanous as crystal, compact and ponderous, easily fusible in fire like resin, flowing as wax, and more flowing than quicksilver yet without fumes; piercing and penetrating solid and compact bodies, as oil penetrates paper; soluble and dilatable in any liquid capable of softening it; brittle as glass; taking on a saffron color when it is reduced to powder, yet red as ruby when it remains in one unadulterated mass (this color is the signature of perfect fixation and of fixed perfection); coloring and dyeing constantly; fixed in the tribulations of all experiences, even when tried by devouring sulphur and fiery waters and by the very strong persecution of fire; always durable, incalcinable, and like the Salamander, permanent and justly judging all things (because it is in its own way all in everything), and proclaiming: ‘Behold, I shall renew all things’”.



Around 1585, the English, the English adventurer Edward Kelley, surnamed Talbot, had acquired, from an innkeeper, the philosophers' stone found in the tomb of a bishop who was said to have been very rich; it was red and very heavy, but without any odor. Meanwhile, Berigard of Pisa says that a skillful man gave him a gros (3.82 grams) of a powder whose color was similar to that of the red poppy and which had the odor of calcined sea salt (4).

Helvetius (Jean-Frederic Schweitzer) saw the stone, sown to him by a foreigner, an Adept, on December 27, 1666, in the form of a metal powder the color of sulphur. This powdered product came, says Khunrath, from a red mass. In a transmutation performed by Seton in July 1602, in front of Dr Jacob Zwinger, the powder used was, according to Dienheim, "rather heavy, and of a color appearing lemon yellow". A year later, during a second projection at the house of a goldsmith, Hans de Kempen in Cologne, August 11, 1603, the same artist used a red stone.

According to several trustworthy witnesses, this stone, directly obtained in powder form, could take on a color as bright as that of a stone formed in a compact mass. This instance is rather rare, but it can happen and is worth mentioning. In this way, an Italian Adept, who, in 1658, realized the transmutation in front of the Protestant minister, Gros, at the house of a goldsmith (named Bureau) from Geneva, used, according to those who were in attendance, a red powder. Schmeider described the stone that Boetticher obtained from Lascaris as a substance having the appearance of a fire-red colored glass. Yet, Lascaris had given Dominico Manuel (Gaetano) a powder similar to vermilion, the color of cinnabar. That of Gustenhover was also very red. As for the sample given by Lascaris to Dierback, it was examined under Counselor Dippel's microscope and appeared composed of a multitude of small grains or crystals which were red or orange; this stone had a power equal to about 600 times the unit.

Jean-Baptiste Helmont, relating his experience in 1618 in his laboratory at Vilvorde near Brussels, writes, "I have seen and touched the philosophers' stone more than once; its color is like powdered saffron, but heavy and shining like pulverized glass". This product, of which one fourth of a grain (13.25 milligrams) furnished eight ounces of gold (244.72 grams), showed a considerable energy: approximately 18,470 times the unit.

In the category of tinctures, i.e., liquids obtained by solutions oily metallic extracts, we have the account of Godwin Herman Braun from Osnabrueck who achieved the transmutation in 1701, using a tincture having the appearance of an oil, "rather fluid and of a brown color". The famous chemist Henckel (5), according to Valentini, reports the following anecdote: "One day a stranger, who had a brown tincture with a smell close to hartshorn oil (6), came to a famous apothecary of Frankfort-on-Main, named Salwedel; with our drops of this tincture he changed a gros of lead into 7-1/2 grains of gold of 23 carats. This same man gave a few drops of this tincture to the apothecary who lodged him and who then produced identical gold which he saved in memory of that man, with the small bottle in which it was contained and where the marks of the tincture can still be seen. I had this bottle in my hands, and I can testify about it to the world".

Without disputing the truth of the last two statements, we nevertheless refuse to categorize these as transmutations brought about by the philosophers' stone in its special state of powder of projection. All the tinctures meet this criterion. Their subjection to a particular metal, their limited potency, the specific characteristics they exhibit, lead us to regard them as simple metallic products, extracted from common metals by certain procedures called little particulars, which pertain to spagyry rather than to alchemy. Furthermore, these tinctures, being metallic, have no other action but to penetrate the metals which have been used as a basis for their penetration.

Let us leave aside these processes and tinctures. Above all, it is important to remember that the philosophers' stone appears in the shape of a crystalline, diaphanous body, red in mass, yellow after pulverization, dense and very fusible, although fixed at any temperature, and which its inner qualities render incisive, fiery, penetrating, dense and very fusible, although fixed at any temperature, and which its inner qualities render incisive, fiery, penetrating, irreducible, and incalcinable. In addition, it is soluble in molten glass, but instantaneously volatilizes when it is projected onto molten metal. Here, in one single object, are gathered physiochemical properties which singularly separate it from a possible metallic nature and render its origin rather nebulous. A little reflection will get us out of our difficulty. The masters of the art teach us that the goal of their labors is triple. What they seek to realize first is the universal Medicine or the actual philosophers' stone. Obtained in a saline form, whether multiplied or not, it can only be used for the healing of human illnesses, preservation of health, and growth of plants. Soluble in any alcoholic liquid, its solution takes the name of Aurum Potabile (7) (although it does not even contain the least atom of gold because it assumes a magnificent yellow color. Its healing value and the diversity of its use in therapeutics makes it a precious auxiliary in the treatment of grave and incurable ailments. It has no action on metals, except on gold and silver, on which it fixes itself and to which it bestows its own principles, which, consequently, becomes of no use for transmutation. However, if the maximum number of its multiplications is exceeded, it changes form and instead of resuming its solid crystalline state when cooling down, it remains fluid like quicksilver and definitely non-coagulable. It then shines in darkness, with a soft, red, phosphorescent light, of a weaker brightness than that of a common

nightlight. The universal Medicine has become the Inextinguishable Light; the light-giving product of those perpetual lamps, which certain authors have mentioned as having been found in some ancient sepulchers. Thus radiant and liquid, the philosophers' stone is not likely, in our opinion, to be pushed further; desiring to amplify its igneous quality would seem dangerous to us; the least that could be feared would be to volatilize it and lose the benefit of a considerable labor. Finally, if we ferment the solid, universal Medicine with very pure gold or silver, through direct fusion, we obtain the Powder of Projection, third form of the Stone. It is a translucent mass, red or white according to the chosen metal, pulverizable, and appropriate only to metallic transmutation. Oriented, determined, and specific to the mineral realm, it is useless and without action in the other two kingdoms.

It becomes clearly evident from the preceding considerations, that the philosophers' stone or universal Medicine, in spite of its undeniable metallic origin, is not uniquely made from metallic matter. If it were otherwise, and if one had to compose it only with metals, it would remain subjected to the conditions ruling mineral nature and it would have no need to be fermented to operate transmutation. Furthermore, the fundamental axiom which teaches that bodies have no action on bodies would be false and paradoxical. Take the time and the trouble to experiment, and you will recognize that metals have no action on other metals. Be they brought to the state of salts or ashes, glasses or colloids, they will always retain their nature throughout trials and, in the process of reduction, they will separate without losing their specific qualities.

Only the metallic spirits possess the privilege to alter, modify and denature metallic bodies. They are the true instigators of all the physical metamorphoses that can be observed here. But since these tenuous, extremely subtle and volatile spirits need a vehicle, an envelope capable of holding them back; since this matter must be very pure ---to allow the spirit to remain there ---and very fixed so as to prevent its volatilization; since it must remain fusible in order to promote ingress; since it is essential that it be absolutely resistant to reducing agents, we may easily understand that this matter cannot be searched for in the sole category of metals. That is why Basil Valentine recommends that we take the spirit out of the metallic root and Bernard of Trevisan forbids the use of metals, minerals and their salts in the construction of the body. The reason for it is simple and self-explanatory. If the stone were made up of a metallic body and a spirit fixed in this body, the latter acting on the former as if it were of the same species, the whole would take the characteristics form of metal. We could, in this case, obtain gold or silver or even an unknown metal but nothing more. This is what alchemists have always done, because they did not know the universality and the nature of the agent which they were looking for. But what we ask for, along with all the philosophers, is not the union of a metallic body with a metallic spirit, but rather the condensation, the agglomeration of this spirit into a coherent, tenacious and refractory envelope, capable of coating it, impregnating all its parts and guaranteeing it an efficacious protection. This soul, spirit, or fire assembled, concentrated and coagulated in the purest, the most resistant and the most perfect of earthly matters, we call it our stone. And we can certify that any undertaking which does not have this spirit for guide and this matter for basis will never lead to the proposed objective. (1) *Les Douze Clefs de Philosophie*, by Frater Basil Valentine, monk of the Order of St Benedict, dealing with the true metallic Medicine. (2) *Le Cosmopolite ou Nouvelle Lumiere Chymique* (The Cosmopolite or New Chemical Light), Paris, J. d'Houry, 1669. *Le Traite du Sel* (Treatise on Salt), p. 64. (3) In the Latin ms, 5614 of the Bibliotheque National (Paris), which contains treatises by ancient philosophers, the third book is entitled: *Modus Faciendi Optimam Ceram Rubeam*. (4) By evaporating one liter of seawater, heating the crystals obtained until complete dehydration, and submitting them to calcination in a porcelain capsule, you will clearly perceive the characteristic odor of iodine (5) J.-F. Henckel: *Flora Saturnisans*, Paris, J.-T. Herissant, 1760, ch. 8, p. 158. (6) It is the characteristic of ammonium carbamate. (7) Potable gold.

#### **THE SALAMANDER OF LISIEUX IV**

On the second floor of the manor of Lisieux, carved in the left pillar of the façade, a man of rather primitive appearance lifts and seems to be trying to remove a tree trunk of rather large dimensions (Plate IV).

This symbol, seemingly very obscure, hides nevertheless the most important of the secondary arcane. We shall even affirm that for not being cognizant of this point of doctrine ---and also for having followed too literally the teachings of the old authors ---many good artists were unable to reap the fruit of their labors. And how many investigators, more enthusiastic than penetrating, still collide and stumble today against a stumbling block of specious reasonings! Let us refrain from pushing human reason too far, which is so often contrary to natural simplicity. If we knew how to more innocently observe the effects which nature manifests around us; if we were content to control the results obtained by using the same means; if we subordinated our research to the mystery of causes to facts, and its explanation to what is probable, possible, or hypothetical, many truths would be discovered which are still to be sought. And so beware of introducing, in your observations, that which you think you know, for you would be forced to conclude that it would have been better to learn nothing rather than to have to unlearn everything.

This is perhaps superfluous advice, since putting it into practice demands the application of an unyielding will, of which

mediocre are incapable. We know how costly it is to exchange diplomas, seals, and parchments for the humble mantle of the philosopher. At age 24 we had to drain this chalice filled with a bitter beverage. Heart-wounded, ashamed of the errors of our young years, we had to burn the books and the notebooks, we had to confess our ignorance, and as a modest neophyte, decipher another science on the benches of another school, And so, it is for those who had the courage to forget everything that we take the trouble to study the symbol and to strip its esoteric veil.

The tree trunk that this artisan of another age has grasped seems only intent to serve his industrious genius. Yet, it is indeed our dry tree, the same that had the honor of giving its name tone of the oldest streets of Paris, after having appeared for a long time on a very famous street sign. Edouard Fournier (1) tells us that, according to Sauval (Vol. 1, p. 109), this sign could still be seen around 1660. It indicated to passersby "an inn of which Monstrelet speaks", (Vol. 1, Chap. 177), it was well chosen, for such a dwelling, and from 1300 on, must have served as a lodging for pilgrims returning from the Holy Land. The Dry Tree was a memory of Palestine; it was the tree planted very close to Hebron (2), which, after having been "green and full of leaves" since the beginning of the world, lost its foliage on the day our Lord died on the cross, and dried up; "but to become green again, when a Lord, Prince of the West, will reach the Promised Land with the aid of Christians and will have a mass sung underneath this dry tree".

This dessicated tree, issuing out of arid rock, is pictured in the last plate of *The Art of the Potter* (4), but it has been depicted with leaves and fruit, and with a streamer bearing the motto: *Sic in sterili* (5). The same one is found sculpted on the beautiful gate of the Cathedral of Limoges, as well as on a quatrefoil of the sub-foundation of Amiens. Two fragments of this same mutilated trunk are raised by a stone clerk above the great shell used as a holy water basin in the church of Guimilau (Finistere) in Brittany, Finally, we find the dry tree again on a certain number of secular buildings of the 15th century. In Avignon it surmounts the basket-handle gate of the ancient college of Roure. In Cahors it is used as a frame for two windows (Verdier House on the street of Boulevards), as well as on the small door belonging of the Pellegrin College of the same city (Plate VIII)

Such is the hieroglyph adopted by the philosophers to express metallic inertia, that is to say, the special state that human industry gives to reduced and molten metals> Hermetic esoteric demonstrates that metallic bodies remain alive and endowed with vegetative power, as long as they are mineralized in their deposits. There they are combined with the specific agent, or mineral spirit, which ensures their vitality, their nutrition, and their evolution to the term required by nature, when they take on the shape and properties of native silver and gold. Once this goal has been reached, the agent separates from the body, which then ceases to live, becomes fixed and no longer capable of transformation. Were it to stay on earth for several centuries, it still could not, by itself, change state or abandon the characteristics which distinguish metal from mineral aggregate.

However, the process that occurs inside of the metal-bearing deposits is far from simple. Subjected to the vicissitudes of this transitory world, numbers of ores see their evolution suspended by the action of profound causes ---exhaustion of nutritive elements, shortage of crystalline additions, insufficient pressure, heat, etc. ---or external causes ---fissures, surge of waters, opening of the mine. Consequently metals solidify and remain mineralized with the qualities acquired up to then, without being able to go beyond the evolutionary stage they have reached. Others, younger, still await the agent that must ensure their solidity and consistency, they remain in a liquid state and are totally non coagulable. Such is the case of mercury, which is frequently found in its native state, or mineralized by sulphur (cinnabar), either in the ore-bearing earth itself, or outside its place of origin. In this native form, even though metallurgic treatment did not have to intervene, these metals are as insensitive as those whose ores have undergone roasting and fusion. No more than those ores do the metals possess their own vital agent. The Sages tell us that they are dead, at least in appearance, because it is impossible for us to bring out the latent potential life hidden in the depth of their being under their solid crystallized mass. These are dead trees, although they still conceal a trace of humidity, and they will no longer bear leaves, flowers, fruit, or, above all, seed.

So with good reasoning certain authors assert that gold and mercury cannot help, wholly or partially, in the elaboration of the Work. The first, they say, because its proper agent has been separated from it during its completion, and the second, because the agent has not yet been introduced into it. Other philosophers maintain nevertheless that gold, although sterile in its solid form, may recover its lost vitality and resume its evolution if we know how to "put it back into its first state". But this is an ambiguous teaching which we must guard ourselves from understanding in its common obvious meaning. Let us stop for a moment on this litigious point and not lose sight of the possibility of nature: it is the only means we have to recognize our way in tortuous labyrinth. Most hermeticists believe that, by the term reincrudation, one should understand that which brings back the metal to its primitive state; they take as a basis the meaning of the word itself, which expresses the action of rendering crude or retrograding. This conception is false. It is impossible for nature, and more so for the art, to destroy the effect of the work of centuries. What has been acquired remains acquired. And this is the reason why the old masters assert that it is easier to make gold than to destroy it. No one will ever flatter himself to give back to roasted meat

and cooked vegetables the appearance and qualities they possessed before they underwent the action of fire. Here again the analogy and the possibility of nature are the best and surest guides. There is no example of regression anywhere in the world.

Other seekers believe that it is enough to bathe the metal in the primitive and mercurial substance which, through slow maturation and progressive coagulation, has given birth to it. This reasoning is more specious than true. Even supposing that they knew this first matter and where to get it ---that which the greatest masters did not know ---they could only obtain, in the final analysis, an increase of the gold they used and not a new body with a power higher to that of the precious metal. The operation, thus understood, boils down to the mixture of one and the same body taken in two different stages of its evolution, one liquid, the other solid. With some thought it is easy to understand that such an enterprise cannot lead us to our aim. Besides, it is in formal opposition to the philosophical axiom we have often stated: bodies have no action on bodies; only spirits are active and acting.

Therefore, by the expression to put gold back into its first matter, we must understand the animation of the metal accomplished by means of the vital agent of which we have spoken. The spirit fled out of the body during its manifestation on the physical plane; it is the metallic soul, or this first matter which we have not wished to designate otherwise and which dwells in the womb of the undefiled Virgin. The animation of gold, symbolically vivifying of the dry tree or resurrection of the dead, is allegorically taught to us by the text of an Arab author. This author, named Kessaesus, who ---Brunet tells us in his notes on *The Gospel of Childhood* --was very busy collecting oriental legends on the topic of events recounted in the Gospels, relates the circumstances of Mary's delivery in these words: "When the moment of her delivery approached, she departed in the middle of the night from the house of Zachary, and she walked out of Jerusalem. And she saw a dried up palm tree; and when Mary sat at the foot of this tree, it immediately bloomed anew and was covered with leaves and greenery, and it bore a great abundance of fruit through the operation of God's power. And God called forth a spring of living water next to it, and when the pains of childbirth tormented Mary, she squeezed the palm tree tightly with her hands".

We would not know how to say it better or to speak with more clarity.

(1) Edouard Fournier: *Enigmas des rues de Paris (Enigmas of the Streets of Paris)*; Paris, E. Dentu, 1860). (2) We identify it with the Oak of Member (*Chene de Membre*) or, more hermetically, the dismembered oak (*chene dismembre*). (3) *Le Livre de Messire Guill. De Mandeville (The Book of Sir Guill. De Mandeville)*; Bibliotheque Nationale, ms 8392, vol. 157. (4) *Les Trois Livres de l'Art du Potier (The Three Books of the Art of the Potter)*, by Cavalier Cyprian Piccolpassi, translated by Claudius Popelyn, Parisian; Paris, International Library, 1861). (5) The one previously sterile.

## **THE SALAMANDER OF LISIEUX V**

On the central pillar of the second floor, a group, of certain interest to the lovers of the art and the curious about symbolism draws our attention. Although it has suffered much and today exhibits itself mutilated, fissured, and corroded by bad weather, we are nevertheless still capable of discerning its subject. It is a character holding between his legs a griffin whose paws, equipped with claws, are very apparent, as well as the lion's tail extending from its rump, details which alone permit an exact identification. With his left hand the man seizes the monster about the head, and with his right makes a gesture of striking it (Plate IX).

We recognize in this motif one of the major emblems of the science, one which covers the preparation of the raw materials of the Work. While the combat between the dragon and the knight signifies the initial encounter, the duel of the mineral products trying to defend their threatened integrity, the griffin marks the result of the operation, veiled moreover by myths variously expressed, but all showing the characteristics of incompatibility, of natural and profound aversion which the substances in contact have for on another.

From the combat that the knight, or secret sulphur, engages with the arsenical sulphur of the old dragon, is born the astral stone, white, heavy, shining as pure silver, and which appears to be signed, bearing the imprint of its nobility, its stamp (1) esoterically translated as the griffin, a sure indication of the union and peace between fire and water, between air and earth. However, we should not hope to attain this dignity from the first conjunction. For our black stone, covered with rags, is soiled by so many impurities that completely freeing it from them is extremely difficult. For this reason it is important to submit to several levigations (which are Nicolas Flamel's *laveures* or fire purifications), so as to progressively cleanse it from impurities and from heterogeneous and tenacious stains which encumbers it, and to see it take on, with each one of these fire purifications, more splendor, more polish, and more brilliance.

Initiates know that our science, although purely natural and simple, is in no way vulgar; the terms we use, following the

masters, are no less so. Please pay attention to them, since we have chosen them with care, with the intention of showing the way, of pointing out the potholes which pit it, thus hoping to enlighten the studious and to divert the blind, the greedy, and the unworthy. Learn, you who already know, that all our purifications are igneous, that all our purifications are made in fire, by fire, and with fire. This is the reason why some authors have described these operations under the chemical title of calcinations, because the matter, long subjected to the action of the flame, yields its impure scorched parts to it. Know also that our rock ---veiled in the form of the dragon ---at first allows a dark, evil-smelling, and poisonous liquid to flow, whose thick volatile smoke is extremely toxic. This water, symbolized by the crow, cannot be washed or whitened except by means of fire. This is what the philosophers gave us to understand when, in their enigmatic style, they recommend that the artist cuts off its head. By these fiery ablutions, the water discharges its black coloration and takes on a white color. The crow, decapitated, gives back its soul and loses its feathers. Thus fire, by its frequent reiterated action on water, forces the latter to better defend its specific qualities by abandoning its superfluities. The water contracts, tightens itself to resist Vulcan's tyrannical influence; it is nourished by fire which aggregates its pure and homogeneous molecules, and finally it is coagulated into a dense corporeal mass, fiery to the extent that the flame remains powerless to further exalt it.

For you, unknown brothers of the mysterious city of the sun, we have formed the resolution of teaching the diverse and successive modes of our purifications. You will be thankful to us, we are certain, to have pointed out to you these reefs of the hermetic sea, against which so many inexperienced Argonauts have been shipwrecked. If you want to possess the griffin ---which is our astral stone ---by tearing it from its arsenical ganque, take two parts of virgin earth, our scaly dragon, and one part of the igneous agent, which is that valiant knight armed with the lance and shield. [\*152-1] (Ares), more vigorous than Aries, must be in a lesser quantity. Pulverize and add the fifteenth part of this pure, white, admirable salt, washed and crystallized several times, which you must necessarily know. Intimately mix it; and then, following the example of the painful Passion of Our Lord, crucify it with three iron nails, so that the body dies and can then be resurrected. This done, drive away the coarsest sediments from the corpse; crush and triturate the bones; mix the whole thing on a slow heat with a steel rod. Then throw into this mixture half of this second salt, extracted from the dew that fertilizes the earth in the month of May, and you will obtain a body clearer than the preceding one. Repeat the same technique three times; you will reach the matrix of our mercury, and you will have climbed the first rung of the ladder of the sages. When Jesus resurrected the third day after his death, a luminous angel clothed in white alone occupied the empty sepulcher...

However, if it suffices to know the secret substance represented by the dragon in order to discover its antagonist, it is essential to know the means that sages employ in order to limit, to temper the excessive ardor of the belligerents. For want of a necessary mediator ---for which we have never found a symbolic interpretation ---the ignorant experimenter would be exposed to grave dangers. Anxious spectator of the drama which he would have imprudently unleashed, he could neither control its phases nor regulate its fury. Fiery projections, sometimes even brutal explosion of the furnace, would be the sad consequences of his temerity. This is why, aware of our responsibility, we urgently beseech those who do not possess this secret to abstain until then. They will thus avoid the fate of an unfortunate priest of the diocese of Avignon, about which the following notice briefly gives an account (2): "Abbot Chapaty thought to have discovered the philosophers' stone but, unfortunately for him, the crucible burst asunder, the metal exploded against him, attached itself to his face, arms and clothes; he ran in this way along the Infirmary Street, dragging himself in the gutters as though possessed, and he perished miserably burnt, like a damned person. 1706".

When you perceive a noise resembling that of boiling water in the vessel ---a hollow rumbling of the earth, whose entrails fire is tearing out ---be ready to fight and maintain your composure. You will notice smoke and blue, green and violet flames accompanying a series of quick detonations.

Once the effervescence has passed and calm has been restored, you will be able to enjoy a magnificent spectacle. On a sea of fire, solid islands form, float on the surface, moving slowly, taking and leaving an infinity of vivid colors; their surface puffs up, bursts in the center, causing them to resemble tiny volcanoes. Then they disappear, being replaced by pretty green transparent balls revolving quickly, hitting one another, and seeming to chase one another, in the midst of multicolored flames and the iridescent reflection of the incandescent bath.

In describing the difficult and critical preparation of our stone, we have neglected to speak of the effective cooperation which certain external influences must provide. On this topic we are content to quote Nicolas Grosparmy, Adept of the 15th century, of whom we have spoken at the beginning of this study, or Cyliani, philosopher of the 19th century, without omitting Cyprian Piccolpassi, Italian master potter, all of whom devoted a part of their teachings to the study of these conditions; but their works are not within the grasp of all. Nevertheless, so as to satisfy as far as possible the legitimate curiosity of seekers, we shall say that, without the absolute harmony of the higher with the lower elements, our matter, lacking astral virtues, can be of no use. Before it is put to work, the body on which we operate, is more earthly than heavenly. By helping Nature, art must render it more heavenly than earthly. Knowledge of the propitious moment, times,

places, seasons, etc., is therefore essential to us in order to ensure the success of this secret production. Let us predict the hour when the stars will forming the sky of the fixed heavenly bodies, the most favorable aspect. For they will be reflected in this divine mirror which is our stone and they will therein fix their imprint. And the earthly star, occult torch of our nativity, will be the proving mark of the blessed union of heaven and earth, or as Philalethes writes, of "the union of superior virtues in inferior things". You will obtain confirmation of it by discovering, in the midst of the igneous water, or of this earthly heaven, according to the typical expression of Wenceslaus Lavinus of Moravia, the hermetic sun, centric and radiant, made manifest, visible, and obvious.

Catch a ray of sun, condense it into a substantial form, nourish this corporified spiritual fire with elemental fire, and you will possess the greatest treasure of this world.

It is useful to know that the brief but violent fight fought by the knight ---be his name St George, St Michael, or St Marcel in the Christian tradition; Mars, Theseus, Jason, or Hercules in the myths ---only ceases with the death of both champions (hermetically, the eagle and the lion) and their union into a new body whose alchemical signature is the griffin. Let us recall that in all ancient Asian and European legends, the dragon is always appointed guardian of treasures. It watches over the golden apples of the Hesperides and over the hanging fleece of Colchis. Hence it is absolutely necessary to silence this aggressive monster if we want to possess the wealth it protects. A Chinese legend tells us about the learned alchemist Hujumsin, numbered among the gods after his death, that this man, having killed a horrible dragon which ravaged the country, fixed this monster to a column. This is exactly what Jason does in the forest of Aetes, and Cyliani in his allegorical tale of Hermes Unveiled. The truth, always unchanged, expresses itself through analogous means and fables.

The combination of the two initial matters, one volatile, the other fixed, produces a third body, fixed, which marks the first stage of the stone of the philosophers. Such is, we have said, the griffin, half eagle, half lion, a symbol which corresponds to the basket of Bacchus and the fish of Christian iconography. Indeed we must point out that the griffin bears, instead of a lion's mane or a necklace of feathers, a crest of fish fins. This detail has its importance. For if it is expedient to provoke the encounter and dominate the fight, one must still discover the means of capturing the pure, essential part of the newly produced body, the only one useful to us; in other words, the philosophical mercury. Poets tell us that Vulcan, catching Mars and Venus at adultery, immediately surrounded them with a net or string so that they could not escape his revenge. Likewise, the masters also advise us to use a fine thread or subtle net to capture the product gradually as it appears. The artist fishes, metaphorically, for the mythical fish, and leaves the water empty, inert, and without soul: Man, in this operation, is then supposed to kill the griffin. This is the scene reproduced by our bas-relief.

If we look for some secret meaning attached to the Greek word [\*155-1] (gryps), griffin, which has for root [\*155-2] (grypos), that is to say, "to have a crooked beak", we will find a related word, [\*155-3] (griphos), whose sound comes much closer to our French word. Furthermore, [\*155-4] means both an enigma and a net. We then see how the fabulous animal contains, in image and in name, the most difficult hermetic enigma to be discovered, that of the philosophical mercury, whose substance, deeply hidden in the body, is caught like a fish in water with the help of an appropriate net.

Basil Valentine, who is usually clearer, did not use the symbol of the Christian [\*155-5] (Ichtus) (3), which he preferred to humanize under the cabalistic and mythological name of Hyperion. He signifies his knight in this way, presenting the three operations of the Great Work in an enigmatic formula containing three succinct phrases, thus set forth:

"I issued from Hermogenes. Hyperion chose me, Without Jamsuph, I am forced to perish".

We have seen how, and as a result of what reaction, the griffin is born, that comes from Hermogene or from the prime mercurial substance. Hyperion, in Greek [\*156-1] (Hyperion), is the father of the sun; he releases, out of the second white chaos formed by the art and represented by the griffin, the soul that he holds imprisoned, the spirit, fire, or hidden light, and clears the doorway above the mass in the form of a clear and limpid water: Spiritus Domini ferebatur super aquas. For the prepared matter, which contains all the elements needed for our great work, is nothing but a fertilized earth where some confusion still reigns; a substance which holds within itself scattered light, which the art must gather together and isolate by imitating the Creator. We must mortify and decompose this earth, which amounts to killing the griffin and fishing the fish, or separating the fire from the earth, the subtle from the gross, "gently, with great skill and prudence", as Hermes teaches in his Emerald Tablet.

Such is the chemical role of Hyperion. His very name, formed from [\*156-1] (Hyp) contraction of [\*156-2] (Hyper), above, and from [\*156-3] (erion) ---meaning sepulcher, tomb, which has for root [\*156-4] (Hera), earth, indicates that which rises from the earth, above the sepulcher of matter. We can, if we prefer, choose the etymology according to which [\*156-5] (Hyperion) would derive from [\*156-6], beyond and from [\*156-7] (ion), violet. The two meanings have between them a perfect hermetic concordance; we only give this variant to enlighten the novices of our order, following in this the word of

the Gospel: "Therefore take care how thou listen; for unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" (4) .

(1) Translator's Note: Griffes in French translates as both claw and stamp. (2) Collection of documents on Avignon; Library of Carpentras, ms. 917, folio 168. (3) The Greek name for fish is formed by the combination of the initials of this phrase: [\*1568], Iesous Christos Theous Yios Soter, Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour. The word [\*156-9] is frequently seen engraved in Roman catacombs; it also appears on the mosaic of St Apollinaire at Ravenna, placed at the top of a stellate cross, raised on the Latin words SALUS MUNDI (Salvation of the World), and having the letters Alpha and Omega at the extremities of its arms. (4) Matthew 25:29-30; Luke 8:18 and 19:26; Mark 4:25. THE SALAMANDER OF LISIEUX VI

Sculpted above the group of the man with the griffin, we notice an enormous grimacing head adorned with a pointed beard. Its cheeks, ears, and forehead are stretched out to the extent that they take on the appearance of flaming expansions. This blazing mask, with an unfriendly grin, seems crowned and provided with homed, ribboned appendices which are resting on a twisted cord in the background of the cornice (Plate IX). With its horns and its crown, the solar symbol takes on the meaning of a genuine Baphomet; in other words, of the synthetic image in which Templar Initiates had assembled all the elements of high science and tradition. Truly a complex figure under its apparent simplicity, an eloquent figure, pregnant with teaching in spite of its rude and primitive aesthetic. If we recognize at first the mystic fusion of the natures of the Work, symbolized by the horns of the lunar crescent placed on the solar head, we are no less surprised by the strange expression, reflection of a devouring ardor emanating from the inhuman face, specter of the last judgment. Even the beard, hieroglyph of a luminous and fiery beam projected toward the earth, justifies the exact knowledge of our destiny that the scientist possessed.

Could we possibly be facing the dwelling of some affiliate of the sets of the Illuminati or of the Rosicrucians, descendants of the old Templars? The cyclical theory, concurrent with the doctrine of Hermes, is so clearly exposed here, that except for ignorance or dishonesty we could not suspect the knowledge of our Adept. As for us, our conviction is firm; we are certain not to be mistaken in front of so many categorical assertions: we indeed have before our eyes a baphomet, renewed from the one of the Templars. This image, about which we possess but vague indications or simple hypotheses, never was an idol, as some believed, but rather a complete emblem of the secret traditions of the Order, especially used outwardly as an esoteric paradigm, a seal of chivalry, and a sign of recognition. It was composed of an isosceles triangle, its apex pointed down, hieroglyph for water, first created element, according to Thales of Miletus, who maintained that "God is the Spirit which has formed all things from water" (1). A second similar triangle, inverted in relationship to the first, but smaller, was inscribed in its center and seemed to occupy the position reserved for the nose on the human face. It symbolized fire and more precisely, fire enclosed in water, or the divine spark, soul incarnate, life infused in matter. On the inverted base of the large triangle of water, there was a graphic sign similar to the Latin letter H or Greek [\*158-1] (eta), but wider whose central bar was cut with a median circle. This sign in hermetic steganography indicates the universal Spirit, the Creative Spirit, God. Inside the large triangle, slightly above and on each side of the triangle of fire, one could see on the left the lunar circle with an inscribed crescent and on the right the solar circle with a visible center. These small circles were arranged in the manner of eyes. Finally, welded to the base of the small inner triangle, the cross, placed on the globe, thus realized the double hieroglyph of sulphur, active principle, associated to mercury, passive principle and solvent of all metals. A longer or shorter segment often located at the apex of the triangle was carved with lines of a vertical tendency where the layman could recognize not the expression of luminous radiation but a sort of goatee.

Thus presented, the baphomet assumed a gross animal form, imprecise and uneasy to identify. This would probably explain the diversity of descriptions it inspired, where the baphomet is seen as a haloed death head or a bucrane, sometimes the head of the Egyptian Hapi, of a goat, and, even better, the horrifying face of Satan himself! Simple impressions, far removed from reality, but images so unorthodox that they, alas, contributed to spread the accusation of demonology and sorcery upon the learned Knights Templar and became one of the foundations of their trial, one of the causes of their condemnation.

We have just seen what the baphomet was; now we must try to discover the meaning hidden behind this name.

In the pure hermetic expression corresponding to the labor of the Work, Baphomet comes from the Greek roots [\*158-2] (Bapheus), dya, and [\*159-1], standing for [\*159-2], the moon; unless we want to use [\*159-3], [\*159-4], in the genitive case, mother or matrix, which leads to the same lunar meaning, since the moon is truly the mother or the mercurial matrix which receives the tincture or seed of sulphur, representing the male, the dya --[\* 159-5] (Bapheus) ---in metallic generation. [\*159-6] has the meaning of immersion and of tincture. And it can be said, without revealing too much, that sulphur, father and dya of the stone, fertilizes the mercurial moon through immersion, which brings us back to the symbolic baptism of Mete, expressed again by the word baphomet (2). It appears as the complete hieroglyph of science, represented

elsewhere in the personality of the god Pan, mythical image of nature in full activity.

The Latin word Bapheus, dyer, and the verb meto, to gather, collect, harvest, also indicate the special quality possessed by mercury or the moon of the sages, of collecting the tincture gradually as it emitted during the immersion or the king's bath, and which the mother keeps in her bosom for the required time. It is the Grail containing the eucharistic wine, liquor of spiritual fire, vegetative liquor, living and vivifying, introduced into material things. As for the origin of the Order, its lineage, the knowledge and beliefs of the Templars, we could not do better than to literally quote a fragment of the study which Pierre Dujols, the erudite and learned philosopher, devotes to the brother knights in his *Bibliographie Generale des Sciences Occultes* (3).

"The brothers of the Temple", says the author, "---and we could no longer uphold the opposite view ---were truly affiliated to Manichaeism". Furthermore, Baron de Hammer's thesis conforms to this opinion. For him, the sectarians of Mardeck, the Ismaelians, the Albigensians, the Templars, the Freemasons, the Illuminati, etc., depend on the same secret tradition emanating from this House of Wisdom (Dar-el-hickmet) founded by Hakem in Cairo around the 11th century. The German academician Nicolai concludes in the same sense and adds that the famous baphomet, which he derives from the Greek word [\*159-7] (Baphometos), was a Pythagorean symbol. We will not spend any time with the divergent opinions of Anton, Herder, Munter, etc., but we will dwell for a moment on the etymology of the word baphomet. The idea of Nicolai is acceptable if we admit, with Hammer, this slight variation: [\*160-1](Baphe Meteos), which could be translated as "baptism of Mete". Precisely a rite of this name has been established among the Ophites. Mete was an androgynous divinity representing naturing Nature. Proclus says verbatim that Metis, also called [\*160-2] (Erikarpais) or Germinating Nature, was the hermaphroditic god of the Snake worshippers. We also know that the Greeks venerated Prudence, designated by the word Metis, as Jupiter's wife. In a word, this philological discussion indisputably confirms that the Baphomet was the pagan expression of Pan. And like the Templars, the Ophites had two baptisms: one, exoteric, the baptism of water, the other esoteric, that of the spirit, or fire. The latter was called the Baptism of Mete. St Justin and St Irenaeus called it illumination. It is the Freemasons' baptism of Light. This purification ---the word is truly appropriate here ---is found on one of the Gnostic idols discovered by Monsieur de Hammer, which he illustrated. It holds in its lap ---mark well the gesture as it is very revealing ---a fire-filled basin. This fact, which should have struck the learned German and with him all of the symbolists, seems to have revealed nothing to them. And yet it is from this allegory that the famous myth of the Grail takes its origin. Indeed, the erudite baron talks abundantly about this mysterious vessel, whose exact meaning is still being sought. Everyone knows that in the ancient Germanic legend Titurel raises a temple to the Holy Grail at Montsalvat and entrusts its guard to twelve Knights Templar. Monsieur de Hammer would like to recognize in it the symbol of gnostic Wisdom, a very vague conclusion after having burned (4) for so long. Forgive us if we dare to suggest another point of view. The Grail ---who doubts it today? ---is the most elevated mystery of mystical Chivalry and of Masonry which degenerated from it; it is the veil of the Fire creator, the Deus absconditus (5) in the word INRI, engraved above Jesus' head on the cross. When Titurel erected his mystical temple, it was to light the sacred fire of the Vestals, of the Mazadaens, and even of the Hebrews, for the Jews kept a perpetual fire in the temple of Jerusalem. The twelve custodians recall the twelve signs of the Zodiac annually crossed by the sun, a symbol of living fire. The vase of Baron de Hammer's idol is identical with the pyrogenous vase of the Parsees, which is represented full of flames. The Egyptians also possessed this attribute: On the banks of the Nile, Serapis is often represented with the same object on his head, named Gardal. In this Gardal the priests kept the material fire, while the priestesses kept therein the celestial fire of Ptah. For the initiates of Isis, the Gardal was the hieroglyph of divine fire. And this Fire-god, this Love-God eternally incarnates into each being since everything in the universe contains his vital spark. It is the Lamb sacrificed since the beginning of the world, which the Catholic church offers to its faithful in the form of the Eucharist enclosed in the ciborium, like the Sacrament of Love. The ciborium ---honni soit qui mal y pense! (6) ---as well as the Grail and the sacred craters of all religions, represents the female reproductive organ and corresponds to the cosmogonic vessel of Plato, the cup of Hermes and Solomon, and the urn of the ancient Mysteries. The Gardal of the Egyptians is therefore the key of the Grail. It is, in short, the same word. Indeed, from distortion to distortion Gardal became Gradal, and then, with a sort of aspiration, Graal. The blood boiling in the holy chalice is the igneous fermentation of life or of the generating mixture. We can only deplore the blindness of those who are so obstinate as to only see in this symbol, stripped of its veils to the point of nudity, a profanation of the divine. The Bread and the Wine of the mystical Sacrifice are the spirit or the fire in matter, which, through their union, produce life. For this reason, all the Christian initiatic handbooks, called Gospels, cause Christ to say allegorically: "I am the Life; I am the living Brad; I have come to set things on fire, and surround him in the sweet exoteric sign of the ideal nourishment".

(1) Cicero: *On the Nature of the Gods*, I, 10, p. 38. (2) As mentioned, the baphomet sometimes exhibited the outer characteristic and appearance of ox skulls. Presented in this manner, it is identified with the watery nature represented by Neptune, the greatest sea divinity of Olympus. Poseidon is indeed veiled under the icon of the ox, bull, or cow, which are lunar symbols. The Greek name for Neptune come from [\*159-6], [\*159-7] (Bous, bos) in the genitive case, ox, bull, and



from [\*159-8], [\*159-9] (eydos, eydolon), image, specter, or simulacrum. (3) With regard to the Dictionnaire des Controverses Historiques by S.-F. Jehan, Paris, 1866. (4) Translator's Note: reference to a children's game in which one child hides an object and answers the others' questions by "you are cold", if they are far from the object or "you are burning", if they are close to it. (5) The God hidden... (6) Honni soit qui mal y pense ---The English device ---Shame unto him who thinks ill of this. THE SALAMANDER OF LISIEUX VII

Before leaving the lovely manor of the Salamander, we will again point out a few motifs placed on the second floor, which, without being as interesting as the preceding ones, are not lacking symbolical value.

To the right of the pillar bearing the image of the woodcutter, we see two adjacent windows, one blind, and one with glass. At the center of the four-centered arches we can see, on the first, a heraldic fleur-de-lys(1), emblem of the sovereignty of science, which later became the attribute of royalty. The sign of Adept hood and of sublime knowledge, by appearing in royal coats of arms when blazonry was instituted, did not lose its elevated meaning and ever since still indicates acquired superiority, preponderance, valor, and dignity. For this reason the chief city of the kingdom received permission to add to the gules field of its coats of arms three fleur-de-lys placed as the head, on an azure field. Moreover the meaning of this symbol is clearly explained in the Annales of Nangis: "The kings of France are accustomed to carrying the fleur-de-lys painted three times on their coat of arms as if saying to the world: Faith, Wisdom, and Chivalry are, by the gift and the grace of God, more abundant in our kingdom than in any other. The two leaves of the fleur-de-lys, of same nature, mean wisdom and chivalry guarding faith".

On the second window, a baby head, round and moon-shaped, surmounted by a phallus, cannot but strike out curiosity. We discover it on the very expressive indication of the two principles, whose conjunction engenders the philosophers' matter. This hieroglyph of the agent and the patient, of sulphur and mercury, of sun and moon, the philosophical parents of the stone, is obvious enough for us not to explain it.

Between these windows, the small median column bears instead of a capital, an urn similar to the one we described while studying the motifs of the entrance gate. We do not have to repeat an interpretation we have already given. On the opposite small column, continuing to the right, a little angel, its forehead ribboned, stands hands folded in an attitude of prayer. Farther down, two windows, adjacent as the two preceding ones, bear across their lintel the image of two shields decorated with three flowers, emblem of the three repetitions of each work, about which we have frequently spoken during this analysis> The figures which are the capitals of the three columns of the windows respectively show, from left to right, Number 1: a man's head, which we believe is that of the alchemist himself, whose glance is directed towards the man riding the griffin; Number 2: a small angel, pressing against his breast a quartered shield, that distance and lack of depth prevent us from describing in detail; Number 3: finally, a second angel, showing the open book, the hieroglyph of the matter of the Work, prepared and liable to manifest the spirit it contains. The sages have called their matter Liber ---the book -- because its texture, crystalline and lamellated, is formed of superimposed leaves, like the pages of a book.

Finally, carved in the mass of the last pillar, a kind of Hercules, entirely naked, carries with great difficulty the enormous mass of a solar-inflamed baphomet. Of all the subjects sculpted on the façade, it is the coarsest, the one whose execution is the least successful. Although it dates from the same period, it seems that this little man, stout, malformed, with a swollen belly, with disproportionate genital organs, must have been carved by some unskilled and second-rate artist. With the exception of the face, neuter in its physiognomy, everything seems purposely tormented in this disgraceful caryatid. It is trampling a curved mass garnished with numerous teeth, as a whale's mouth. Out Hercules might very well represent Jonah, that little prophet miraculously saved after having stayed three days in the belly of a whale. For us, Jonah is the sacred image of the Green Lion of the sages, which remains for three philosophical days locked up in the mother substance before it rises through sublimation and appears on the waters.

(1) We keep the old spelling of the word lys in fleur-de-lys, in order to clearly establish the difference of expression which exists between this heraldic emblem, the draught of which is an iris flower (fleur d'iris), and the natural lily (fleur de lis) given as an attribute to the Virgin Mary. THE ALCHEMICAL MYTH OF ADAM AND EVE

The dogma of the first man's fall from grace, says Dupiney, from Vorepierre, does not only belong to Christianity, but also to the mosaic religion and to the primitive religion, which was that of the Patriarchs. For this reason this belief is found, albeit altered and disfigured, among all the peoples of the earth. The authentic story of man's downfall through his sin has been preserved in the first book of Moses (Gen. 2-3). "This fundamental dogma of Christianity", writes Abbot Foucher, "was not unknown in ancient times. People closer to the origin of the world than we, knew through a uniform and constant tradition that the first man had prevaricated, and that his crime had drawn God's curse on all his posterity". "The fall of degenerate man", says Voltaire himself, "is the foundation of the theology of all ancient nations".

According to the Pythagorean Philolaus (5th century BC), ancient philosophers said that the soul was buried in the body as in a tomb, in punishment for some sin. Plato also testified that such was the doctrine of the Orphics, and he himself professed it. But as people also recognized that man had come out of the hands of God and that he had lived in a state of purity and innocence (according to Dicaearchus and Plato), one had to admit that the crime for which he was being punished occurred after his creation. The golden age of Greek and Roman mythologies is evidently a memory of man's first state when coming out of God's hands.

The monuments and traditions of Hinduism confirm the history of Adam and his Fall. This tradition also exists among the Buddhists of Tibet; it was taught by the Druids as well as by the Chinese and the ancient Persians. According to the books of Zoroaster, the first man and the first woman were created pure and submissive to Orzmond, their creator; Ahriman saw them and became jealous of their happiness; he approached them assuming the form of a grass snake, presented them with fruit and persuaded them that he was himself the creator of the entire universe. They believed him, and their nature then became corrupted, and this corruption infected their posterity. The mother of our flesh, or the serpent woman, is famous in Mexican tradition, which represents her, fallen from her primitive state of happiness and innocence. In Yucatan, in Peru, in the Canary Islands, etc., the tradition of the downfall also existed among the natives when the Europeans discovered these countries. The atonements which took place among these diverse peoples to purify the child upon birth were irrefutably witness to the existence of this generalized belief. "Ordinarily", said the learned Cardinal Goussset, "this ceremony took place in the day when the child was given its name". Among the Romans this day was the ninth for boys, and the eighth for girls; it was called *lustricus* because of the lustral water used to purify the newborn. The Egyptians, Persians, and Greeks had a similar custom. In Yucatan, in America, the child was brought to the temple, where a priest poured on its head water reserved for this usage and gave him a name. In the Canary Islands women fulfilled this function instead of priests. Similar atonements were ordered by law among Mexicans. In some provinces a fire was also lit, and a movement was made of passing the child through the flame so as to purify it both by water and by fire. The Tibetans in Asia have similar customs. In India, when an infant is named, after having written his name on his forehead and after having plunged him three times in water, the Brahmin or priest cries out in a loud voice, "O God, pure, unique, invisible, and perfect, we offer you this child, offspring of the holy tribe, anointed with an incorruptible oil, and purified with water".

As Bergier points out, this tradition certainly must go back to the beginning of mankind; for if it had been born among one particular people after the dispersion, it could not have spread from one end of the world to the other. Furthermore, this universal belief in the first man's Fall was accompanied with the expectation of a mediator, an extraordinary individual who was to bring salvation to man and reconcile him with God. Not only was this liberator expected by the Patriarchs and by the Jews, who knew that he would appear among them, but also by the Egyptians, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Hindus, the Siamese, the Arabs, the Persians, and by various nations of America. Among the Greeks and the Romans, this hope was shared by some men, as Plato and Virgil testify. Further, as Voltaire points out, "from time immemorial, there was a maxim among the Indians and the Chinese that the Sage would come from the West. Europe, on the contrary, said that he would come from the East".

Under the biblical tradition of the first man's Fall, the philosophers, with their customary skill, hid a secret of alchemical nature. Clearly we owe to this fact the existence of the representations of Adam and Eve that we discovered on a few old Renaissance dwellings, and it enables us to explain them. One of those, clearly representative of this intention, will serve as an example for our study. This philosopher's dwelling located in Le Mans displays, on the second floor, a bas-relief representing Adam, his arm raised to gather the fruit of the tree of knowledge, while Eve is drawing the branch towards him, with a rope. Both of them are holding phylacteries, attributes meant to express the fact that the two characters have an occult meaning, different from that of Genesis. This motif, worn badly by weathering ---only the larger masses have been spared ---is circumscribed by a crown of foliage, flowers, and fruit, hieroglyphs of a fecund, fertile nature, of abundance and production. To the right and above we can notice among the leprous foliated moldings the image of the sun, while on the left appears that of the moon. The two hermetic stars come to emphasize and further specify the scientific quality and the secular expression of the subject borrowed from the Holy Scripture (Plate X).

Let us notice, in passing, that the secular scenes of the temptation conform themselves to that of religious iconographies. Adam and Eve are always represented, separated by the trunk of the tree of Paradise. In the majority of cases, the snake, coiled around the trunk, is figured with a human head; it appears in this way on the Gothic bas-relief of the ancient Fountain Saint-Maclou, in the church of the same name in Rouen, and on another large tableau decorating a wall of the so-called 'house of Adam and Eve', in Montferriand (Puy-de-Dome), which seems to date back to the end of the 14th or the beginnings of the 15th century. On the stalls of Saint-Bernard-de-Comminges (Haute-Garonne), the reptile uncovers its breasted bust, with a woman's arms and head. The snake of Vitre also exhibits a woman's head, sculpted on the four-centered arch of a lovely 15th century door on rue Notre-Dame (Plate XI). On the other hand, the group of the tabernacle of the Cathedral of Valladolid in Spain, made of pure silver remains realistic: the snake is represented in its normal shape and

holds an apple in its wide-open mouth, between its fangs (1).

Adamus, Latin for Adam, means made of red earth; it is the first being of nature, the only one among human creatures who was endowed with the two natures of the androgyne. We can therefore regard him, from the hermetic viewpoint, as the basic matter joined to spirit in the very unity of the created substance, immortal and everlasting. According to the Mosaic tradition, as soon as God gave birth to woman by individualizing, into two distinct and separate bodies, these natures that had been primitively associated in one single body, the first Adam had to withdraw, specifying himself by losing his original constitution and becoming the second Adam, imperfect and mortal. The Adam princeps ---the first Adam ---of whom we have never found any figuration anywhere, is called by the Greeks [\*172-1] (Adamos) or [\*172-2] (Adamas), a word meaning, on the earthly plane, the hardest of steel, used for [\*1723] (Adamastos), that is to say, indomitable, and still virgin [from the roots [\*172-4], primitive not, and [\*172-5] (damao), to tame], which characterizes quite well the profound nature of the first heavenly man and of the first earthly body as being solitary and not subject to the yoke of marriage. But what about this steel called [\*172-6] (adamas) about which the philosophers say so much? Plato, in *Timaeus*, gives us the following explanation.

"Of all the waters which we have called fusible, that which has the most tenuous and the most equal parts, which is the most dense, this unique type with a bright, shining yellow color; the most precious of goods, gold in short, has formed by filtration through stone. The knot of gold having become very hard and black because of its density, is called adamas. Another body, close to gold on account of the smallness of its parts but which shows several species, whose density is lower than that of gold, which contains a weak alloy of very tenuous earth, rendering it harder than gold, and which is also lighter, owing to the pores dug in its mass, is one of these brilliant and condensed water called bronze. When the portion of the earth it contains becomes separated through the agency of time, it becomes visible of itself and it is given the name rust".

The text by the great initiate teaches the distinction of the two successive personalities of the symbolic Adam, which are described in their proper mineral expression of steel and bronze. And the body close to the substance named adamas ---knot or sulphur of gold ---is the second Adam, considered in the organic kingdom as the true father of all men, and in the mineral kingdom as the agent and procreator of the metallic and geologic individuals constituting it.

Thus we learn that sulphur and mercury, generating principles of metals, were originally one and the same matter; for only later did they acquire their specific individuality and retain it in the compounds proceeding from their union. Although this individuality is maintained by a powerful cohesion, art can nevertheless break it and isolate sulphur and mercury in the form specific to them. Sulphur, the active principle, is symbolically designated by the second Adam, and mercury, the passive element, by his wife Eve. The latter element or mercury, regarded as the most important, is also the most difficult to obtain in the practice of the Work. Its usefulness is such that the science itself owes its name, hence hermetic philosophy is based on the perfect knowledge of Mercury, in Greek [\*173-1] (Hermes). This is being expressed on the bas-relief which accompanies and borders the panel of Adam and Eve on the house of Le Mans. There we can see Bacchus as a child, holding the thrysus (2), his left hand hiding the opening of a pot, and standing on the lid of a large vase decorated with garlands. Bacchus, emblematic divinity of the mercury of the sages, incarnates a secret meaning similar to that of Eve, mother of the living. In Greece, all Bacchantes (3) were called [\*173-2], Eva, a word which has for its root [\*173-3], Evius, a nickname for Bacchus. As for the vessels destined to contain the philosophers' wine or mercury, they are eloquent enough by themselves to spare us the explanation of their esoteric meaning.

This explanation, albeit logical and complying to the doctrine, is nevertheless insufficient to provide the rationale for certain experimental idiosyncrasies and some obscure points of practice. Indubitably the artist could not pretend to acquire the original matter, that is to say, the first Adam, "formed of red earth"; and the subject of the sages itself, qualified "first matter of the art", is quite removed from the inherent simplicity of the second Adam. Nevertheless, this subject is properly the mother of the Work, just as Eve is the mother of men. It is she who endows the bodies which she bears, or more exactly which she reincrudates, with vitality, vegetativeness, and the possibility of mutation. We shall go further and say for those who already have some smattering of science, that the mother common to all alchemical metals does not enter in substance into the Great Work, although, without her, it is impossible to produce or undertake anything. As a matter of fact, through her intervention, common metals, true and only agents of the stone, are turned into philosophical metals; through her, they are dissolved and purified; in her, they can repossess their lost activity and from having been dead come alive again; she is the earth that nourishes them, makes them grow, fructify, and allows them to multiply; finally, by returning to the motherly womb which had once upon a time formed them and given birth to them, they are reborn, recovering the primitive faculties which human activity had taken away from them. Eve and Bacchus symbolize this philosophical and natural substance ---yet not the first in the sense of unity or universality ---commonly known by the name of Hermes or Mercury. We know, on the other hand, that the winged messenger of the gods was the intermediary between the powers of Mount Olympus, and played in mythology a role analogous to that of mercury in the hermetic work. Hence, we understand more clearly the

special nature of its action, and why it does not remain with the bodies which it has diluted, purged, and animated. We can also grasp in which way it is appropriate to understand Basil Valentine when he affirms that metals (4) are creatures twice born from mercury, children of the one and only mother, produced and generated by her. Further we can conceive more clearly where the stumbling-block lies which the philosophers have thrown across our paths when they assert in common agreement that mercury is the unique, sole matter of the Work, whereas the necessary reactions are only provoked by it, which they said either by metaphor or by considering it from a specific viewpoint.

It is also useful to learn that, if we need the cist of Cybele, Ceres, or Bacchus, it is because it contains a mysterious body which is the embryo of our stone; if we need a vase, it is to place the body therein, and everyone knows that, without suitable earth, any seed would become useless. Consequently, we cannot do without a vessel, although that which is contained is infinitely more precious than the container, the latter being destined sooner or later to be separated from the former. Water in and of itself has no shape, although it is liable of espousing them all and of taking that of the container which contains it. This is the reason for our vessel and for its necessity and why philosophers have repeatedly recommended it as the indispensable vehicle, the necessary excipient of our bodies. And this truth finds its justification in the image of the infant Bacchus standing on the lid of a hermetic vessel.

Of the preceding, it is especially important to remember that metals, liquefied and dissociated by mercury, recover the vegetative power they possessed at the time of their appearance on the physical plane. The dissolving agent plays for them the part of a genuine Fountain of Youth. It separates the heterogeneous impurities brought in from the mineral deposits, takes away from them the infirmities contracted throughout the centuries; it reanimates them, gives them new vigor and rejuvenates them. It is the way common metals are reincrudated; that is, put back in a state close to their original state, and from then on they are known as living or philosophical metals. Since they reassume, upon contact with their mother, their original faculties, we can assert that they became close to what she is and have taken a nature similar to hers. On the other hand, as a result of this conformity of complexion, they are obviously incapable of engendering new bodies with their mother, the latter having only a renewing rather than a generating power. Hence we must conclude that the mercury of which we speak and which has for symbol the Eve of the Mosaic Eden, is not the one to which the sages have assigned the role of matrix, of receptacle, the vase, suitable for the reincrudated metal, called sulphur, sun of the philosophers, metallic seed and father of the stone.

Do not be mistaken; there lies the Gordian Knot of the Work, the one that beginners must try to untie if they do not want to be stopped short at the beginning of practice. Hence another mother exists, daughter of the first, whom the masters with an intention easy to guess, have also called mercury. And the differentiation of these two mercuries, one the agent of renewal, the other of procreation, constitutes the most difficult study that the science has reserved for the neophyte. With the aim of helping him overcome this obstacle we have dwelled at length on the myth of Adam and Eve, and we shall attempt to clarify these obscure points, voluntarily left in shadow by even the best of authors. Most of them were content to allegorically describe the union of sulphur and mercury, generators of the stone, which they call sun and moon, philosophical father and mother, fixed and volatile, agent and patient, male and female, eagle and lion, Apollo and Diana (that same transformed into Apollonius of Tyana), Gabritius and Beya, Urim and Thumin, the two columns of the temple: Jachim and Boaz, the old man and the young virgin; finally, and more exactly so, brother and sister, whose respective beings proceeded from a common mother, owing to the opposition of their temperaments, and rather to the difference in age and evolution than to a gap of affinities.

The anonymous author of *The Ancient War of the Knights* (5), in a discourse told by the metal reduced to the state of sulphur under the action of first mercury, teaches us that this first sulphur needs a second mercury with which it must be joined so as to multiply its kind.

"Among the artists", the metal says, "who have worked with me, some have pushed their work so far as to succeed in separating from me my spirit, which contains my tincture; so that, mixing it with other metals and minerals, they succeeded in communicating a few of my virtues and strengths to metals that have some affinity and friendship for me. However, the artists who have succeeded in this path and who found with certainty a part of the art are truly in a very small number. Since they did not know whence the tinctures come, it was impossible for them to push their work any further, and in the final analysis they did not find anything very useful in their process. But if these artists had taken their research beyond this point and had seriously examined who is the proper wife for me, and if they had looked for her and united me with her, then I could have tinted a thousand times more". In *The Conversation between Eudoxus and Pyrophile*, which serves as a commentary to this treatise, Limojon Saint-Didier writes about this passage: "The woman who is appropriate for the stone and who must be united to it is the fountain of living water, whose source, entirely heavenly, and particularly which has its center in the sun and the moon, produces this clear and precious stream of the Sages, which flows into the sea of philosophers that surrounds the whole world. It is not without foundation that this divine fountain is called by the author

the wife of the stone: some have represented it in the form of a celestial nymph; others gave it the name of the chaste Diana, whose purity and virginity were not soiled by the spiritual connection uniting her to the stone. In a word, this magnetic conjunction is the magical marriage of earth with heaven, about which some philosophers have spoken; so that the second source of the physical tincture which operates such wonders takes its birth from this all mysterious marital union".

The two mothers or mercuries we had just distinguished are represented in the shape of two roosters (6) in the stone panel located on the third floor of the house of Le Mans (Plate XII). They accompany a vase (7) filled with leaves and fruit, symbol of their vivifying, generative and vegetative capacity, of the fecundity and abundance of the productions issued therefrom. On each side of the motif, seated characters ---one blowing into a horn, one plucking a kind of guitar ---perform a musical duo. The various subjects sculpted on the facade refer to a translation of the Art of Music, conventional epithet for alchemy.

Before we continue our study of the motifs of the house of Adam and Eve, we believe that we must warn the reader that under barely veiled terms our analysis contains the revelation of what it is customary to call the secret of the two mercuries. Our explanation, nevertheless, could not resist an examination, and whosoever will take the trouble to dissect it will find in it certain contradictions, obvious errors of logic or judgment. Yet we loyally acknowledge that at the foundation, there is only one basic mercury, and that the second one necessarily derives from the first. It was appropriate nevertheless to call attention to the different qualities they took on, and to show ---be it at the cost of the twisting of reason or an improbability ---how they can be distinguished and identified and how it is possible to directly extract the appropriate wife of sulphur, mother of the stone, from the womb of our primitive mother. Between cabalistic tale, traditional allegory, and silence, we had no choice. Since our aim is to help workers little familiar with parables and metaphors, the use of allegory and the cabala was forbidden to us. Would it have been better for us to act as many of our predecessors did and say nothing? We do not think so. What would be the use of writing if not for those who already know and who do not need such advice? We have therefore preferred to give in clear language a demonstration *ab absurdo*, thanks to which it has become possible to reveal the Arcanum, until now obstinately hidden. Besides, this technique does not belong to us. May the authors ---and they are numerous ---in whose texts similar contradictions are not noticed, throw the first stone at us!

Above the roosters, guardians of the fruitful vase, a larger panel can be seen, unfortunately quite mutilated, whose tableau represents Deianira's kidnapping by the centaur Nessus.

The legend tells us that Hercules, having obtained from Oeneus the hand of Deianira, for having triumphed over the river god Achelous (8), our hero, accompanied with his new wife, wanted to cross the river Evenus (9). Nessus, who was in the neighborhood, offered to transport Deianira to the other bank. Hercules made the mistake of agreeing to it, and soon found out that the centaur was trying to take his wife away from him. An arrow dipped in the blood of the Hydra and shot with a very sure hand stopped him immediately. Nessus, knowing he was dying, gave to Deianira his tunic tinged in his blood, assuring her that she could use it to bring back her husband if he left her and became attached to other women. Later the credulous wife, having learned that Hercules was looking for Iole (10), his prize for having triumphed over Eurytus, her father, sent him the blood-stained vestment. But as soon as Hercules put on the tunic, he felt horrible pains, Not being able to withstand so much suffering, he threw himself in the midst of the pyre raised on Mt Oeta (11), which he had lit with his own hands. Deianira, learning that fateful news, killed herself in despair.

The tale refers to the last operations of the Magistry; it is an allegory of the fermentation of the stone by gold, so as to direct the Elixir towards the metallic kingdom and to limit its use to the transmutation of metals.

Nessus represents the philosophers' stone, not yet determined or assigned to any one of the great natural realms, whose color varies from carmine to brilliant scarlet. [\*180-1] (nesos), in Greek means crimson garment, and the bloody tunic of the centaur ---which "burns bodies more than the fires of hell" ---signifies the perfection of the completed product, matured and full of tincture.

Hercules represents the sulphur of gold whose virtue, refractory to the most incisive agents, cannot be vanquished by anything except the action of the red garment or blood of the stone. Gold, charred under the combined action of the fire and the tincture, takes on the color of the stone and in exchange, gives it the metallic quality which the work had caused it to lose. Juno, queen of the Work, thus consecrates the glory and reputation of Hercules, whose mythical apotheosis finds its material realization in fermentation. The very same Hercules, [\*181-1] (Heracles), indicates that he owes to Juno the imposition of the successive works he undertook, and assured his fame and spread his renown; [\*181-1], as a matter of fact, is formed, from the roots [\*181-2] (Hera), Juno and [\*181-3] (kleos), meaning glory, reputation, and renown. Deianira, wife of Hercules, personifies the mercurial principle of gold, which fights together with sulphur to which it is joined but which nevertheless succumbs under the ardor of the igneous tunic. In Greek, [\*181-4] (Deianeira) derives from [\*181-5] (Deiotes), hostility, fight, agony.

On the face of the two inside pillars which form a border for the mythological scene whose esotericism we have just studied, appear, on one side, a lion's head with wings and on the other, a dog's or a bitch's head. These animals are also integrally represented on the arches of the door of Vitre. The lion, hieroglyph of the fixed and coagulating principle, commonly called sulphur, has wings so as to show that the primitive dissolving agent, by decomposing and reincrudating the metal, gives to sulphur a volatile quality without which its reunion with mercury would become impossible. Some authors have described how to achieve this important operation in their allegory of the fight of the eagle and the lion, of the volatile and the fixed a fight which has been sufficiently explained elsewhere (12) .

As for the symbolic dog, direct successor of the Egyptian cynocephalus, the philosopher Artepheus has granted it civil rights among the figures of alchemical iconography. Indeed, he speaks of the dog of Khorassan and of the Bitch of Armenia, emblems of the sulphur and the mercury, parents of the stone (13). But while the word [\*181-6] (Armenos), meaning that which is needed, which is prepared and appropriately disposed indicates the passive and feminine principle, the Dog of Khorassan, or sulphur, gets its name from the Greek: [\*181-7] (Korax), equivalent of crow (14) .

The word crow was also used to indicate a certain blackish fish about which, if we were free to do so, we could say many intriguing things.

The Sons of Science whose perseverance has led to the threshold of the sanctuary, are aware that next to the knowledge of the universal dissolving agent ---unique mother taking on Eve's personality ---there is no other more important knowledge than that of metallic sulphur, first son of Adam, effective generator of the stone, which received the name of Cain. Cain means acquisition and the artist first acquires the black and enraged dog mentioned in the texts, the crow, first testimony of the Magistry. It is also, according to the version of the Cosmopolite, the fish without bones, echeneis, or remora, "which swims in our philosophical sea", and about which Jean Joachim d'Estinguel d'Ingrofort (15) affirms that "once you possess the small fish named Remora, which is very rare if not unique in this great sea, you will no longer need to fish but only to ponder about the preparation, the seasoning, and the cooking of this small fish". Although it is preferable not to extract it from the environment in which it lives --leaving it, if need be, enough water to maintain its vitality ---those who had the curiosity of isolating it could verify the accuracy, the veracity of the philosophical assertions. It is a very tiny body ---in relation to the volume and the mass from which it comes ---with the external appearance of an often circular, sometimes elliptical, double-convex lens. Of an earthy rather than metallic appearance, this light button, not fusible but very soluble, hard, breakable, friable, black on one side, whitish on the other, violet at its breaking point, has received several names relative to its form, its coloration, or to certain of its chemical idiosyncrasies. It is the secret prototype of the popular bather of the cake of the kings (16), the charm, [\*182-1] (kymanos), paronym of [\*182-2] (kyanos, bluish-black), the sabot or wooden shoe [\*182-3] (bembex) (17); it is also the cocoon [\*182-4] (bombykion) and its worm, whose Greek name, [\*182-5] (bombex), is so similar to that of sabot, which has for root [\*182-6] (bombos), precisely expressing the sound of a spinning top. It is also the small blackish fish called chabot from which Perrault derived his Chat botte(18). The famous Marquis of Carabas, from [\*183-1] (Kara), head and [\*183-2] (basileus), king, of the hermetic legends dear to our youth and gathered under the title, Tales of Our Mother Goose, also has relevance; it is, finally, the basil of the fable ---[\*183-3] (basilikon) ---our regulus (little king) or kinglet ([\*183-4] (basiliskos), the fur slipper (because it is white and grey) of the humble Cinderella, the sole, the flat fish of which each side is differently colored and whose name is related to sun (Latin sol, solis), etc. In the oral tradition of the Adepts, however, this body is usually called by the term violet, the first flower that the sage can see being born and blooming during the springtime of the Work, transforming into a new color the green of its flower bed...

We believe that we must interrupt the teaching here and maintain the wise silence of Nicolas Valois and of Quercetanus, the only ones, our knowledge, who revealed the verbal epithet of sulphur, gold, or hermetic sun.

(1) The sculptor Jaun de Arfe made this magnificent work of art in 1590. (2) In Greek [\*173-3] (thrysos), to which Adepts prefer the synonym [\*173-4] (thysologchos), as being much nearer to scientific truth and experimental reality and in which we can still grasp a very suggestive relationship between the rod of Aaron and the lance of Ares. (3) Translator's note: Bacchantes, the priestesses of Bacchus. (4) Here, the Adept hears about alchemical metals produced by reincrudation, or the return of the common metallic bodies to the simple state. (5) Treatise reprinted in The Hermetic Triumph by Limojon de Saint-Didier; Amsterdam, Henry Wetstein, 1699 and Jacques Desbordes, 1710. (6) In antiquity the rooster was attributed to the god Mercury. The Greeks designated it by the word [\*176-1] (alektor), which sometimes signifies virgin and sometimes wife, characteristic expressions of both mercuries; cabalistically, alektor is a pun on [\*176-2], that which must not or cannot be told, secret, mysterious. (7) In Greek, vase is [\*179-1] (ageion), the body, word which has for root [\*179-2] (aggos), uterus. (8) The water, the humid or mercurial stage which metals originally offer and which they progressively lose as they coagulate under the desiccating action of the sulphur supposed to assimilate mercury. The Greek term [\*180-2]

(Acheloos) does not only apply to the river Achelous but is also used to mean any course of flowing water or river. (9) [\*180-2] (Euenios), soft, easy. Remark here that the matter is not a solution of the principles of gold. Hercules does not enter into the waters of the river, and Deianira crosses it on the back of Nessos. It is the solution of the stone that is the topic of this allegorical crossing of the Evenus, and this solution is easily obtained in an easy and soft fashion. (10) The Greek word [\*180-3] (Ioleia) is formed from the Greek word [\*180-4] (Ios), venom and [\*180-5] (leia), booty or prey. Iole is the hieroglyph of the first matter, violent poison, say the sages, yet with which the great medicine is made. The common metals, dissolved by it, thus fall prey to this venom which changes their nature and decomposes them. This is why the artist must be very careful not to mix the sulphur obtained in this fashion with the metallic gold. Hercules, although looking for Iole, does not enter into union with her. (11) In Greek [\*180-6] (Aitho), to burn, inflame, be fiery. (12) Cf. Fulcanelli, *Le Mystere des Cathedrales* (The Mystery of the Cathedrals) (13) Among the details of the Creation of the world which ornament the north portal of the Cathedral of Chartres, we can see a 13th century group, representing Adam and Eve, having at their feet the tempter, represented by a monster with a head and torso of a dog, leaning on his front paws and ending in a snake tail. It is the symbol of sulphur, connected with mercury in the original chaotic substance (Satan). (14) The Latins called the crow Phoebeius ales, Bird of Apollo or of the Sun [\*181-8] (phoibos). In Notre-Dame de Paris, among the chimeras affixed to the balustrades of the high galleries, a strange crow is found clothed with a long veil that half covers it. (15) Jean-Joachim d'Estinguel d'Ingrofont, *Traitez du Cosmopolite nouvellement decouverts* (Newly Discovered Treatises of the Cosmopolite), Paris, 1691, Letter II, p. 46. (16) Translator's Note: This is in reference to the French tradition when on the Day of Epiphany, the 6th of January, day of the Three Wise Men, a cake ---called the cake of the kings, la galette des rois --- is baked to remind people of the appearance of the three Magi. A bean figurine is hidden in the cake and the person who finds it is crowned. (17) See supra, p. 22 in *Le Mystere des Cathedrales*, what has been written about this child's toy, this principal object of ludus poerorum (child's play). (18) Translator's Note: Literally Puss in Boots, but there is hermetic cabala here as chabot: the small special fish sounds like Puss 'n Boots in French.

## **LOUIS D'ESTISSAC I GOVERNOR OF POITIER AND SAINTONGE**

### **Grand Officer of the Crown and Hermetic Philosopher**

The mysterious side of a historical figure is revealed to us through one of his works. As a matter of fact, Louis d'Estissac, man of high birth, turns out to be a practicing alchemist and one of the best instructed Adepts in hermetic secrets.

Where did he obtain his science? Who gave him ---by word of mouth most probably ---the first elements of it? We do not know it for a fact, but we would like to believe that the learned doctor and philosopher Francois Rabelais (1) could very well have to do with the initiation.

Louis d'Estissac, born in 1507, was the nephew of Geoffrey d'Estissac and lived in the house of his uncle, superior of the Benedictine Abbey of Maillezais, who had established his priory in the vicinity at Liguge (Vienne). It is well known that Geoffrey d'Estissac had for a long time entertained a relationship of the most intense and warm friendship with Rabelais. "In 1525", writes H. Clouzet (2), "our philosopher lived in Liguge as an attaché in the service of Geoffrey d'Estissac". "Jean Bouchet", adds Clouzet, "the procurator-poet who informs us so well about the way of life at Liguge, in the priory of the reverend bishop, unfortunately, does not specify Rabelais' position. Secretary to the prelate? It is possible. But why not governor of his nephew Louis V, who is only 18 years of age and does not marry until 1527? The author of Gargantua and of Pantagruel brings about such developments in the education of his heroes that we must assume that his scholarship was not purely theoretical but that it was also the fruit of an earlier practice". Moreover, Rabelais seems never to have abandoned his new friend ---perhaps his disciple ---for while in Rome in 1536, he sent, according to Clouzot, to Madame d'Estissac, the young niece of the bishop, "medicinal plants and a thousand cheap little objects of curiosity", imported from Cyprus, Candia, and Constantinople. It is still to the castle of Coulonges-sur-l'Autize ---called Coulonges-les-Royaux in the Fourth Book of Pantagruel ---that our philosopher, pursued by the hatred of his enemies, came around 1550 to seek refuge at Louis d'Estissac, heir of Rabelais protector, the bishop of Maillezais.

Be that as it may, this leads us to believe that the search for the philosophers' stone in the 16th and 17th centuries was more active than we tend to believe, and, that its fortunate owners did not represent the tiny majority of the spagyric world that people usually tend to assign it. If they remained unknown to us, it is much less because of a lack of documents relative to their science, than due to our ignorance of traditional symbolism, which does not allow us to recognize them easily. King Francis I, by prohibiting the use of printing through his decree of 1537, probably was the determining cause of this shortage of books, noteworthy in the 16th century, and also was the unconscious promoter of the new symbolic development worthy of the most beautiful medieval period. Stone takes the place of parchment, and sculpted ornamentation comes to the aid of prohibited printing. This temporary return of thought to monuments, of the written allegory to the stone parable, has given us some brilliant works of real interest for the study of the artistic versions of the old alchemy.

As far back as the Middle Ages, the masters whose treatises we possess, were fond of adorning their dwellings with hermetic signs and images. At the time of Jean Astruc (3), physician to King Louis XV, that is to say, around 1720, there was a dwelling in Montpellier, in rue Cannau opposite the convent of the Capuchin monks, which, according to tradition, is said to have belonged to Master Arnold of Villanova in 1280, or where he might have lived. One could see on it, sculpted on the door, two bas-reliefs representing, one a roaring lion, the other a dragon biting its own tail, acknowledged emblems of the Great Work. The dwelling was destroyed in 1755. His disciple, Raymond Lully, returning from Rome, stopped in Milan in 1296 to pursue his philosophical research. In the same town, in the 18th century, people still showed the house in which Lully had worked; the entrance was decorated with hieroglyphic figures pertaining to the science, as is indicated in a passage in Borrichius' treatise on *The Origin and the Progress of Chemistry* (4). It is known that the houses, the churches, and the hospitals built by Nicolas Flamel served as turning points for the distribution of images of the sacred Art; his own dwelling, "l'hostel Flamel", built in the year 1376 on rue Marivaux close to the St Jacques Church in Paris, was, according to a chronicle, "all beautiful with painted and gilded stories and mottoes".

Louis d'Estissac, contemporary of Rabelais, Denis Zachaire, and Jean Lallemand, also wanted to devote to the science which he dearly loved, a dwelling worthy of it. At age 35, he made plans for a symbolic interior where the secret signs which had guided his works would be found, skillfully distributed and hidden with great care. Once the topics were well-established and appropriately veiled ---so that the layman could not discern their mysterious meaning --once the broad outlines of the architecture were decided upon, he entrusted its execution to an architect who might have been Philibert de l'Orme ---in any case it is Monsieur de Rochebrune's opinion. Thus was born the superb castle of Coulonges-sur-l'Autize (in the district of Deux-Sevres), whose construction demanded 26 years, from 1542 to 1568, which today offers but an empty interior with barren walls. The furniture, the porches, sculpted stones, ceilings, and even quoin turrets have all been scattered. Some of these artworks were acquired by the famous etcher, Etienne-Octave de Guillaume de Rochebrune, and were used for the refurbishing and embellishment of his house in Fontenay-le-Comte, (in the district of Vendee). In the castle of Terre-Neuve, where they are preserved today, we can admire and study them at leisure. This castle, furthermore, by the abundance, the variety, and the origin of the artistic works it contains, is more akin to a museum than to a private dwelling from the time of Henry IV.

The most beautiful ceiling of the castle of Coulonges, which once upon a time ornamented the hall and the treasure room, covers today the great salon of Terre-Neuve, called the Workshop. It is composed of nearly 100 panels, all different; one bears the date of 1550 along with the monogram of Diane de Poitiers, similar to the one found in the Castle of Anet. This detail led people to suggest that the plans of the Castle of Coulonges could have belonged to the architect-priest Philibert de l'Orme (5). Later, while studying a similar dwelling, we will come back to the secret meaning of the ancient monogram adopted by the mistress of Henry II, and shall point to the mistake that caused so many magnificent dwellings to be erroneously attributed to Diane de Poitiers.

A mere sharecropper farm at first, the castle of Terre-Neuve, in its current form, was built in 1595 by Jean Morison, on behalf of Count Nicolas Rapin, vice-seneschal of Fontenay-le-Comte and "distinguished poet", as we learn from a handwritten monograph of the castle of Terre-Neuve, probably by Monsieur de Rochebrune's hand. The inscription, in verse, which is under the porch, was composed by Nicolas Rapin himself. We quote it here as an example, keeping its original spelling and form:

Winds blow in all seasons A good air into this house  
May fever, plague or ills Coming from envy, quarrels  
Or suits never molest Those who dwell here.

The castle of Terre-Neuve owes its rich collection to the aesthetic sense of the successors of the poet-seneschal and above all to the sure taste of Monsieur de Rochebrune (6) for artworks. Our intention is not to draw up a catalog of the curiosities it shelters; let us haphazardly mention, for the pleasure of enthusiasts and amateurs, high-warp tapestries from the time of Louis XIII, coming from Chaligny, near Sainte-Hermine (Vendee); a door from the great salon, originally from Poitiers; the sedan chair of the Lord of Mercy, bishop of Lucon in 1773; gilded wood panels in the style of Louis XIV and Louis XV; a few beautiful wood consoles from the castle of Chambord, an emblazoned panel of Gobelin tapestry (1670) given by Louis XIV; very beautiful 15th century wood sculptures, coming from the library of the Castle of Hermenault, also in the Vendee district; some Henry II curtains; three of the eight panels of a series entitled *Triumphs of the Gods*, representing the triumphs of Venus, Bellone and Minerva, woven in silk in Flanders and attributed to Mantegna; a piece of Louis XIV furniture, quite well preserved, and a piece of sacristy furniture from the time of Louis XIII; engravings from the best masters of the 16th and 17th centuries; an almost complete collection of all offensive weapons in use from the 9th to the 18th centuries; enameled glazes from Avisseau; Florentine bronzes; Chinese dishes of the green period; a library containing the works of the most famous architects of the 16th and 17th centuries: Ducerceau, Bietterlin, Bullant, Lepautre, Philibert de l'Orme, etc.



Of all these marvels, the one which most interests us is without question the monumental fireplace of the Grand Salon, bought in Coulonges and rebuilt in the Castle of Terre-Neuve in March 1884. More remarkable even, by the accuracy of the hieroglyphs which decorate it, the finishing quality of the workmanship, the mastery, to the extent of virtuosity, of the carving, and its surprising preservation, rather than by its artistic merit, it constitutes for the disciples of Hermes a precious document, very useful to consult (Plate XIII).

The art critic would indeed be justified to aim at this stonework the reproach common to decorative productions of the Renaissance, namely, that it tends to be heavy, inharmonious, and cold in spite of its sumptuous appearance, and the display of a far too gaudy luxuriousness. He could pick out the excessive weightiness of the mantle bearing on its meager jambs, the panes poorly balanced among themselves, a poverty of form, of invention, painfully masked under the brilliance of ornaments, moldings, or arabesques lavished in vain ostentation. As for us, we voluntarily leave aside the aesthetic feeling of a brilliant albeit superficial period, where affectations and mannerisms replaced missing thought and failing originality, and we will concentrate on the initiatory value of the symbolism for which this fireplace serves both as pretext and support.

The mantle, structured as an entablature filled with interlacing and symbolic figures, is carried by two cylindrical and polished stone pillars. A fluted lintel is bearing on their abacus under a quarter-round ovum and flanked by three acanthus leaves. Above, four girdled caryatids, two men and two women, hold up the cornice; the women's girdles are ornamented with fruit while those of the men show the mask of a lion biting a crescent moon, by way of a ring. Between the caryatids, three frieze panels unfurl various hieroglyphs in a decorative form designed to better veil them. The cornice is divided horizontally into two levels, by a jutting fillet covering four motifs: two vases filled with fire and two shield escutcheons bearing the engraved date of execution, March 1563 (7). They serve as a frame for three panels receiving the three words of a Latin sentence: *Nascnedo quotidie morumur*. Finally, the upper part displays six little panels, opposed two-by-two, from the extremities toward the center; there we can see small kidney-shaped panels, bucranes, and near the median axis, some hermetic shields.

Such are, briefly described, the most interesting emblematic pieces for the alchemist, that we shall analyze in great detail.

(1) Gilbert Ducher, in one of his epigrams to philosophy (1538), remembers him as one of the faithful of the divine science: "In primis sane Raelaesum, principem eundem Supremeum in studiis diva tuis Sophia".

(2) H. Clouzot: *Vie de Rabelais (Life of Rabelais)*, biographical notice written for publication of *Les Oeuvres de Rabelais (Works of Rabelais)*, Paris, Garnier Brothers, 1926. (3) Jean Astruc: *Memoires pour servir a l'Histoire de la Faculte de Medecine de Montpellier (Memoirs to Serve for the History of the Medical School of Montpellier)*; Paris, 1767, p. 153. (4) "Quod autem Lullius Mediolani et fuerit et chimica" etc. (Olaus Borichius, *De Ortu et Progressu Chemicæ*, p. 133) (5) On September 5, 1550, Philibert de l'Orme received a canonicate at Notre-Dame de Paris, around the same time as Rabelais. Our architect canceled it in 1559, but his name is frequently mentioned in the capitularies of the cathedral. (6) Monsieur de Rochebrune, born at Fontenay-le-Comte in 1824 and who died at the Castle of Terre-Neuve in 1900, was the grandfather of the current owner, Monsieur de Fontenious (7) When Louis d'Estissac was 56 years of age

## LOUIS D'ESTISSAC II

The first of the three panels separated by the caryatids, the one on the left, exhibits a central flower, our hermetic rose, two comb-type shells, known as merelles de Compostelle (1), and two human heads, one of a very old man at the bottom, the other of a cherub at the top. We uncover here a formal indication of the materials we need for the Work and the result the artist should expect therefrom. The old man's mask is the emblem of the primary mercurial substance to which, say the philosophers, all metals owe their origin. "You must know", writes Limojon de Saint-Didier (2), "that our old man is our mercury; that the name suits it because it is the raw matter of all metals; the Cosmopolite says it is their water, and gives it the name of steel and magnet, and he adds, to further confirm what I have just uncovered for you: *Si undecies coit aurum cum eo, emittit suum semen, et debilitatur fere ad mortem usque; concipit chalybs, et generat filium patre clariores*" (3).

On the west portal of the Chartres Cathedral, we admire a very beautiful 12th century statue where the same esotericism is so luminously expressed. It is a tall old man of stone, crowned and haloed ---which already signifies his hermetic personality --draped in the ample mantle of the philosopher. In his right hand he holds a zither (4). In his left hand he raises a bulging phial somewhat like the pilgrims' calabash. Standing between the posts of a throne, he tramples underfoot two intertwined human-headed monsters, one of which has wings and bird feet (Plate XIV). These monsters represent the raw bodies whose decomposition and assemblage into another form of volatile quality provides the secret substance we call mercury and that suffices to single-handedly accomplish the entire work. The calabash, which contains the beverage of the peregrinator, is the image of the dissolving qualities of the mercury, cabalistically called pilgrim or traveler. In the motifs of our fireplace,

the same is represented by the scallop shells (5), also used as, and called holy-water basins, because therein is kept holy or blessed water, qualifications which the ancients applied to mercurial water. Here, in addition to the purely chemical meaning, the two shells, still teach the seeker that the regular and natural proportion demands two parts of the dissolving agent for one of the fixed body. From this operation, accomplished according to the art, arises a new, regenerated body, of a volatile nature, evoked by the cherub or angel (6) who dominates the composition. Thus, the death of the old man gives birth to the child, and ensures its vitality. Philalethes advises us that in order to achieve the goal we must kill the living so as to resuscitate the dead. "By taking", he says, "the gold, which is dead, and the water, which is living, we form a compound in which, after a brief decoction, the gold seed becomes alive while the living mercury is killed. The spirit coagulates with the body and the two putrefy forming a silt-like substance, until the constituent parts of the compound are reduced to atoms. Such is the nature of our Magistry" (7). This double substance, this perfectly matured, augmented and multiplied compound becomes the agent of the marvelous transformations which characterize the philosophers' stone, *rosa hermetica*. The rose is sometimes white, sometimes red, depending on the ferment, silver or gold, which serves to orient our first stone. Flamel describes for us the two philosophers' flowers, blooming on the same rosebush, Flamel describes for us in his *Book of Hieroglyphic Figures*. They similarly embellish the title page of *Mutus Liber*, and are seen blooming in a crucible, on the Gobbille engraving illustrating the twelfth key of Basil Valentine. It is known that the celestial Virgin wears a crown of white roses and it is also known that the red rose is the signature reserved to the initiates of the higher order, the Rose Cross (8). Finally, explaining this term Rose Cross will allow us to complete the description of the first panel.

Apart from the alchemical symbolism whose meaning is even quite clear, we unveil in this panel another hidden element, relating to the high rank occupied, in the initiatory hierarchy, by the man to whom we owe the motifs of this hieroglyphic architecture. The fact that Louis d'Estissac had conquered the title par excellence of hermetic nobility is beyond doubt. The central rose in fact appears in the center of the St Andrew cross, formed by the rising of stone bandelettes which we can assume had previously covered and enclosed it. It is the great symbol of manifested light (9), which is indicated by the Greek letter X (khi), initial of the words [\*197-1] (Chone), [\*197-2] (Chrysos), and [\*197-3] (Chronos), crucible, gold, and time, triple unknown of the Great Work. The cross of St Andrew ([\*197-4] ---Chiasma), in the shape of an X, is the hieroglyph of luminous and divergent radiations, emanated from a unique fire/center, reduced to its simplest expression. Therefore, it is clearly the graphic of the spark. Its radiation can be multiplied, but it is impossible to further simplify it. These intersecting lines produce the diagram of the shining of stars, of the radiating dispersion of all that shines, lightens and irradiates. Thus it has been made the seal, the mark of illumination, and, in a wider sense, of spiritual revelation. The Holy Spirit is always perpendicular to its body, that is to say, in a cross. For the Greek cross and that of St Andrew have in hermetics an exactly similar meaning. One frequently encounters the image of the dove completed by a halo which specifies the hidden meaning, as can be seen in the religious scenes of our Primitives and in a number of purely alchemical sculptures (10). The Greek X and the French X represent the writing of light by light itself, the trail of its passage, the manifestation of its movement, the affirmation of its reality. It is its true signature. Until the 12th century, no other mark was used to authenticate old charters; from the 15th century on, the cross became the signature of illiterates. In Rome, auspicious days were signed with a white cross and unfavorable ones with a black cross. It is the complete number of the Work, because unity, the two natures, the three principles, and the four elements give the double quintessence, the two Vs joined in the Roman cipher X for the number ten. The number is the foundation of the Pythagorean Cabala, or of the universal language, whose curious paradigm can be seen on the last page of a little alchemy book (11). Bohemians used the cross or the X as a sign of recognition. Guided by this graphic traced on a tree or on some wall, they still camp exactly on the spot occupied by their predecessors near the sacred symbol which they call *Patria*. One could believe this word to be of Latin origin and apply to the nomads this maxim which the cats ---living objects of art ---strive to practice: *Patria est ubicumque est bene* ---wherever we are comfortable, there is our country; but their emblem refers to a Greek word [\*198-1] (*Patria*), with the meaning of family, tribe, race. The cross of the Gypsies or Romanies therefore indicates the place of refuge assigned to a tribe. Furthermore, almost all meanings revealed by the sign X have a transcendent or mysterious value, and this fact is singular. In algebra, X is the unknown quantity; it is also the problem to be solved, the solution to be discovered; it is the Pythagorean sign of multiplication, and the element to cast out the nines in arithmetic; it is the popular symbol of mathematics in what concerns higher or abstract development. It characterizes that which, generally is excellent, useful, remarkable ([\*198-2] -- Chresimos). In that sense, and in the slang of students, it serves to single out the French Polytechnic School (12) by securing the superiority that the "taupins and dear comrades" (13) of that school would not permit to be discussed or disputed. The best pupils, candidates to the school, are united in each promotion or "taupe", by a cabalistic formula composed of an X whose opposite angles the chemical symbols of sulphur and potassium hydrate are written: SXKOH. This is pronounced, in slang of course, "souffre et potasse pour l'X" (14). The X is the emblem of measure ([\*199-1] ---metron), taken in all its meanings: dimension, area, space, duration, rule, law, boundary or limit. For this occult reason, the international standard of the meter, made of platino-iridium and kept in the pavilion of Breteuil in Sevres, has the shape of an X in its cross-section (15). All bodies of nature, all beings either in their structure or in their appearance, abide by this fundamental law of radiation, all are subjected to this measure. The canon of the Gnostics applies this measure to the human

body (16); and Jesus Christ, spirit incarnate, St Andrew, and St Peter, personify its glorious and painful image. Have we not noticed that the aerial organs of vegetables --be they lofty trees or tiny herbs --show along with their roots the characteristic divergence of the branches of the X? In what manner do flowers bloom? Section vegetable leaves, leafstalks, nervures, etc., examine the cross-sections under a microscope and you will observe, with your own eyes, the most brilliant, the most marvelous confirmation of this divine will. Diatoms, sea urchins, starfish are other examples; but, without looking any further, open an edible shellfish --be it cockle, conch, scallop ---and the two valves opened flat will show you convex surfaces endowed with grooves in the double fan shape of the mysterious X. Its whiskers gave the cat its name (17); we do not doubt that they hide a meaning of high degree of knowledge and that this gracious feline owes the honor of being raised to the rank of Egyptian deities to this secret reason. Speaking of cats, many among us remember the famous Chat-Noir (Black Cat) (18), which was so popular under Rodolphe Salis' management; but how many knew what sort of esoteric and political center was concealed there, what international masonry was hidden behind the ensign of the artistic cabaret? On the one hand the talent of a fervent, idealistic youth made up of aesthetes seeking glory, carefree, blind, and incapable of suspicion; on the other, the confidences of a mysterious science mixed up with obscure diplomacy, a two-faced tableau deliberately exhibited in a medieval framework. The enigmatic tableau deliberately exhibited in a medieval framework. The enigmatic "tournee des grands ducs" (19) signified by a cat with scrutinizing eyes under its black coat, with its rigid, disproportionate X-shaped whiskers, and whose heraldic posture gave to the wings of Montmartre mill a symbolic value equal to its own (20), was not a pleasure outing for princes! Whether held by the god's hands, trampled underfoot by him or whether bursting out of the eagle's claws, Zeus' lightning bolts, which make Olympus tremble and scatter terror among mythological humanity, do espouse the graphic shape of radiation. It is the translation of celestial fire or terrestrial fire, of potential or virtual fire which composes or disintegrates, engenders or kills, vivifies or disrupts. Son of the sun which generates it, servant of man who liberate and feeds it, divine fire, downfallen, imprisoned in heavy matter in order to determine its evolution and orient its redemption, is Jesus on his cross, image of the igneous, luminous and spiritual radiation incarnate in all things. It is the Agnus (lamb) sacrificed since the beginning of the world and it is also Agni, Vedic god of fire (21), but is the Lamb of God bears the cross on his banderole just as Jesus bears it on his shoulder, if he supports it with his foot, it is because he has the sign of it inlaid in his very foot: image outside, reality inside (22). Whoever receives in this way the celestial spirit of the sacred fire, who bears it within himself and is marked by its sign, has nothing to fear from elemental fire. These elects, disciples of Elias and children of Helios, modern crusaders having for guide the star of their elders, go for the same conquest with the same cry of God wills it! (23).

This higher and spiritual force, acting mysteriously amidst concrete substance, compels crystal to take its form and its immutable characteristics; it is this force which is its pivot, its axis, its generating energy, its geometric will. And this configuration, varying infinitely, though always based on the cross, is the first manifestation of organized form, by condensation and embodiment of light, soul, or fire. Owing to their same arrangements, spider webs old back gnats, nets catch fish, birds, and butterflies without hurting them, fabrics become translucent, wire gauze cuts off flames and oppose the inflammation of gases.

Finally, in space and time, the same immense ideal cross divides the 24 centuries of the cyclic year ([\*201-1] ---Chiliarmos), and separates the 24 elders of the Apocalypse into four groups of ages, of whom twelve sing the praises of God, while the other twelve bemoan the downfall of man.

How many unsuspected truths remain hidden in the simple sign that Christians renew every day on their own person without always understanding its meaning nor its hidden virtue! "For the word of the cross is folly for those who go astray; but for those who save themselves, that is to say for us, it is the instrument of God's power. This is why it is written: 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. What has become of the wise? What has become of the doctors of law? What has become of those spirits interested in the knowledge of this age? Has God not proved the wisdom of this world to be foolishness?'" (24). How many more know about it than the wild ass which saw the birth of the humble God-Child in Bethlehem, transported him, triumphant, to Jerusalem, and received as a memento of the King of Kings the magnificent black cross that it bears on its back? (25).

In the alchemical domain, the Greek cross and the cross of St Andrew have come meaning that the artist must know. These graphic symbols, reproduced on a great number of manuscripts, and which are in certain texts the object of a special nomenclature, represent among the Greeks and their medieval successors, the crucible of fusion that potters always marked with a small cross (crucibulum), sign of good make and of tested solidity. The Greeks also used a similar sign to indicate an earthenware matrass. We know that this vessel was destined for coction and we think that, because of its very material, its usage must have differed little from that of a crucible. Moreover, the word matrass, used in the same sense in the 13th century, comes from the Greek [\*202-1], (metra) matrix, a word equally used by puffers and applied to the secret vase serving in the maturation of the compound. Nicolas Grosparmy, Norman Adept of the 15th century, gives an illustration of this spherical utensil, laterally tabulated, which he also calls matrix. Furthermore, the X denotes sal ammoniac of the sages

or salt of Ammon ([\*202-2] ---ammoniakos), in other words, salt of the Ram (26) , which was formerly written, more accurately, harmoniac, because it realizes the harmony ([\*202-3] ---assembling), the agreement of water with fire, because it is the mediator par excellence between heaven and earth, the spirit and the body, the volatile and the fixed. It is also the Sign, without any other qualification, the seal that reveals to man the intrinsic virtues of the prime philosophical substance through certain superficial lineaments. Finally, the X is the Greek hieroglyph for glass, purest of all matters, affirms the masters of the art, and the one nearest to perfection.

We believe we have sufficiently demonstrated the significance of the cross, the depth of its esotericism, and its predominance in symbolism in general (27). As far as the practical realization of the Work is concerned, it certainly offers no less value or teaching. It is the first key, the most considerable and most secret of all the ones that can open the sanctuary of nature to man. This key always appears in visible characters, outlined by nature herself, obedient to the divine will on the cornerstone of the Work, which is also the fundamental stone of the Church and Christian Truth. And so in religious iconography, a key is given to St Peter as his particular virtue, allowing us to distinguish him among the apostles of Christ as the one who was the humble fisherman Simon (cabalistically, [\*205-1] ---C-monos ---the only ray) and who was to become his earthly spiritual representative after the death of the Savior. We find him represented in that same manner on a very beautiful 16th century statue sculpted in oak wood and kept in the Church of St Etheldreda in London (Plate XV). St Peter, standing up, holds a key and displays the Veronica, a peculiarity which makes this remarkable image a unique work of exceptional interest. From the hermetic standpoint, symbolism is certainly doubly expressed thereon, since the meaning of the key is repeated in the Holy Face, miraculous seal of our stone. Furthermore, the Veronica is here presented to us as a veiled replica of the cross, major emblem of Christianity and signature of the sacred Art. In fact, the word veronica does not come from the Latin vera iconica (true and natural image) ---which teaches us nothing ---as certain authors claimed, but from the Greek [\*205-2] (pherenikos), he who procures victory (from [\*205-3] ---phere ---to bear, produce, and [\*205-4] ---nike -- victory). Such is the meaning of the Latin inscription: In signo vinces, "You will vanquish by this sign", placed under the Christ monogram of the labarum of Constantine, which corresponds to the Greek formula [\*205-5] (En totu nike). The sign of the cross, monogram of Christ, of which the X of St Andrew and the key of St Peter are two replicas of equal esoteric value, is indeed the very mark capable of assuring victory by the sure identification of the unique substance exclusively assigned to the philosophical labor.

St Peter holds the keys of Paradise, although only one is sufficient to insure access to the celestial dwelling. But the first key becomes two, and these two intercrossed symbols, one of silver, the other of gold, constitute, with the triple crown, the arms of the sovereign pontiff, heir of Peter's throne. The cross of the Son of Man, reflected in the keys of the Apostle, reveals to men of good will the arcane of universal science and the treasures of the hermetic art. It alone allows him who possesses its meaning, to open the gate of the closed garden of Hesperides and to pick, without fear for his salvation, the Rose of Adepthood.

From what we have said about the cross and the rose, its center, or more exactly, its heart --this bleeding heart, radiant and glorious of Christ-matter ---it is easy to infer that Louis d'Estissac bore the high title of Rose Cross, mark of higher initiation, brilliant testimony of a positive science made concrete in the substantial reality of the absolute.

Nevertheless, if no one could deny our Adept the grade of Rose Cross, one should not deduce from this fact that he belonged to the hypothetical brotherhood of the same name. To so conclude would be to commit an error. It is important to know how to discern the two Rose Crosses so as not to confuse the true with the false.

We will probably never know what obscure reason guided Valentin Andraea, or rather the German author called by this pseudonym, when he had the pamphlet entitled Fama Fratemitatis Rosae-Crucis printed in FrankfurtOder, around 1614. Perhaps he was pursuing a political motive, either attempting to counterbalance, through a fictitious occult power, the authority of the Masonic lodges of his time, or wanting to provoke the grouping of the Rose Crosses who were disseminated everywhere into one single fraternity, depository of all their secrets. However it may be, if the Manifesto of the brotherhood was unable to realize any of its objectives, it still contributed to spread among the public news of an unknown sect, endowed with the most extravagant attributions. According to the testimony of Valentin Andrae, its members, bound by an inviolable oath and submitted to a severe discipline, possessed all the riches and power to accomplish all marvels. They called themselves invisible, claimed they could make gold, silver, precious stones; cure paralytics, the blind, the deaf, all the contagious, and the incurables. They pretended to possess the means to prolong human life beyond its natural limits, to converse with higher and elementals spirits; to discover even the most hidden things, etc. Such a display of prodigies had to strike the imagination of the masses and justify the assimilation which was soon made of the Rose Crosses, thus introduced, with magicians, sorcerers, Satanists, and necromancers (28). A rather disobliging reputation which they shared, moreover, in certain provinces with the Freemasons themselves. Let us add that the latter had hastened to adopt and introduce into their hierarchy this new title out of which they made a rank without attempting to know its symbolic significance or its true

origin (29) .

In short, the mystical fraternity, in spite of the voluntary affiliation of a few learned personalities whose good faith was taken by surprise by the Manifesto, never existed anywhere else than in the desire of its author. It is a fable and nothing more. As for the Masonic rank, it also has no philosophical significance whatsoever. Finally, if we mention, without entering them, those little chapels where one gets lazily promoted under the Rose Cross banner, we will have uncovered the diverse modalities of the apocryphal Rose Cross. Moreover, we will not maintain that Valentin Andraea exaggerated much the extraordinary virtues that certain philosophers, more enthusiastic than sincere, give to the Universal Medicine. If he attributes to the brothers what could only belong to the Magistry, at least we find therein the proof that his conviction was based upon the reality of the stone. Further, his pseudonym clearly shows that he knew quite well what part of occult truth entered into the symbol of the cross and the rose, the emblem used by the ancient magi and known by all antiquity. To such an extent that after reading the Manifesto, we are led to see there a mere alchemical treatise, whose interpretation is neither more difficult nor less expressive than so many other writings of the same nature. The tomb of the Knight Christian Rosenkreuz (the Christian and Rosicrucian cabalist) presents a singular identity with the allegorical cave, furnished with a chest of lead, which is inhabited by the fearsome guardian of the hermetic treasure (30), that fierce genie whom the Songe Verd (Green Dream) calls Seganissegede (31). A light emanating from a golden sun lights the cave and symbolizes the incarnate spirit, divine spark imprisoned in things, already discussed. Enclosed in the tomb are the numerous secrets of wisdom and this cannot come as a surprise since, the principles of the Work being perfectly known, the analogy naturally leads us to the discovery of connected truths and facts.

A more detailed analysis of this booklet would teach us nothing new except for a few indispensable conditions of prudence, discipline, and silence for the use of Adepts; judicious advice undoubtedly, but superfluous. True Rose Cross, the only ones who are worthy of bearing this title and provide the material proof of their science, have no need of it. Living isolated in their austere retreats, they do not fear ever being known, not even by their brothers. A few, nevertheless, occupied important positions: d'Espagnet, Jacques Couer, Jean Lallemand, Louis d'Estissac, the Count de St Germain are among those; but they knew how to mask the origin of their fortune so skillfully that no one was able to recognize the Rose Cross under the features of the gentleman. Which biographer would dare to certify that Philalethes -- this friend of truth ---was the pseudonym of the nobleman Thomas Vaughan, and that under the epithet of Sethon (the wrestler) was hidden an illustrious member of a powerful Scottish family, the Lords of Winton? By attributing this strange and paradoxical privilege of invisibility to the brothers, Valentin Andraea recognizes the impossibility of identifying them, much as great lords traveling incognito in private dress and carriage. They are invisible because unknown. Nothing characterizes them except modesty, simplicity, and tolerance, virtues that are generally scorned in our conceited civilization prone to the ridiculous exaggeration of personality.

Besides these highborn men we have just mentioned, how many other scientists preferred to bear their Rosicrucian dignity without pomp, living among the working people in a voluntary mediocrity, and the daily practice of professions without nobility! Such is the case of a so-called Leriche, a humble blacksmith, unknown Adept and possessor of the hermetic gem. This gentleman of an exceptional modesty would have been forever unknown if Cambriel (32) had not taken the trouble to name him, telling in detail what he did to bring back to life the young man from Lyon, Candy, an 18-year old whom a lethargic attack was about to kill (1774). Leriche shows us what the true sage must be and how he must live. If all Rosicrucians had maintained themselves in this prudent reserve, if they had observed the same discretion, we would not have to deplore the loss of so many quality artists, carried away by blundering zeal, blind faith, or pushed by the irresistible need to attract attention. This conceited desire for glory led Jean du Chatelet, baron of Beausoleil, to the Bastille prison in 1640, where he died five years later; Paykul, a Livonian (33) philosopher, transmutes before the Senate of Stockholm and is condemned to be beheaded by Charles XII; Vinache, man of the lower class, knowing neither how to read nor write, but on the other hand knowing the great Work down to its smallest details, also painfully expiates his insatiable taste for luxury and notoriety. It is to him that Rene Voyer de Paulmy d'Argenson appeals to manufacture the gold which the financier Samuel Bernard intends for the payment of the debts of France. Once the operation is finished, Paulmy d'Argenson, in gratefulness for his faithful services, captures Vinache on February 17, 1704, throws him in the Bastille, and has his throat cut March 19th, coming in person to make sure that the murder has been executed, and then has him clandestinely buried March 22nd around six at night under the name of Etienne Durand, age 60 ---when Vinache was actually only 38 ---and completes his crime by publishing that he died of a stroke! (34). Who then, after reading this, would find it strange that alchemists refuse to reveal their secrets and dared to prefer to remain shrouded in mystery and silence?

The pretended Brotherhood of the Rose Cross never had any social existence. Adepts bearing this title are only brothers through knowledge and the success of their work. No oath compels them, no statute binds them together, no rule apart from the hermetic discipline, freely accepted, voluntarily observed, influences their free will. All that could have been written or related according to the legend attributed to the theologian de Cawle is apocryphal and worthy at most of feeding the

romantic imagination of a Bulwer Lytton. The Rose Cross did not know one another; they had neither meeting place nor headquarters, nor temple, ritual, or external mark of recognition. They did not pay dues and would never have accepted the title given to some brothers, of Knights of the Stomach since banquets were unknown to them. They were and still are isolated workers dispersed throughout the world, "cosmopolitan" searchers in the narrowest meaning of the word. Since the Adepts do not recognize any hierarchic grade, it follows that the Rose Cross is not a rank but the sole consecration of their secret works, that of experience, positive enlightenment, whose existence had been revealed to them by strong faith. True, some masters were able to assemble young aspirants around them and accepted the mission of counseling them, directing them, orienting their efforts and creating some small, sometimes recognized, often mysterious, initiation centers whose souls they were. But we certify --and very pertinent reasons allow us to say so --that there has never been among the possessors of the title any other connection but that of scientific truth confirmed by the acquisition of the stone. If the Rose Cross are brothers through discovery, work, and science, brothers through acts and works, it is in the manner of the philosophical concept which considers all human beings members of the same human family.

In summary, the great classical authors who taught the precepts of our philosophy and the arcane of the art in their literary or artistic works, those also who left irrefutable proofs of their mastery, all are brothers of the true Rose Cross. And it is to these learned people, famous, unknown, that the anonymous translator of a famous book (35) addresses himself when he says in his Preface: "As it is only by the cross that the true faithful must be tried, it is to you Brothers of the true Rose Cross, who possess all the treasures of the world, that I am appealing. I defer entirely to your pious and wise advice; I know that it can be but good, because I know how gifted you are with virtue above the rest of men. As you are the dispensers of Science, and that consequently I owe you what I know, if I may say that I know something, I want things to return whence they came (according to the institution that God established in Nature). 'Ad locum', says the Preacher, 'unde exeunt flumina revertuntur, ut iteru fluant': 'All is yours, all comes from you, and so all will return to you'".

May the reader excuse us for this digression which led us farther than we wished. But it seemed necessary to us to clearly establish what is the true and traditional hermetic Order of the Rose Cross, to isolate it from other common groups placed under the same banner (36), and to allow to single out the rare initiates from the imposters who draw vanity from a title whose acquisition they could not justify.

(1) Scallop shells. In French the name relates to St James of Compostella --see Translator's note. (2) Lettre aux Vrais Disciples d'Hermes (Letter to the True Disciples of Hermes), in the Triomphe Hermetique (Hermetic Triumph). (3) "If gold is joined eleven times with her (the water), it emits its seed and becomes debilitated to the point of death; then the seed conceives and engenders a son, clearer than its father". (4) It isn't rare to find alchemy characterized as the Art of Music in medieval texts. This name is the motif of the effigy of the two musicians who can be noticed among the balasters completing the upper story of the Manor of the Salamander at Lisieux. We have also seen them reproduced on the house of Adam and Eve at Le Mans, and we can again find them in the Cathedral of Amiens (the kings-musicians of the high gallery), as well as in the dwelling of the counts of Champagne, commonly called house of the musicians in Reims. In the beautiful plates illustrating the Ampitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae of Heinrich Khunrath (1610), there is one representing the interior of a sumptuous laboratory; in the middle of this laboratory there is a table covered with musical instruments and many musical scores. The Greek word [\*194-1] (musikos) has for root [\*194-2] (mythos), fable, apologue, allegory, which also means spirit, the hidden meaning of a tale. (5) See Translator's note. (6) In Greek [\*194-3] (aggelos), angel, also means messenger, a position which the divinities of Mt Olympus had reserved for Hermes. (7) Philalethes: Introitus apertus ad occlusum Regis palatium, in Langlet-Dufresnoy, Histoire de la Philosophie hermetique (History of Hermetic Philosophy), Paris, Coustelier, 1742, vol. II, ch. 13, 20. (8) Translator's Note: The author uses the adjective Rose Cross instead of Rosicrucian and explains why further on. (9) The symbol of light is found in the visual organ of man, window of the soul opened onto nature. It is the X-shaped crossing of bands and the optic nerves which anatomists call chiasma (from Greek [\*197-4] ---chiasma, disposed as a cross, root [\*197-5] ---chiazō, to cross in X). The intercrossed wicker of chairs led to the name of Cayelles ([\*197-6], ray of light) in the dialect of Picardie. (10) The ceiling of Lallemand's house in Bourges offers a remarkable example of this image. (11) La Clavicle de la Science Hermetique (The Clavicle of Hermetic Science), written by an inhabitant of the north during his leisure hours, 1732; Amsterdam, Pierre Mortier, 1751. (12) Translator's note: Famous French engineering school known as the X (13) Translator's note: Each promotion is referred to as taupe (mole in English), and the students of a promotion are called taupin. (14) Translator's note: Literally sulphur and potash for X, but in French slang it means "suffer and swot up for the school". (15) We are not speaking here of the copy #8 kept in the Conservatory of Arts and Professions in Paris, which is the legal standard, but of the international prototype. (16) Leonardo da Vinci used and taught it, transporting it from the mystical domain to that of aesthetic morphology. (17) X, the Song of Light. The Picard dialect, guardian of the traditions of the sacred language like the Provençal, has kept in English the hard primitive ka to designate the cat (chat in French). (18) Translator's note: Very famous cabaret in Montmartre in the 19th century. (19) Translator's note: Literally, "the round of the grand dukes", which means in French slang: to go out on a spree.

(20) Rodolphe Salis imposed on the artist Steinlein, author of the vignette, the image of the Mill of the Galette, that of the cat as well as the color of the coat, the eyes, and the geometric straightness of the whiskers. The cabaret of the Black Cat, founded in 1881, disappeared at the death of its creator in 1897. (21) The Hindu swastika, or in French *croix gramme*, cross with branches in the shape of a gamma g, is the sign of divine, immortal, and pure spirit, the symbol of life and fire and not, as people wrongly believe, a utensil designed to produce flame. [Translator's note: This material was written before the existence of Nazi Germany]. (22) Let us not be accused of leading our reader into useless and vain reveries. We assert that we speak in a positive manner, and initiates will not be mistaken by it. Let us say this for the others. Boil a sheep's foot in water until the bones can be easily separated; you will find one among them which bears a medial furrow on one side and separated; you will find one among them which bears a medial furrow on one side and a Maltese Cross on the opposite side. This signed bone is the true knucklebone of the Ancient; with it Greek youth played their favorite game (similar to jacks). This bone was called [\*201-2] (astragalos), word formed from [\*2013] (aster, starfish, star of the sea, because of the radiating seal we are talking about, and of [\*201-4] (galos) used for [\*201-5] (gala), milk, which corresponds to Virgin's Milk (maris stella) or Mercury of the Philosophers. We will avoid speaking about another etymology even more revealing because we must obey philosophical discipline which forbids us from unveiling the entire mystery. Our intention is therefore limited to awakening the sagacity of the investigator, allowing him to acquire through personal effort that secret teaching whose elements the most sincere authors have never wished to uncover. All their treatises being achromatic, the hope of finding the least indication concerning the basis and foundation of the art is useless. For this reason we are attempting as far as possible to render these sealed works useful by supplying the matter which formerly constituted the first initiation, i.e., the verbal revelation essential to understand them. (23) A cabalistic expression holding the key to the hermetic mystery. Dieu le Veut (God wills it) is taken for Dieu le Feu (God the Fire), which explains and justifies the badge adopted by the crusader knights and its color: a red cross borne on the right shoulder. (24) St Paul: I Corinthians 1:18-20 (25) This signature caused the donkey to be called St Christopher of Palm Sunday, because Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, that very day when alchemists customarily begin their Great Work. (26) Ammon-Ra, the great solar divinity of the Egyptians, was normally represented with a ram's head, or, when he kept his human head, with spiral horns that originated above his ears. This god, to whom the ram was sacrificed, had a colossal temple in Thebes (Karnak); one entered it by following an avenue lined with crouching rams. Remember that the ram is the image of the water of the sages, just as the solar disk, with or without the uraeus --another attribute of Ammon --is that of the secret fire. Ammon, saline mediator, completes the trinity of the principles of the Work, of which he realizes the concord, unity, and perfection it realizes in the philosophers' stone. (27) So it is that Gothic cathedrals had their facades built according to the essential lines of the alchemical symbol of spirit and that their floor plan is a copy of the imprint of the redeeming cross. Inside they all show these bold interesting ribs in the form of crosses whose invention properly belongs to the Freemasons, enlightened builders of the Middle Ages. So that in the medieval temples the faithful find themselves situated between two crosses, one lower and earthly on which they walk --the image of their daily Calvary --the other, higher and celestial, towards which they aspire, but which only their eyes allow them to reach. (28) Edouard Fournier, in his *Enigmas des rues de Paris* (Enigmas of the Streets of Paris), 1860, mentions "the Sabbath of the Rosicrucian Brothers" which took place in 1623 in the country solitude of Menilmontant. On a note he adds: "In a booklet of the time, *Effroyables pactations* (Awful pacts), etc., reproduced in vol. 9 of our *Varieties Historiques et Littéraires* (Historical and Literary Varieties), it is said that they gathered 'sometimes in the Montmartre quarries, sometimes along the springs of Belleville and there they set forth the lesson privately before making them public'". (29) The grade of Rose Cross is the eighth of the French Masonic rite and the eighteenth of the Scottish rite. (30) Cf. *Azoth ou Moyen de faire l'Or cache des Philosophes* (Azoth or the Means to Make the Philosophers' Hidden Gold); Paris, Pierre Molet, 1659. (31) An anagram for Genie of the sages ---in French ---Genie des sages. (32) See L.P.-Francois Cambriel: *Cours de Philosophie Hermetique ou d'Alchimie, en dixneuf lecons* (Course in Hermetic Philosophy or Alchemy, in 19 Lessons); Paris, Lacour et Maistrasse, 1843. (33) Translator's note: Livonia no longer exists today as a country; it was located between today's Estonia and Lithuania, and its capital was Riga. (34) *Un Mystere a la Bastille*, Etienne Vinache, medecin empirique et alchimique (A Mystery at the Bastille: Etienne Vinache, Empirical and Alchemical Doctor), by Dr Roger Goulard, of Brie-Comte-Robert; *Bulletin de la Societe d'Histoire de la Medicine* (Bulletin of the French Society of the History of Medicine), vol 14, no. 11 and 12. (35) *Le Texte d'Alchymie et le Songe Verd* (Book of Alchemy and the Green Dream); Paris, Laurent d'Houry, 1695. Preface, et seq. (36) In the 19th century, two Rosicrucian Orders were created and quickly fell into oblivion: (1) The Kabbalistic Order of the Rose Cross, founded by Stanislaus de Guaita; (2) The Order of the Rose Cross of the Temple and the Grail, founded in Toulous around 1850 by the Viscount of Lapasse, spagyric physician, student of Prince Balbiani of Palermo, supposedly a disciple of Cagliostro. Josephin Peladan, who gave himself the title of Sar, was one of the aesthetic animators. This idealistic movement, lacking enlightened initiatic direction and a solid philosophical basis, could only have a limited duration. The Rosicrucian Salon opened its doors from 1892 to 1897 and then ceased to exist.

Let's resume our study of the strange motif fancied by Louis d'Estissac for the hermetic decoration of his fireplace.

On the right panel, opposite the one we have just analyzed, we notice the previously identified old man's mask, holding in his jaw two plant stems with leaves, each bearing a flower bud about to open. These stems set a kind of open almond, inside which we can catch sight of a vase decorated with scales and containing flower buds, fruit, and ears of corn. Here is the hieroglyphic expression of vegetation, nutrition, and the growth of the newborn body previously discussed. The corn alone, purposely placed next to the flowers and fruit, is a very revealing symbol. Its Greek name [\*213-1] (zea) derives from the Greek [\*213-2] (zao), meaning to live, subsist, exist. The scaly vase represents the primitive substance which nature offers to the artists, extracted from the mine and with which he begins his labor. From it he extracts the diverse elements which he needs; with and through it his entire labor is accomplished. Philosophers have described it in the image of the black dragon covered with scales, which the Chinese call Loung, whose analogy with the hermetic monster is perfect. Like the monster it is a kind of winged serpent with a homed head, emitting fire and flame through its nostrils, with a black and scaly body borne on four stocky legs, each armed with five claws. The gigantic dragon on Scythian banners was called Apophis. The Greek word [\*213-3] (apophysis), which means excrescence, offspring, has for its root [\*213-4] (apophuo) with the meaning to put forth, grow, produce, be born from. The vegetative power, indicated by the fructifications of the symbolic vase is therefore expressly confirmed in the mythical dragon which divides into common mercury or solvent. Later the primitive mercury, joined to some fixed body, renders it volatile, living, vegetative, and fructifying. It then changes its name by changing its qualities and becomes the mercury of the sages, the humid metallic radical, the celestial salt or the salt in bloom. "In mercurio est quicquid quaerunt Sapientes" ---all that the sages are looking for is within mercury, our ancient authors vied with each other in repeating. One could not better express on stone the nature and the function of the vase which so many artists know without being aware of what it can produce. Without it, without this mercury, drawn from our Magnesia, Philalethes affirms, lighting the lamp or the furnace of the philosophers is useless. We will not say any more here because we will have the opportunity to resume to topic and develop later on the major Arcanum of the great art.

#### **LOUIS D'ESTISSAC IV**

In front of the central panel, the observer cannot refrain from giving an involuntary start of surprise due to its extremely unusual decoration (Plate XVI).

Two human monsters hold a crown formed of leaves and fruit which circumscribes a simple French shield. One of the monsters shows the horrible face of a harelip on a hairless and breasted torso. The other has the bright face of a mischievous and unruly boy, but with the hairy chest of anthropoids. If the arms and hands present no other peculiarity than their excessive emaciation, by contrast, the lower limbs, covered with thick long hairs, end, in one monster, with feline claws and in the other with raptor claws. These nightmarish beings endowed with long curved tails are covered with incredible helmets, one scaly, the other striped, whose tops coil in the manner of an ammonite fossil. Between these stephanophores of repulsive appearance and placed above them in the composition axis, a grimacing human mask with round eyes and fuzzy hair burdening the already low forehead, holds in his bestial open jaw the central shield with a light cord. Finally, a bucranium occupying the lower part of the panel completes this apocalyptic, four part composition on a macabre note.

As for the shield, the bizarre figures it bears, seems to be taken from some old magician's book. Upon first examination one could believe that they were borrowed from the somber Clavicles of Solomon, images traced with fresh blood on virgin parchment, which indicate in their frightening zigzags the ritual movements that the forked wand must perform under the sorcerer's fingers.

Such are the symbolic elements offered to the sagacity of the student and skillfully disguised in the decorative harmony of this strange subject. We shall attempt to explain them as clearly as possible, even if it entails asking the philosophical language for help or resorting to the language of the gods, when we deem, without overstepping the mark, that we cannot push our teaching any further.

The two gnomes (1) facing each other translate ---the reader will have guessed ---our two metallic principles, first bodies or natures with whose help the Work is started, perfected and completed. They are the sulphurous and mercurial genies appointed to guard the subterranean treasures, nocturnal artisans of the hermetic work familiar to the sage whom they serve, honor, and enrich with their unceasing labor. They are the possessors of earthly secrets and revealers of mineral mysteries. The gnome, fictitious creature, deformed but active, is the esoteric expression of metallic life, of the occult dynamism of raw bodies which the art can condense into a pure substance. The rabbinical tradition reports in the Talmud that a gnome cooperated with the building of the Temple of Solomon, which means that the philosophers' stone must have played some part in it. But nearer to us, don't our gothic cathedrals, according to George Stahl, owe the inimitable coloration of their stained glass windows to it? "Our stone", writes an anonymous author (2), "has two other very surprising virtues; the first on glass to which it gives internally all sorts of colors, such as in the windows of Sainte- Chapelle in Paris, and those of the



churches of Saint-Gatien and Saint-Martin in the city of Tours".

Thus the obscure, latent, and potential life of the two primitive mineral substances is developed through the contact, the fight, and the union of their opposite natures, one igneous, the other aqueous. Those are our elements, and there are no others. When philosophers speak of three principles by describing and purposely singling them out, they use a subtle artifice meant to throw the neophyte into the most cruel uneasiness. We therefore certify with the best authors that two bodies are sufficient to accomplish the magistry from beginning to end. "It is impossible to acquire the possession of our mercury", says the Ancient War of the Knights, "in any other way than by means of two bodies one of which cannot receive the perfection it requires, without the other". If we must admit a third, we shall find it in the one which results from their combination and born from their mutual destruction. For no matter how much you look and multiply the experiments, you will never find any other parents of the stone besides the above mentioned two bodies, called principles from which comes the third one, heir of the qualities and the mixed virtues of its parents. This important point is well worth being stated precisely. These two principles, hostile because opposite, are so expressive on Louis d'Estissac's fireplace that even the beginner can recognize them without difficulty. We recognize here, humanized, the hermetic dragons described by Nicolas Flamel, one winged --the hare-lipped monster ---the other wingless ---the gnome with the hairy torso. "Contemplate these two dragons carefully", says the Adept (3), "for they are the true principles of philosophy which the Sages have not dared to show their own children. The wingless one below is the fixed or the male and the one above is the volatile or the female, black and obscure (4), which will dominate for several months. The first is called sulphur or heat and dryness. And the last is called quicksilver or coldness and humidity. They are the sun and the moon, of mercurial source and sulphurous origin which, by means of continual fire, beautify themselves with royal ornaments so as to vanquish, once they are united, and change any metallic thing ---solid, hard, and strong ---into quintessence. They are the serpents and dragons that ancient Egyptians painted as a circle, head biting the tail, to express that they came from one and the same thing, which alone was enough, and that it perfected itself in its contour and circulation. They are the dragons that the ancient poets charged with guarding without sleeping the golden apples of the gardens of the Hesperide virgins. They are the same ones on which Jason, during his adventure of the Golden Fleece, poured the juice prepared by the beautiful Medea and whose discourse so filled the books of the philosophers, that no philosopher ever existed who did not write about them, from the true Hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Artepheus, Morienus and others up to myself. They are the two serpents sent and given by Juno who is the metallic nature, which the strong Hercules, that is to say the Sage, must strangle in his crib, that is to say vanquish and kill them so as to make them rot, corrupt, and engender at the beginning of his Work. They are the two snakes attached around the Caduceus and the stick of Mercury with which he wields his great power and transfigures himself as he wishes. He, says Haly, who kills one of them will also kill the other because one cannot die but with his brother. These two (which Avicenna calls Bitch of Khorassan and Dog of Armenia), being then united in the vessel of the sepulcher, bite each other cruelly and through their great venom and furious rage never leave each other from the moment they have grabbed each other. They are the two sperms, masculine and feminine, described at the beginning of my Philosophical Rosary which are engendered (says Rasis, Avicenna, and Abraham the Jew) in the kidneys, entrails, and from the operations of the four elements. They are the humidity of metals, Sulphur, and Quicksilver, not the common ones which are sold by merchants and apothecaries, but those which give us so many beautiful and dear bodies which we love so much. These two sperms, said Democritus, cannot be found on the earth of the living".

Snakes or dragons, the hieroglyphic forms mentioned by the old masters as figurative of the materials ready to be used in the work, present on the artwork of Fontenay-le-Comte some very remarkable peculiarities due to the author's cabalistic genius and his very expensive knowledge. That which esoterically signifies these anthropomorphic beings is not only their griffin feet and their hairy appendages, but also and above all their helmets. The headgear which ends in a horn of Ammon and is called in Greek [\*220-1] (cranos, because it covers the head and protects the skull ([\*220-2] ---cranium), allows us to identify them. The Greek word used to indicate used to indicate the head (cranium), already brings a useful indication since it also marks the location of Calvary, the Golgotha where Jesus, Redeemer of men, had to suffer his Passion in his flesh before transfiguring himself into spirit. And our two principles one of which bears the cross and the other the lance which will pierce his flank (5) are an image, a reflection of the Passion of Christ. Just like him, if they must resuscitate into a new clear, glorious, and spiritualized body, they must together climb their Calvary, suffer martyrdom, endure the torments of fire, and die of a slow agony at the end of a long hard fight ([\*221-1] -- agonia).

It is known, on the other hand, that the puffers called their alembic, homo galeatus ---man covered with a helmet ---because it was composed of a cucurbit, that is, an inflated part covered with a helmet. Our two helmeted geniuses cannot represent anything other than the alembic of the sages, or the two assembled bodies, the container and the contained, the matter itself and its proper vessel. For if the reactions must be provoked by one (thee agent), they can only happen by breaking the balance of the other (the patient) which is used as a receptacle and a vase for the opposite energy of the adverse nature.

In the present motif the agent is indicated by its grooved, striped helmet. Indeed the Greek [\*221-1] (rabdodes), grooved,

striped, has for a root word, [\*221-2] (rabdos), little stick, scepter, caduceus, lance, dart, javelin, needle. The different meanings characterize most of the attributes of the active, masculine, and fixed matter. It is first of all the stick that Mercury throws between the grass snake and the serpent (Rhea and Jupiter), around which they curl crating the Caduceus, emblem of peace and reconciliation. All hermetic authors speak of a terrible fight between two dragons and Mythology teaches us that such was the origin of the attribute of Hermes who provoked their agreement by putting his stick between them. It is the sign of union and of concord which one must be capable of realizing between fire and water. And fire being represented by a triangle hieroglyph Delta and water by the same, but inverted triangle, the two superimposed signs form the image of the star sure mark of union, pacification and procreation, because the star (stella) means fixation of the sun (6). And as a matter of fact the sign can only be seen after the fight when everything has become calm and when the first effervescences have stopped. The Seal of Solomon, geometric figure, resulting from the assembly of the triangles of fire and water confirm the union of the sky and earth. It is the messianic star announcing the birth of the King of Kings; moreover the Greek [\*221-3] (kerukeion), caduceus, derived from [\*221-4] (kerukeuo), to publish, to announce reveals that the distinctive emblem of Mercury is the sign of the good news. Among North American natives the peace pipe, the calumet which they use in their civil and religious ceremonies is a symbol similar to the caduceus by its form as well as by its meaning. "It is", says Noel (7), "a large smoking pipe of red, black, or white marble. It does resemble a mace; its head is very well polished and the stem two and a half feet long is a rather long cane, ornamented with feathers of all kinds of colors with several braids of women's hair interlaced in various fashions. To it are attached two wings which makes it resemble the caduceus of Mercury or the stick that peace ambassadors once upon a time carried. This cane is implanted in the necks of ospreys, birds with white and black spots as big as our geese. This peace pipe is greatly venerated among the savages who respect it as a precious gift that the Sun makes to man. And so, it is a symbol of peace, the seal of all undertaking of important affairs and of public ceremonies". Hermes' stick is truly the scepter of the sovereign of our art, hermetic gold --vile, abject, despised, more sought after by the philosopher than natural gold; the stick that the high priest Aaron changed into a serpent and the one which Moses (Ex. 17:5-6) ---imitated in this by Jesus (8) ---smites the rock, in other words the passive matter, and pure water, hidden in its midst, springs forth; it is the ancient dragon of Basil Valentine whose tongue and tail end with a sting, which brings us back to the symbolic serpent, serpens aut draco qui caudam devoravit (9) .

As for the second body ---passive and feminine ---Louis d'Estissac had it represented under the shape of a harelipped gnome, equipped with breasts, head covered with a scaly helmet. We already knew from the descriptions left by classical authors that this mineral substance as it is extracted from its mine is scaly, black, hard, and dry. Some have called it leprous. The Greek [\*222-1] (lepis, lepidos), scale, has among its derivatives the Greek [\*222-2] (lepra), leprosy because this frightful infection covers the epiderm with pustules and scales. And so it is essential to drive away the coarse and superficial impurity from the body by removing its scaly envelope ([\*222-3] ---lepizo), an operation which we easily realize with the aid of the active principle, the agent with the grooved helmet. Taking as an example Moses' gesture it will suffice to sharply strike this rock ([\*223-1] ---lepas) of arid and dry appearance three times in order to see the mysterious water that it contains, spring forth. It is the first solvent, common mercury of the sages, faithful servant of the artist, the only thing he needs and that nothing can replace according to the testimony of Geber and of the most ancient Adepts. Its volatile quality which allowed philosophers to assimilate this mercury to the common hydrargyrum, is moreover emphasized on our bas-relief by the tiny lepidoptera wings (Greek [\*223-2], [\*223-3] ---lepidos-pteron) affixed to the shoulders of the symbolic monster. However, in our opinion, the best name that authors have given to their mercury seems to be Spirit of magnesia. For they call magnesia (Greek [\*223-4] ---magnes, magnet) the coarse feminine matter which attracts by an occult virtue the spirit enclosed beneath the hard shell of the steel of the sages. The latter, penetrating like a burning flame into the body of the passive nature, burns, consumes its heterogeneous parts, drives away the arsenical (leprous) sulphur, and animates the pure mercury it contains and which appears in the conventional form of a liquor both humid and igneous ---the fire water of the Ancients ---which we call Spirit of Magnesia and universal solvent.

"Just as steel pulls the magnet to itself", writes Philalethes (10), "so the magnet turns toward the steel. This is what the magnet of the sages does to their steel. This is why, having already mentioned that our steel is the matrix of gold, we must equally point out that our magnet is the true matrix of the steel of the sages".

Finally ---detail useless to the work, that we nevertheless indicate because it comes to prove our examination ---a word close to [223-2] lepis, the word [\*223-3], leporis, once indicated the hare in the Eolian dialect (Latin ---lepus, leporis), hence this facial deformity, at first inexplicable yet necessary for the cabalistic expression which stamps the face of our gnome with its typical physiognomy. Arrived at this point, we must stop for a moment and wonder; the path, bushy and covered with brambles and thorns, becomes impassable. Instinctively we guess a gaping precipice, barely a few steps away. Cruel uncertainty. To continue to advance, holding the disciple's hand, would be an act of wisdom? In truth Pandora accompanies us, but alas! What can we expect from her? The fatal box imprudently opened is empty now. Nothing is left to us except hope!

At this point, the authors who already are rather enigmatic about the preparation of the solvent, remain obstinately silent. Shrouding the process of the second operation in secrecy, they move directly into descriptions of the third one, namely the phrases and regimens of coction. Then resuming the terminology used for the first one, they let the beginner believe that the common mercury is the same as Rebis or compost and as such must be evenly cooked in a sealed container. Philalethes, although writing under the same discipline, pretends to fill the void left by his predecessors. Upon reading his *Introitus*, we do not perceive any cuts, only false manipulation make up for the lack of true ones. They fill the gaps in such a manner that the ones and the others are connected and knit without leaving any trace of artifice. Such a flexibility makes it impossible for the layman to separate the wheat from the chaff, the bad from the good, the error from the truth. It is but necessary for us to assert how much we disapprove of similar abuses which are, in spite of the rules, nothing better than disguised mystification. The cabala and symbolism offer enough resources to express what must be understood by only a few. Moreover we feel that silence is preferable to the most skillfully presented lie.

You might be surprised that we bear such a harsh judgment on a part of this famous Adept's work but others before us have not been afraid to address to him the same criticism. Tollius, Naxagoras, Limojon de Saint-Didier especially, unmasked the insidious and perfidious formula and we are in complete agreement with them. Because the mystery veiling our second operation is the greatest of all; it alludes to the elaboration of the philosophical mercury which has never been taught openly. Some resorted to allegory, enigmas, and parables, but most of the masters abstained from discussing this difficult question. "Truly", writes Limojon de Saint-Didier (11), "some philosophers seemingly quite sincere, nevertheless throw the artists into error solemnly asserting that who does not know the gold of the philosophers will however be able to find it in common gold cooked with the Mercury of the Philosophers. Those are Philalethes' sentiments. He affirms that Trevisan, Zachaire, and Flamel have followed this path. He also adds that this is not the true path of the Sages although it leads to the same end. But these affirmations, sincere as they appear, nevertheless cannot but mislead artists who, eager to follow the same Philalethes through the purification and the animation that he teaches of common mercury so as to turn it into the Mercury of the Philosophers (a glaring error behind which he has hidden the secret of the mercury of the Sages) and undertake, taking his word for it, a very arduous and definitely impossible work. Thus, after a time-consuming work filled with difficulties and dangers, they obtain a mercury only slightly more impure than before they started, instead of a mercury animated with the celestial quintessence. A deplorable error that has lost, broken, and wills till ruin a great number of artists". Yet the seekers who successfully overcome the first obstacles and have drawn the living water from the ancient Fountain possess a key enabling them to open the doors of the hermetic laboratory (12). If they err, and get bored, if they multiply their attempts without discovering the successful goal, it probably results from the fact that they have not acquired an adequate knowledge of the doctrine. They should not despair however. Mediation, study, and above all a strong unshakeable faith will finally bring Heaven's blessing upon their work. "For truly I say to you", says Jesus (Matt. 17:19), "if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Move from here to there, and it shall move; nothing shall be impossible to you". For faith, spiritual certainty of truth not yet demonstrated, prescience of what is feasible, is the torch that God has placed into the human soul to enlighten, to guide, to instruct, and to elevate it. Our senses sometimes lead us astray; faith never misleads us. "Faith only", writes an anonymous philosopher (13), "formulates a positive will; doubt makes it neutral, and skepticism negative. Believing before knowing is cruel for scientists, but what do you expect? Nature can't change her ways, not even for them and she claims to impose faith upon us. As for myself, I admit that I have always found her generous enough to overlook this whim of hers".

May the researchers, before incurring further expenses, learn that which differentiates the first mercury from the philosophical mercury. Once one knows exactly what one is looking for, it becomes easier to orient one's steps. May they know that their solvent or common mercury is the result of Nature's work while the mercury of the sages remains a product of art. When manufacturing the later, the artist, applying natural laws, knows what he wants to obtain. The same does not hold true for common mercury, as God forbids men to penetrate its mystery. No philosopher knows, and many admit it, in what manner the initial matters, while in contact with one another, react, interpenetrate, and finally unite under the veil of darkness which envelops, from beginning to end, the intimate exchanges of this peculiar procreation. This explains why the writers proved so cautious about the topic of philosophical mercury, whose successive phases the operator can follow, understand, and direct at his will. If the technique requires a certain amount of time and demands some labor, it is on the other hand extremely simple. Any layman who knows to feed a fire, will perform it as well as an expert alchemist. It neither requires any special trick nor professional skill but only the knowledge of an unusual artifice, which is the secret of secrets that has not been revealed and probably never will be. About this operation, whose success ensures the possession of the philosophical Rebis, Jacques le Tesson (13), quoting Damascene, writes that the Adept at the time of undertaking the work, "looked around the entire room to see if there were not some flies therein, meaning thereby that it could not ever be kept in too much secrecy for the danger that might result".

Before going further let us say of this unknown artifice ---which from the chemical viewpoint should be called preposterous,

absurd, or paradoxical because its inexplicable action defies all scientific rules ---that it marks the intersection where alchemical science strays from chemical science. Applied to other bodies, it provides, in the same conditions, just so many unpredicted results and so many substances endowed with surprising qualities. This unique and powerful means thus allows a development of an unsuspected scope by the multiple, new, simple elements and compounds derived from the same elements, but whose genesis remains an enigma for the chemical rationale. This evidently should not be taught. If we have entered this reserved domain of hermetics, if, bolder than our predecessors, we have mentioned it, it is because we wanted to show: (1) that alchemy is a true science likely, just like chemistry, to develop and progress, and not be the empirical acquisition of a manufacturing secret of precious metals; (2) that alchemy and chemistry are two positive, exact, and real sciences, although different from each other as much in practice as in theory; (3) that, for these very reasons, chemistry could not claim an alchemical origin; (4) finally, that in the innumerable, more or less marvelous properties attributed in the lump by philosophers to the sole philosophers' stone all belong to the unknown substances obtained from chemical materials and bodies but treated according to the secret technique of our magistracy. It is not for us to teach what is the artifice used for the production of the philosophical mercury. To our great regret and in spite of all the solicitude we feel for the Sons of Science, we must imitate the example of the sages who deemed it wise to hold the remarkable word. We will be content to say that the second mercury or next matter of the Work is the result of the reactions of two bodies ---one fixed, the other volatile. The first, veiled under the epithet of philosophical gold is by no means common gold; the second is our living water already described under the name of common mercury. Through the dissolution of the metallic body with the help of the living water the artist enters into possession of the humid radical of metals, their seed, permanent water or salt of wisdom, essential principle, quintessence of the dissolved metal. This solution, performed according to the rules of the art, with all the required dispositions and conditions, is quite removed from analogous chemical operations. It is not a bit like it. Apart from the length of time and the knowledge of the appropriate means it demands many difficult repetitions. It is a fastidious work. Philalethes (15) himself claims it when he says: "We who have worked and who know the operation certainly know that there is no more boring work than the one for our first preparation" (16). For that reason Morienus warns King Calid that many Sages often complained about the boredom that this particular Work caused them. This caused the famous author of the Secret Hermetique to say that the work required for the first operation was a work of Hercules. We should follow here the excellent advice of the Triomphe Hermetique and "not be afraid to often drench the earth with its own water and to dry it up as many times". Through repeated lixivations or Flamel's laveures or fire purifications, through frequent and renewed immersions, one progressively extracts the viscous, oily, and pure humidity of the metal, "in which, affirms Limojon de Saint-Didier, lies the energy and the greatest efficacy of the philosophical mercury". The living water "more celestial than terrestrial", acting on the heavy matter breaks its cohesion, mollifies it, renders it progressively soluble, attached itself only to the pure parts of the disintegrated mass, abandons the other to the pure parts of the disintegrated mass, abandons the others and rises to the surface, dragging along what it could grasp that conformed to its own fiery and spiritual nature. This important characteristic of the ascension of the subtle by the separation of the coarse gained the operation of mercury of the sages the name of sublimation (17). Our solvent, all spirit, plays the symbolic role of the eagle taking away its prey and this is the reason why Philalethes, the Cosmopolite, Cyliani, d'Espagnet, and several others advise to let it fly away, emphasizing the need to make it fly. For the spirit rises and the matter precipitates. What is cream if not the best part of milk? Now Basil Valentine teaches that, "If the philosophers' stone is made in the same manner that villagers make butter", by churning or shaking the cream which represents, in this similarity, our philosophical mercury. Therefore all the awareness of the artist must be focused on the extraction of the mercury which is collected on the surface of the dissolved compound by creaming the viscous and metallic unctuousness as it is being produced. This is moreover what the two characters of the Mutus Liber (18) represent, where the woman can be seen skimming with a spoon the foam from the liquid contained in an earthen pot that her husband is holding within her reach. "Such is", writes Philalethes, "the nature of our operation and such is our entire philosophy". Hermes, indicating the basic and fixed matter by the solar hieroglyph and its solvent by the lunar symbol, explains it in few words: "The sun", he says, "is its father and the moon its mother". We also understand the secret meaning contained in the words from the same author: "The wind bore it in its belly". Wind or air are names pertaining to living water which, in the fire, its volatility causes to vanish without any residues. Since this water ---our hermetic moon ---penetrates the fixed nature of the philosophical sun, which it holds back, assembling its most noble particles, the philosopher is right to affirm that the wind is the matrix of our mercury, quintessence of the gold of the sages and pure mineral seed: "He who has mollified the dry Sun", said Henckel (19), "by means of the wet moon to the extent that one has become similar to the other and that they remain united, has found the holy water which flows in the Garden of the Hesperides".

Thus is accomplished the first part of the axiom: solve et coagula, by the constant volatilization of the fixed and by its combination with the volatile; the body spiritualized itself and the metallic soul, leaving behind its stained garment, takes on another, even more precious, to which the ancient masters gave the name of philosophical mercury. It is the water of the two champions of Basil Valentine, whose manufacture is taught by the engraving of his second key. One of these bears an eagle on his sword (the fixed body); the other hides a caduceus (the solvent) behind its back. The lower part of the drawing

is entirely taken up by two great spread wings, while in the center standing between the two combatants, appears the god Mercury as a totally naked, crowned adolescent holding a caduceus in each hand. The symbolism of this figure is easily penetrated. The large wings, which serve as boarded floor for the fencers, indicate the goal of the operation, namely the volatilization of the pure parts of the fixed element. The eagle indicates how to proceed, and the caduceus points out the one who must attack the adversary, our dissolving mercury. As for the mythological youth, his nakedness translates the complete stripping of the impure part, and the crown, the sign of his nobility. Finally he symbolizes with his two caducei, the mercury duplex, epithet that some Adepts have substituted to that of philosophical mercury or common mercury, our living and dissolving water (20). It is the mercury duplex that is represented on the fireplace of Terre-Neuve, by the symbolic human head which holds between its teeth the small cord of the emblem-filled shield. The animal expression of the fiery-eyed mask, its energetic physiognomy devoured with appetites render us responsive to the vital power, the generating activity, all the power of production our mercury has received from the mutual collaboration of nature and art. We have seen that it is collected on the surface of the water of which it occupies the highest area; this drove Louis d'Estissac to have its image positioned at the top of the decorative panel. As for the bucrane sculpted in the same axis but at the bottom of the composition, it indicates the foul and coarse caput mortuum, the impure, inert, and sterile cursed earth of the body, that the action of the solvent separates, rejects, precipitates as a useless and valueless residue.

Philosophers have translated the union of the fixed and the volatile, of the body and the spirit as the image of the serpent which devours its tail, The Uroboros of the Greek alchemists ([\*230-1], oura, tail, and [\*230-2], boros, devouring), reduced to its simplest expression, thus takes on the circular form, symbolic drawing of the infinite, eternity as well as perfection. It is the central circle of mercury of the graphic notation, and we notice the same on the bas-relief we are studying, but ornamented with leaves and fruit to signify vegetative abilities and productive power. Furthermore, the sign is complete in spite of the care our Adept took to disguise it. If we examine it carefully, we will indeed see that the crown bears on its upper curve two spirated growths and on the lower curve, the cross figured by the horns and the frontal axis of the bucrane, complements of the circle in the astronomical sign of the planet Mercury.

All that is left for us to do is to dissect the central shield that we saw ---as we have noticed --being carried by the human head (therefore under its domination), image of the philosophical mercury towering above the various motifs of the panel. This relationship between the mask and shield fairly demonstrates the essential role played by the hermetic matter in the cabalistic presentation of these singular coats of arms. The mysterious graphic signs express the entire philosophical labor in a nutshell, using, rather than old forms borrowed from flora or fauna, graphic notation figures. This paradigm constitutes thus an authentic alchemical formula. Let us first call attention to three stars, characteristic feature of the three stages of the Work, or preferably of the three successive states of the same substance. The first of these asterisks, isolated in the lower third of the shield, indicates our first mercury or the living water, whose composition has been taught to us by the two stephanophore gnomes. By dissolving philosophical gold which nothing indicates here or elsewhere (21), we obtain philosophical mercury composed of the fixed and volatile, not yet radically united, but able to coagulate. The second mercury is expressed by the two interlaced Cs of the point, an acknowledged alchemical symbol for the alembic. Our mercury is, we know it, the alembic of the sages, whose inflated round bottom and helmet represent the two spiritualized and assembled elements. Only with philosophical mercury do the sages undertake this long labor made up of numerous operations (22), which they called coction or maturation. Our compound, subjected to the slow and continuous action of heat, distills, condenses, arise, goes down, swells, impastes, contracts, diminishes in volume, and acting principle of its own cohabitations, progressively acquires a solid consistency. Thus raised by one gradation, this mercury, having become fixed by familiarization with fire, again needs to be dissolved by the first water, hidden here under the sign I, followed by the letter M, namely Spirit of Magnesia, another name for solvent. In alchemical notation, any cross bar, whatever its direction, is the conventional graphic signature for the spirit, a fact worth remembering, should one desire to uncover what body is hidden under the epithet of philosophical gold, father of mercury, and sun of the Work (23). The capital letter M serves to identify our magnesia of which it is in fact the first letter. This second liquefaction of the coagulated body is intended to increase it, and to fortify it by feeding it with the mercurial milk to which it owes being, life, and vegetative power. It becomes volatile a second time, but regains, in contact with the heat, the dry and hard consistency which it had previously acquired. We finally arrive at the top of the ascender of the strange graphic, whose shape reminds us of the number 4, but which in reality figures the path, the way which we must follow, Having reached this point, a third solution, similar to the first two, brings us, still on the straight path, from the regimen to the linear way of fire, to the second star, seal of the perfect and coagulated matter which it is sufficient to cook, continuing up to the required gradations without ever straying from this linear path which is completed by the cross bar of spirit, fire or incombustible sulphur. Such is the passionately desired sign of the stone or medicine of the first order. As for the blooming branch of a star, as an outwork, it demonstrates that by repeating the same technique the stone can be multiplied in quantity and quality owing to the exceptional fecundity it has received from nature and art. As its exuberant fertility comes from the primitive and celestial water which gives metallic sulphur activity and movement in exchange for its coagulating virtue, it becomes clear that the stone only differs from

philosophical mercury in perfection rather than in substance. The sages are therefore right to teach that "the stone of the philosophers, or our mercury, and the philosophers' stone are one and the same thing, of one and the same kind", although one is more mature and more excellent than the other. Relative to this mercury, which is also the salt of the sages and the corner stone of the Work, we quote an excerpt from Khunrath (24), quite clear in spite of its very pompous style and the abuse of parenthetical sentences. "The Stone of the Philosophers", says our author, is Ruach Elohim (which rested -- incubabat ---on the waters [Gen. I], conceived by the mediation of heaven, (God alone, through his pure goodness, thus wanted it), made true boy and falling under the influence of senses, in the virginal uterus of the major primogenerated world, of the created chaos, that is, the earth, empty and inane, and water; it is the son born in the light of the Macrocosm, of vile appearance (in the eyes of the ignorant), deformed and almost insignificant; however consubstantial with, and similar to, its author (parens) little World (do not fancy that we actually mean man or anything from or by him) catholic, three in one, hermaphrodite, visible, sensible to the touch, hearing, olfaction, taste, local and finite, self-generatingly self manifested, and by means of the obstetrical hands of the art of physico-chemistry, glorified in its body the moment it ascends; it can be used to almost infinite conveniences or usages and is marvelously salutary to the microcosm and the macrocosm in the catholic trinity. O thou, Son of Perdition, assuredly leave the quicksilver ([\*232-2]---ydragyon) and all things with it, whatever they may be, which have been prepared by thee as if elixirs. Thou art the type of the sinner, not of the Saviour. Thou can and must be delivered, and thou cannot deliver. Thou art the figure of the mediator who leads into error, ruin and death and not that of he who is good and rules truth, growth and life. He has ruled, rules and shall naturally and universally rule over all natural things. He is the catholic son of nature, the salt (know it) of saturn, fusible according to its peculiar constitution, permanent everywhere and always in nature by itself; and universal by its origin and virtue. Listen and be attentive: this salt is the very ancient stone. It is a mystery! Whose kernel (nucleus) is in the decimal. Like the child Horus, remain silent! May whoever understands understand. I have spoken. The Salt of Wisdom, not without serious cause, has been adorned by the Wise Man with many nicknames; they have said nothing was more useful in this world, besides it and the sun. Study this!.

Before going further, we will take the liberty to pass a remark of some importance to our brothers and to men of good will. For it is our intention to provide here the complement to that which we have taught in a former book (25).

The most vested about traditional cabala, among ourselves, have probably been struck by the relation existing between the way, the path drawn by the hieroglyph which borrows the shape of the number 4, and the mineral antimony or stibium, clearly signified by this topographic word. The Greeks called native antimony oxysulphide: [\*233-1] (stimmi), or [\*233-2] (stibia) means the path, the way which the investigator ([\*233-3] ---stibeus) or pilgrim travels on during his voyage; it is the path he tramples underfoot ([\*233-4] ---steibo). These considerations, based upon an exact correspondence of words have not escaped the old masters or modern philosophers, who, backing them up with their authority, have contributed to this spread of unfortunate error, that common antimony was the mysterious subject of the art. Unfortunate misunderstanding, invincible obstacle against which hundreds of seekers have run. From Artepheus, who begins his treatise (26) with these words: "Antimony comes from parts of Saturn", all the way to Philalethes, who entitles one of his works: Experiments on the Preparation of Philosophical Mercury through the Stellated and Silvery Martial Regulus of Antimony, not forgetting Basil Valentine's work: The Triumphal Chariot of Antimony, and Batsdorff's assertion dangerous because of his hypocritical positivism: the number of those who have let themselves be caught in this crude trap is simply prodigious. The Middle Ages saw puffers and alchemists volatilize, without any results, tons of mercury amalgamated with stibiated gold. In the 18th century the learned chemist Jean-Frederick Henckel (27) admits in this Treatise of Appropriation that, for a long time, he devoted himself to these costly and useless experiments. "Regulus of antimony", he says, "is regarded as a means to unite mercury to metals; here is the reason why, the regulus is no longer mercury and it is not yet a perfect metal; it has ceased to be one and has begun to become the other. However, I could not pass over the fact in silence that I uselessly worked, quite hard, to unite gold and mercury more intimately by means of regulus of antimony". And who knows if some good artists are still today following the deplorable example of the medieval spagyrist? Alas! Each one has his idiosyncrasy, each one is attached to his idea and whatever we may say will not prevail against such a tenacious prejudice. All the same, our duty being above all to help those who do not indulge in idle dreams and fantasy, we will write for those only without worrying about the others. Let us then recall that another similarity of words would allow us to infer that the philosophers' stone could come from antimony. It is known that alchemists of the 14th century called their universal medicine Kohl or Kohol, from the Arabic words al cohol, meaning subtle powder, words which later took on in our language the meaning of spirits (of alcohol). It is said that in Arabic Kohl is the pulverized antimony oxysulfide with which Muslim women used to dye their eyebrows black. Greek women used the same product which was called: [\*234-1] (platnophthalmou), large eye, because by using this artifice their eyes appear larger (Greek root [\*234-2] ---platus, large, and [\*234-3] ---ophthalmos, eye). Here are, one might think, suggestive relationships. We could certainly agree if we did not know that not the slightest molecule of stibnite is a part of the platyophthalmon of the Greeks (sublimed mercury sulfide), the Kohl of the Arabs and the Cohol or Cohel of the Turks. The last two, as a matter of fact, were obtained by the calcinations of a mixture of granulated tin and

gall nuts. Such is the chemical composition of the Kohl of oriental women, used by the ancient alchemists as a term of comparison to teach the secret preparation of their antimony. It is the solar eye Egyptians called oudja, which also figure among the Masonic emblems, surrounded by a halo, in the center of a triangle (28). This symbol offers the same meaning as the letter G, seventh of the alphabet, initial of the common name of the Subject of the sages, represented in the middle of a radiating star [N.B. ---gold, gur, galena, graphite, gabbro, granite, gypsum, gneiss, gamet]. This matter is Artephius' Saturnine Antimony, Tollius' regulus of antimony, and the true and only stibium of Michael Maier and all the Adepts. As for mineral stibnite, it possesses none of the required qualities, and whatever the manner in which we want to treat it, neither the secret solvent nor the philosophical mercury will ever be obtained from it. If Basil Valentine gives philosophical mercury the nickname of pilgrim or traveler ([\*235-1] ---stibeus) (29), because it must, says he, go through six celestial cities before fixing its residence in the seventh; if Philalethes affirms it is our only path ([\*235-2] --stibia), this is not sufficient to invoke that these masters claimed to designate common antimony as the regenerator of philosophical mercury. This substance is too far from perfection, from purity, and the acquired spirituality of the humid root or metallic seed -- which one could anyway not find on earth ---to be genuinely useful to us. The antimony of the sages, raw matter directly extracted from the mine, "is not properly mineral, and even less metallic as Philalethes (30) teaches us; but without partaking of these two substances it is something between one and the other. It is not corporeal however, because it is entirely volatile; it is not spirit because it liquefies like metal in fire. It is therefore a chaos which stands in stead of mother to all metals". It is the metallic and mineral flower ([\*235-3] --anthemon), the first rose, black in truth, which has remained down here as a part of the elementary chaos. From it, from this flower of flowers (flos florum) we first draw our frost ([\*235-4] ---stibe) which is the spirit moving on the surface of the waters and the white ornament of the angels; reduced to this bright whiteness, it is the mirror of the art, the torch ([\*235-5] ---stilbe), the lamp or lantern (31), the brightness of stars and splendor of the sun (splendor solis); still, united to philosophical gold, it becomes the metallic planet Mercury ([\*235-6] ---stilbonaster), the nest of the bird ([\*235-7] ---stibas), our Phoenix and its small stone ([\*235-8] ---stia); finally it is the root, subject, or pivot (Latin, stipes, stirps) of the Great Work and not common antimony. Know then, brothers, so as to no longer err, that our term of antimony, derived from the Greek [\*235-9] ---antemon, designates through a pun familiar to philosophers, the ane-Timon (32), the guide which in the Bible leads the Jews to the Fountain. It is the mythical Aliboron, [\*236-1], horse of the sun. One more word. You probably know that in primitive language, Greek cabalists used to substitute numbers for certain consonants, for words whose common meaning they wanted to veil under a hermetic meaning. And so they used the epistimon ([\*236-2]---stagon)(33) , Koppa, sampi, digamma (34), to which they granted a conventional value. The names modified by this process formed genuine cryptograms, although their form and their pronunciation did not seem to have undergone any alteration. Furthermore, the word, antimony, [\*236-3], stimmi, when it was used to signify the hermetic subject, was always written with the episemon ([\*236-4], equivalent of the consonants sigma and tau together. Written in this manner [\*236-5] --simmi, it is no longer the stibnite of mineralogists, but indeed a matter signed by nature, or still better, a movement, a dynamism, or a vibration, a sealed life ([\*236-6] ---simenai) so as to allow a man to identify it, a very peculiar signature submitted to the rules of the number six. In addition, a close term frequently used in phonetic cabala for assonance, the word [\*236-7] ---epistemon indicates one who knows, one who is informed of, one who is skilled at. In Rabelais' book Pantagruel, one of the main characters, the man of science, is called Epistemon. He is the seret artisan, the spirit, the mind enclosed in raw substance as translated by the Greek epistemon, because the spirit can single-handedly perform and perfect the entire work without any other help apart from elementary fire.

It would be easy for us to complete what we have said about the philosophical mercury and its preparation, but it is not up to us to entirely unveil this important secret. The written teachings should never go beyond that which the proselytes received once upon a time in the lesser Mysteries of Agra. And if we willingly yield to the difficult task of the ancient Hydranos, on the other hand, the esoteric domain of the Great Eleusian Mysteries is absolutely forbidden to us. Because before they receive the supreme initiation, the Greek mystes swore on their life and in the presence of the Hierophant to never reveal anything of the truths which would be entrusted to them. We do not speak here to some trustworthy and tested disciples in the shadow of a closed sanctuary before the divine image of the venerable Ceres ---black stone imported from Pessinonte ---or o the sacred Isis, seated on the cubic block; we discourse at the threshold of a temple under the peristyle and in front of the crowd without exacting a preliminary oath from our listeners. Confronted with such adverse circumstances, how could one be surprised to see us demonstrate prudence and circumspection? True, we deplore the fact that the initiatory institutions of Antiquity have forever disappeared and that a narrow exotericism serves as a substitute for the open spirit of the Mysteries of yesteryears; for we believe, along with the philosopher (35), "that it is more worthy of human nature and more instructive to first admit the marvelous by trying to extract from it what is true than to first treat it as a lie or to canonize it as a miracle to avoid explaining it". These are useless regrets. Time, which destroys everything, has made a clean sweep of ancient civilization. What remains of them today besides the historical testimony of their greatness and power, memories buried in the depth of papyri or piously exhumed from arid lands, peopled with moving ruins? Alas! The last Mystagogues have taken their secret with them; and only to God, Father of Light and dispenser of all truths, can we

appeal for the grace of higher revelations.

We take the liberty to give advice to sincere investigators, to the sons of science, on whose behalf we are writing. Only divine illumination will bring them the solution of the obscure problem: where and how to obtain this mysterious gold, unknown body, capable of animating and fertilizing water, first element of metallic nature? The ideographic sculptures of Louis d'Estissac stand mute about this essential point; but our duty being oriented toward respecting the will of the Adepts, we shall limit our concern to report the obstacle by replacing it in the context of practical work.

Before we examine the upper motifs, we must still say a word about the central shield, filled with hieroglyphs, which we have just analyzed. The monograph quoted from the castle of Terre-Neuve which we think was written by the late Monsieur Rochebrune, holds a rather peculiar passage concerning these symbols. The author after a brief description of the fireplace adds: "It is one of the beautiful works of stone executed by the decorators of Louis d'Estissac. The shield placed under that of the Lord of this beautiful castle is decorated in its center with the monogram of the master image carver; it is surmounted with a four, symbolic number, almost always coupled with all monograms of artists, engravers, printers, or glass-painters, etc. We are looking for the key to this curious sign of the guilds". Here is in truth, a rather surprising thesis. It is possible that its author occasionally encountered an initial in the form of a four used to classify or identify certain works of art. As for us who have noticed it on many curious objects of clearly hermetic characteristic ---engravings, stained glass windows, enameled objects, goldsmith's works, etc. ---we cannot admit that this number might constitute a sign of the guilds. It does not belong to any of the coats of arms of the corporation because in this case they would have to show the tools and insignias specific to the given corporations. In the same way this blazon cannot be classified in the category of revealing arms or that of marks of nobility, since the latter do not obey the heraldic rules and since the former are deprived of image meaning, characteristic of visual riddles. On the other hand, we know pertinently that the artists entrusted by Louis d'Estissac with the decoration of his dwelling are totally forgotten; their names have not been preserved. Could this gap authorize the hypothesis of the personal mark of an artist while the same characters have a very precise meaning are often found in alchemical formulas? Further, how can we explain the indifference of the learned symbolist scientist, the Adept of Coulonges, before his work, when, himself content with a very modest shield, he abandons a field more spacious than his own to the whims of his artisans? And what reason would allow the organizer, the creator of such a harmonious hermetic paradigm, so consistent with pure doctrine, in its smallest details, to tolerate the addition of foreign hieroglyphics if the latter were to be in glaring disagreement with the rest of the work? We conclude that the hypothesis of any guild's sign cannot be supported. There is no example where the thought of an artwork is concentrated in the very signature of the artisan although this is the error made by a defective interpretation of the analogy.

(1) The Greek word [\*218-1] (gnoma), phonetic equivalent to the French word gnome, means clue, which is used to make a thing known, to classify it, to identify it. It is its distinctive sign. [\*218-2] (gnomon) is also the sign indicating the movement of the sun, the hand of sundials and our gnome. Meditate upon this; an important secret is hidden beneath this cabala. (2) Clef du Grand Oeuvre ou Lettres du Sancelrien Tourangeau (Key to the Great Work, or Letters from the Author from Touraine); Paris, Cailleau, 1777, p. 65. (3) Le Livre des Figures Hieroglyphiques (The Book of Hieroglyphic Figures) by Nicolas Flamel; in Trois Traitez de la Philosophie Naturelle (Three Treatises of Natural Philosophy); Paris, G. Marette, 1612. (4) This woman says of herself in the Song of Songs, ch. 1:5, "I am black but I am beautiful". (5) Longin, in the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, plays the same role as St Michael and St George; Cadmos, Perseus, Jason make a similar gesture among the pagans. He pierces with a blow of his lance the side of Christ just as the celestial knights and the Greek heroes pierce the dragon. This is a symbolic act whose positive application to hermetic labor is pregnant with fortunate consequences. (6) This esoteric truth is wonderfully expressed in the Hymn of the Christian Church: The sun is hidden beneath the star, The Orient in the setting sun; The artisan is hidden in the work; And through the help of grace, He is given back and brought back To his country. (7) Fr. Noel: Dictionnaire de la Fable ou Mythologie Greque, Latine, Egyptienne, Celtique, Persanne, etc. (Dictionary of the Fable or Greek, Latin, Egyptian, Celtic, Persian, Mythology); Paris, Le Normant, 1801. (8) According to the Armenian version of the Gospel of Childhood, translated by Paul Peeters, Jesus during his sojourn in Egypt renews in the presence of children of his age the miracle of Moses: "And Jesus, having gotten up, stood among them and with a stick he struck the rock and at the same time a spring of abundant and delicious water sprung from this rock and he gave it to them all to drink. This spring still exists today". (9) Translator's Note: A snake and a dragon which devour each other. (10) Introitus apertus ad oclusum Regis palatium, Op. cit., chap. IV, I. (11) Le Triomphe Hermetique, p. 71. (12) This key was given to the neophytes in the ceremony of the Crater ([\*225-1], kraterizo -- root, [\*225-2], krater, great cup, or fountain basin), which consecrated the first initiation in the mysteries of the Dionysiac cult. (13) Comment l'Esprit vient aux tables (How the Spirit Came to Tables), by a man who has not lost his mind; Paris, New Library, 1854. (14) Le Grand et Excellent Oeuvre des Sages (The Great and Excellent Work of the Sages) by Jacques Le Tesson; Second Dialogue du Lyon Verd (Second Dialogue of the Green Lion), Ch. VI, ms. 17th century, Library of Lyon, # 971. (15) Introitus apertus...; Ch. VIII, 3, 4. (16) We can see that the Adept speaking of the preparation of the philosophical



Mercury as if it were the first of all; he purposefully omits the one which procures the universal solvent. He assumes it is known and realized. He is actually describing the first operation of the second work. This is a commonly occurring philosophical artifice against we want to warn the disciples of Hermes. (17) "You will separate earth from fire subtle from heavy, slowly with a lot of labor"; Hermes Trismegistus in the Emerald Tablet. (18) Mutus Liber; see also Alchimie by Canseliet, published by J.-J. Pauvert, p. 40 et seq. (19) J.F. Hecnel: Flora Saturnisans; Paris, J.-T. Herissant, 1760, Ch. IV, p. 78. (20) In the Twelve Keys of Philosophy by Basil Valentine, cf. above. (21) "You must know that this solution and separation has never been described by any of the ancient Sage Philosophers who have lived before me and who have known this Magistry. And if they have spoken of it, it has been only through enigmas and symbols and not in an open fashion". Basil Valentine, Testamentum. (22) The artists who believed that the third work to complete with a continuous coction requiring no other help but a specific fire of equal and constant temperature were badly mistaken. The true coction is not accomplished in such a manner, and it is the last stumbling block against which those who stumble, who after long and painful efforts, have finally taken possession of the philosophical mercury. A useful note can correct them: the colors are not the work of fire. They appear only by the will of the artist; they can only be observed through the glass, that is in each coagulation stage. But will you be able to fully understand me? (23) The father of the Greek Hermes was Zeus, the master God. And [\*231-1] (Zeus) is close to [\*231-2] (Zeuxis), a word which marks the action of joining, uniting, assembling, marrying. (24) Henri Khunrath: Ampitheatre de l'eternelle sapience; Paris, Chacomac, 1900, p. 156. (25) Fulcanelli: Le Mystere des Cathedrales (The Mystery of the Cathedrals); Paris, J. Schemit, 1926. (26) Le Livre Secret du Tres-Ancien Philosophe Artephius (The Secret Book of the Very Ancient Philosopher Artephius) in Trois Traitez de la Philosophie Naturelle; Paris, G. Marette, 1612. (27) J.F. Henckel: Opuscules Mineralogiques, ch. III, p. 404; Paris, Herissant, 1760. (28) Translator's Note: As seen on the American one dollar bill. (29) Old engravings bearing the inscription Icon peregrini (icon of the travelers) represent hermetic Mercury in the image of a pilgrim climbing a sharp and rocky path in a place filled with rocks and precipices. Wearing a large flat hat he leans with one hand on a stick and holds in the other a shield where are represented the sun and three stars. Sometimes young, alert, and well dressed; sometimes old, tired, and miserable, he is always followed by a faithful dog which seems to share his good or his bad fortune. (30) Introitus apertus..., Ch. II, 2. (31) A pen and ink drawing made by the Adept Lintaut, in his manuscript called L'Aurore (Dawn)(Bibliotheque de l'Arsenal, # 3020, 17th century), shows us the soul of a crowned king lying down, inert, on a large stone slab, rising in the shape of a winged child towards a lantern suspended in the midst of dark clouds. We also mention here for hermeticists what Rabelais said about the trip to the land of the Lantern People, the Lantermois, which he had the heroes of his Pantagruel accomplish. (32) Translator's Note: The antimony which sounds like antimony and also in French like Ane Timon or the donkey (named Timon, also the donkey bearing the beam of a plough. (33) Translator's Note: Episimon is like the sigma at the end of the word. The numerical value is 6. (34) Translator's Note: Letters in ancient Greek to which letters were attributed. (35) Comment l'Esprit vient aux Tables, op. cit., p. 25.

## **LOUIS D'ESTISSAC V**

A Latin inscription covering the entire width of the entablature can be read above the symbolic panels which were up to now the subject of our study. It is composed of three words separated one from the other two pyrogenous vases forming the following epigraph:

### **NASCENDO QUOTIDIE MORIMUR (1)**

In being born, we die every day. A serious thought of Seneca, the philosopher, an axiom which we would hardly expect to find here.

Evidently, this profound albeit ethical truth, seems conflicting and without direct relation to the surrounding symbolism. In the midst of hermetic emblems what value could be attributed to the severe exhortation, to have to meditate on the unfortunate fate that life has in store for us, on the implacable destiny which imposes death on humanity as the real goal of existence, the walk to the sepulcher as the essential condition of the earthly sojourn, the coffin as the *raison d'être* for the crib? Could it be simply to remind us ---salutary distraction ---that is useful to keep in mind the image of supreme anxieties and uncertainties, the fear of the troubling Unknown, necessary bridles to our passions and our aberration? Or else, by incidentally provoking here an awakening of our consciousness inviting us to ponder, to confront that which we fear most, did the learned organizer of the building want to persuade us of the vanity of our desires, of our hopes, of the uselessness of our efforts, of the emptiness of our illusions? ---We do not believe so. For, as expressive, as rigorous, as the literal meaning of the epigraph might be for the average man, it is certain that we must uncover another one, adequate and conforming to the esotericism of this masterly work. We think, in fact, that the Latin axiom borrowed by Louis d'Estissac from Nero's stoical governor, was not inappropriately put there. It is the only written word written in the Mutus Liber. There is no doubt of its significance and that it was placed there on purpose to teach what the image could not translate.

A simple examination of the inscription shows that of the three terms which contribute to form it, two are preceded by a special sign, the words *quotidie* and *morimur*. This sign, a little lozenge, was called by the Greeks [\*240-1] (*rombos*) from [\*240-2] (*rembo*) to be mistaken, to go astray, to turn around. A deceptive meaning likely to lead astray, to turn around. A deceptive meaning likely to lead us astray, is very clearly indicated. Two signs were used to emphasize two meanings, ([\*240-3] ---*amphibolos*) in that diplomatic sentence. The same character engraved before *quotidie* and *morimur* testifies that these words remain invariable and retain their ordinary meaning. *Nascendo*, on the contrary, deprived of any clue, contains another meaning. By using it as a gerund it invokes without spelling modification, the idea of production, of generation. We should no longer read being born, but rather in order to produce or in order to generate. Thus the mystery, free from its matrix, gives away the hidden reason for the amphibological axiom. And the superficial formula, reminding man of his mortal origin is erased and disappears, now symbolism figuratively addresses the reader and teaches him: in order to produce we die every day. The parents of the hermetic child speak. Their language is true; they actually die together not only to give it being, but also to ensure the growth and multiplication of the stone. The child is born from their death and feeds on their corpses. We see how the alchemical meaning proves to be quite expressive and enlightening. Therefore Limojon de Saint-Didier states a primordial truth when he affirms: "The stone of the philosophers is born from the destruction of two bodies". We add that the philosophers' stone ---or our mercury, its next matter ---is also born from the fight, the mortification, and the ruin of two opposite natures. Thus in the essential operations of the art we always have two principles producing a third one and the generation depends upon a preliminary decomposition of its agents. Furthermore, philosophical mercury itself, sole substance of the Magistry can never yield anything unless it dies, ferments, and putrefies at the end of the first stage of the Work. Finally, whether it is a matter of obtaining the sulphur, the Elixir, or the Medicine, we cannot transform one or the other, whether in power or quantity as long as we have not made them resume their mercurial state, next to the original *rebus* and as such directed toward corruption. For there is a fundamental law in hermetics expressed by the old adage: *Corruptio unius est generatio alterius* (2). Huginus a Barma tells us, in the chapter about Hermetic Positions (3) that: "Whoever does not know the means of destroying the bodies does not know wither the means of producing them". Elsewhere the same author teaches that "if the mercury is not tinted it will not tinct". And the philosophers' mercury opens with the color black, seal of its mortification, the chromatic series of the philosophical spectrum. It is its first tincture and it is also the first favorable clue of the technique, harbinger of success, which sanctions the artisan's mastery. "Indeed", writes Nicolas Flamel in the Book of Hieroglyphic Figures, "whoever does not see this blackness at the beginning of his operation, during the days of the stone, whatever other colors he may see, he is totally failing the magistry and he can no longer perfect it with this chaos. For he is not working well of he is not putrefying; all the more because if consequently the stone cannot take on a vegetative life to grow and multiply". Further, the great Adept asserts that dissolving the compound and liquefying it under the influence of fire provokes the disintegration and liquefying it under the influence of fire provokes the disintegration of the assembled parts whose black parts whose black color is a sure proof. "Therefore", he says, "this blackness and color clearly teaches that in this beginning the matter and compound are beginning to rot and to dissolve the matter and compound are beginning to rot and to dissolve into a powder tinier than the atoms of the Sun, later transforming themselves into permanent water. Envious (4) philosophers call this dissolution death, destruction, and perdition, because the natures change forms, Whence came so many allegories about the dead, tombs, and sepulchers. Others have called it Calcination, Denudation, Separation, Trituration, Assation, because the compounds are changed and reduced into very small pieces and parts. Others, Reduction into the first matter, Mollification, Extraction, Commixtion, Liquefaction, Conversion of Elements, Subtiliation, Division, Hunation, Impastation, and Distillation because the compounds are liquefied, reduced to seed, mollified and circulated in a matrass, Others still, Xir, Putrefaction, Corruption, Cymmerian Shadows, Abyss, Hell, Dragons, generation, Ingress, Submersion, Complexion, Conjunction, and Impregnation, because the matter is black and aqueous, the natures mix perfectly, and mutually keep the ones from the others". A certain number of authors ---Philalethes in particular ---demonstrated the necessity, the utility of death and of mineral putrefaction by using a simile drawn from wheatseed. They probably got the idea from the parable collected in St John's Gospel (12:24); the apostle therein transcribes these words of Christ: "Verily, I say unto you, if the grain of wheat does not die after it has been thrown into the earth, it remains alone, but when it is dead it bears much fruit".

We believe to have sufficiently developed the secret meaning of the epigraph: *Nascendo quotidie morimur*, and demonstrated how this classical axiom, skillfully used by Louis d'Estissac throws a new light on the lapidary work of the hermetic scientist.

(1) *Morimur* is an ancient form of *Morimur*. (2) The corruption of the one is the generation of the other. (3) Huginus a Barma: *Le Regne de Saturne change en Siecle d'Or...*; Paris, P. Derieu, 1780. (4) Translator's note: In the old meaning of sparring with their words. LOUIS D'ESTISSAC VI

Of the symbolic fireplace, only the cornice is left to be discussed. It is divided into six oblong panels, ornamented with symmetrical motifs repeated two by two and it summarizes the essential points of experimentation.

Two kidney-shaped shields occupy the angles and their concave edge is stretched out in the shape of a shell. Their field displays the image of a medusa head with its snake hair, out of which two lightning bolts are flashing. These are the emblems of the initial matters, one ardent, igneous, figures by the Gorgon mask and its lightning bolts; the other, aqueous and cold, passive substance represented in the shape of a sea shell called Merelle by the philosophers, from the Greek [\*243-1] (meter) and [\*243-2] (ele), Mother of Light. The mutual reaction of these primary elements ---water and fire ---yield common mercury, of mixed quality, which is this igneous water or aqueous fire that we use as a solvent in the preparation of the philosophers' mercury.

After the shields, the bucranes indicate the two mortifications marking the beginning of the preliminary works: the first creates common mercury and the second gives birth to the hermetic rebis, These fleshless heads of the solar oxen stand for human skulls and crossed femurs, scattered bones or complete skeletons of alchemical iconography; like these they are called crow heads. It is the common epithet applied to decomposing matters, matters being corrupted, which are characterized in the philosophers' work by an oily, greasy appearance, a strong and disgusting odor, a viscous and sticky condition, a quicksilver-like consistency, a blue, violet or black coloration. You will notice the bandlets connecting the bucrane's horns; they are crossed in the shape of an X, divine attribute and first manifestation of light, previously diffuse in the darkness of mineral earth.

As for the philosophers' mercury, whose elaboration is never revealed, not even under the hieroglyphics veil, we find nonetheless its image on one of the decorative shields adjacent to the median acanthus. Two stars are engraved above the moon crescent, images of the mercury duplex or Rebis that coction first transforms into white, semi-fixed and fusible sulphur. Under the action of the elementary fire, the operation resumed and pursued, leads to the great final realizations, figures on the opposite shield by two roses. These, as we know, mark the result of the two, lesser and greater, magisteries, white Medicine and red Stone, whose fleur de lys below them, sanction the absolute truth. It is the sign of perfect knowledge, the emblem of Wisdom, the crown of the philosopher, the seal of Science and Faith united with the double spiritual and temporal power of Knighthood.

#### **THE MAN OF THE WOODS MYSTICAL HERALD OF THIERS**

A picturesque county town of the Puy-le-Dome district, Thiers offers a remarkable and very elegant specimen of secular, 15th century architecture. It is the so-called house of the Man of the Woods, a noggin building, reduced today to the first and second floors only. Its surprising preservation makes it precious to art enthusiasts as well as to dilettantes of the Middle Ages (Plate XVII)

Four bays closed with ogee arches, with filleted and suspate ribs, open on the façade. Engaged little columns with capitals composed of grotesque masks which are covered with long-eared head-dresses, separate them from one another and support as many figurines sheltered under light, delicate, and perforated canopies. On the lower level, panels ornamented with parchments correspond to the upper bays, but the beveled pillars which form a perpendicular edge exhibit devouring snouts of dragons by means of capitals.

The main character which serves as a sign for this old dwelling is a character similar to the one we have seen maneuvering a stump, on the corner sorb tree pillar of the manor of Lisieux. Sculpted in the corresponding place with almost the same gestures, it seems to claim the same tradition. We know nothing of him except that it getting close to five centuries old and, since it has been built, generations of Thiers inhabitants have always seen him leaning against the panel of his old dwelling. This large but rather rudimentary wooden bas-relief with a naïve design whose age and weathering emphasize the harsh character, represents a tall hairy man, dressed with skins transversely sewn together, fur outside. Bare headed, he smiles, enigmatic, somewhat distant; he leans on a long stick which bears at its upper extremity the face of a hooded and quite ugly old woman. His bare feet bear on a lump formed of rough sinuosities which cannot be identified due to the coarseness of execution. Such is this man of the Woods called by a local chronicler the Sphinx of Thiers. "The local people", he writes, "are not concerned about his origins, his gesture, or his silence. They only know one thing about him, the name he bears in their memory, the wild and graceless name which they use to refer to him and which perpetuates his memory throughout the ages. Foreigners and tourists are more friendly and somewhat more curious. They stop before him as before an object of value. They examine at leisure the features of his physiognomy and anatomy. They smell a history full of local interest and perhaps of general interest. They question their guides. But these guides are as ignorant and perhaps as mute as the local guardians of this solitary figure. And he avenges himself on the ignorance of the ones and the stupidity of the others by keeping his secret".

People have wondered whether this image did not represent St Christopher facing the image of the Child-Jesus that would have occupied the opposite and empty panel of the façade. Beyond the fact that no one has any memory of the subject which once upon a time hid the nogging on the right ---if we even suppose that it might have existed ---one would still have

to admit that the pedestal bearing our hermit must have represented waves. Nothing is less certain than such hypothesis. Indeed, how could we explain his miraculous position on the water ---on waters whose surface would be convex? Furthermore, the very absence of Jesus on the shoulder of the colossus justifies the exclusion of a possible resemblance with St Christopher. Even if we suppose that he could have incarnated Offerus ---first personality of the Christian Giant before his conversion ---still we could not give any satisfying reason for the monkey-like clothing which imprints its particular features on our sculpture. If the legend asserts that the man who took Jesus across had to unearth a tree so as to fight against the violence of the stream and the inexplicable heaviness of his divine burden, nowhere is it pointed out that this tree had any kind of effigy in it, any kind of distinctive mark. Now we know too well the high conscience, the scrupulous fidelity which medieval imagers conveyed to the translation of their subjects to accept an evaluation with such slight foundation.

The Man of the Woods, the result of a clearly thought-out intent, necessarily expresses a precise and powerful idea. We will agree that he could not have been created and placed there without purpose, and that, from this standpoint, the decorative concern seems only to intervene on a secondary level. In our opinion, what was meant to be asserted, what this bas-relief of Thiers clearly indicates, is that it designates the dwelling of an unknown alchemist. It officially stamps the ancient philosopher's dwelling and reveals its mystery. Its indisputable hermetic individuality is completed and further emphasized against the background of the other accompanying figures. If they have neither the caliber nor the expressive energy appropriate to the subject, the little actors of the Great Work are no less instructive to such an extent that it would be quite difficult to solve the enigma if we did not compare these symbolic characters among themselves. As for the correct meaning of the Man of the Woods, it is mostly focused on the old woman's head at the top of his rustic scepter. With a duenna face, her skull bound by a hood, such appears here in its plastic form, a version of our crazy Mother. With the name people used to designate ---in the times of the joyous parodies of the Donkey Festival ---the high dignitaries and masters of certain secret institutions. The Dijon Infantry or the Brotherhood of the Crazy Mother, a group of masked initiates, masked under Rabelaisian appearance and committing Pantagruel-like eccentricities is the last example of it. This mother of the insane, or crazy Mother is no other than the hermetic science itself, its body of knowledge considered as a whole. As science provides whoever embraces it and cultivates it with complete wisdom, consequently the tall insane man sculpted on the façade of the Thiers building is actually a wise man, as he leans on Sapience, dry tree and the scepter of the crazy Mother. This simple man with abundant, disheveled hair, and unkempt beard, this man of nature whose traditional knowledge leads him to despise the vain frivolity of the poor insane people who think they are wise, stands head and shoulders above other men, just as he stands above the mound of stones which he tramples underfoot (1). He is the Enlightened one for he has received the light spiritual enlightenment. Behind a mask of detached serenity, he remains silent and protects his secret from conceited inquisitiveness and from the sterile activity of the histrionic play-actors of the human comedy. He, the silent one, represents for us the myste of Antiquity (in Greek [\*251-1] ---mustes, head of the initiates) (2), Greek incarnation of the mystic or mysterious science ([\*251-2] ---musterion, secret dogma, esotericism)(Plate XVIII).

The Man of the Woods reveals yet another function, apart from his esoteric one demonstrating what the alchemist should be: a learned man of simple spirit, an attentive investigator of nature, always attempting to imitate, just as the monkey imitates man (3). The other function completes the first one. For the insane man, humanized emblem of the children of Hermes, still evokes mercury itself, unique and proper matter of the sages. About this artifex in opere -- process in operation ---that the hymn of the Christian Church speak about, this artisan hidden in the center of the work, capable of doing everything with the external aid of the alchemist. This mercury or insane man who is the absolute master of the Work, the obscure and never lazy worker, the secret agent and faithful and loyal servant of the philosopher. This incessant collaboration of human foresight with natural activity, this duality of effort combined and directed toward the same goal is expressed by the great symbol of Thiers. As for the means through which the philosophers' mercury makes itself known and can be identified, we are now going to disclose it.

In an old almanac which, with the Clavicles of Solomon and the Secrets of the Great Albertus, constituted once upon a time the greater part of the scientific body (4) of colporteurs, an interesting woodcut is found among the plates illustrating the text. It represents a skeleton surrounded with images meant to mark out the planetary correspondences "with the parts of the body which are connected with it and under their rule". In the drawing, while the Sun exhibits its radiant face, and the Moon its profile crowned with a crescent, Mercury appears in the shape of a court jester. Head covered with the pilgrim's hood out of which prick up two long ears ---just as the capitals which we have pointed out at the basis of the figurines ---he is holding a caduceus instead of his jester's bauble. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, the artist cared to write the name of each planet under its proper sign. It is, therefore, a genuine symbolic formula, used in the middle ages for the esoteric translation of celestial Mercury and quicksilver of the sages. Moreover, it suffices to remember that the French word sou (once upon a time fol) ---meaning crazy ---comes from the Latin follies, bellows used to blow in fires, to awaken the idea of the puffer, derogatory epithet conferred on medieval spagyrist. Later still in the 17th century, it is not infrequent to encounter in the caricatures of Jacques Callot's rivals, grotesque figures drawn in the symbolic spirit whose philosophical manifestations we

are now studying. We remember a drawing representing a seated buffoon, legs crossed and forming the sign X, and hiding behind his back a large bellows. We should not be surprised that court jesters, among whom several have remained famous, have a hermetic origin. Their multicolored costumes, their strange clothes ---they carried on their belt a bladder which they called a lantern (5) ---their puns, their mystifications prove it, along with the rare prerogative which they shared with philosophers, namely, to utter very bold truths with impunity. Finally, due to its fickleness and volatility, the mercury called the Crazy Man of the Great Work, has its meaning confirmed in the first card of the Tarot, called the Joker, the Magician or sometimes the Alchemist (6).

In addition, the Jester's bauble which is positively a rattle ([\*\*\*-253-1] ---krotalon) (7), amusement for toddlers and toy of all firstborns, is not different from the caduceus. The two attributes share an obvious analogy, although the court fool's bauble expresses, in addition, the inborn simplicity possessed by children and that science demands from sages. One and the other are similar images. Momos and Hermes carry the same instrument, revealing the sign of mercury. Draw a circle on the upper extremity of a vertical line, add two horns to the circle and you will have the graphic secret used by medieval alchemists to designate their mercurial matter (8). This diagram which rather faithfully reproduces both the jester's bauble and the caduceus, was known in antiquity: it has been discovered, engraved on a Punic monument in Lulybee (9). In the final analysis, the rattle or jester's bauble seems to be a caduceus whose esotericism is clearer than that of the stick with snakes, whether surmounted by a winged figure or not. Its name, (marotte in French) diminutive of merotte, little mother according to some, the universal mother of Mary, according to others, underlines the feminine nature and the generating virtue of the hermetic mystery, mother and nourisher of our king.

The word caduceus is less evocative as it retains in the Greek tongue the meaning of the announcer. The words [\*254-1] (kerukeion) and [\*254-2] (caduceus), both mean the herald or public barter; only their common root [\*253-3] (kerux) for rooster (because the bird announces sunrise and the dawn of light), expresses one of the qualities of secret quicksilver. For that reason the rooster, herald of the sun was consecrated to the God Mercury and appears on our church steeples. If nothing in the bas-relief of Thiers reminds us of this bird, it cannot, however, be denied that it is hidden in the word caduceus, which our herald is holding in both hands. For the stick, or scepter, which the heraldry officers bore was called caduceus just like the stick of Hermes. It is further known that it was among the herald's tasks to build as a sign of victory or for happy events, commemorative monuments called Montjoie ---Mounts of Joy (10). These were simple cairns or heaps of stones. The Man of the Woods therefore, appears to be both a representative of Mercury or nature's jester, and the mystical herald, marvelous worker whose masterpiece raises on the cairn (Mount of Joy), revealing sign of his material victory. And if this king at arms, this triumpher, prefers his faun outfit to the opulent uniform of the heralds, it is to demonstrate the straight path he was able to abide by, the indifference which he manifests towards material goods and worldly glory.

Next to a subject of such noble bearing, the little characters which accompany it have but a very unobtrusive role; we would be wrong, nevertheless, to neglect their study. No detail is superfluous in hermetic iconography and these humble depositories of secrets, modest images of ancestral thought, deserve to be questioned and examined with care. It is with less of an ornamental aim than in the charitable intention to enlighten those who prove their interest for them that they have been placed there. As for us we have never regretted devoting too much time and attention to the analysis of hieroglyphs of this kind. Often they have brought us the solution of the most abstruse problems and, in the practice, the success which we were seeking in vain without the help of their teaching.

The figures sculpted under their canopies and supported by the jester's sticks of the capitals are five in number. Four among them bear the mantle of the philosopher, which they open to show the different emblems of their duties. The furthest one from the Man of the Woods is standing in a corner formed by the angle of a modern gothic style niche which shelters behind its windows a little statue of the Virgin. A very hairy man with a long beard holds in his left hand a book and squeezes in his right hand the shaft of a lance or a fighting stick. These very suggestive attributes clearly show in form the two active and passive matters, whose mutual reaction yields, at the end of the philosopher's fight, the first substance of the Work. Some authors ---Nicolas Flamel and Basil Valentine in particular ---have given to these elements the conventional name of dragons; the celestial dragon which they represent with wings designates the volatile body, the terrestrial wingless dragon indicates the fixed body. "Of these two dragons or metallic principles", writes Flamel (11), "I have said in my Summary mentioned above that the enemy would enflame by his ardor the fire of his enemy and then if we pay heed, one would see in the air a venomous fume of a bad odor, worse in flame and in poison than the envenomed head of a snake and of a Babylonian dragon". Generally when they only speak of a dragon philosophers think of the volatile. They recommend to kill it by piercing it with the thrust of a lance; and this operation has become among them the subject of numerous fables and various allegories. The agent is veiled under several names of similar esoteric value: Mars, Martha, Marcel, Michael, George, etc., and these knights of the sacred art, after a fierce fight which they always win, open in the flank of the mythical snake a large wound out of which flows a dark, thick, and viscous blood (12). Such is the secret truth which proclaims, on his wooden throne, the secular herald, mute and silent, screwed in place on his old dwelling.

The second character is more discreet and more reserved; he barely raises the flap of his coat, but this gesture allows us to notice a large closed book that he is holding firmly against his belt. We shall soon speak of him again.

After him comes a knight, energetic in his composure, who is clutching the hilt of his sword. Necessary weapon that he will use to kill the earthly and flying lion or griffin, mercurial hieroglyph we have studied on the manor of Lisieux. Here again is the emblematic statement of an essential operation, that of the fixation of mercury and of its partial mutation into fixed sulphur. "The fixed blood of the red Lion", says Basil Valentine (13), on the subject, "is made of the volatile blood of the green Lion because they are both of the same nature". Note here that the version of the parable differs somewhat from those used by authors to describe this work; most if them indeed are content to represent the duel of the knight and the lion as it can be observed in the castle of Coucy (the tympanum of the dungeon gate) and on one of the bas-reliefs of the golden Carroir (14) in Romorantin (Plate XIX).

Of the following figure we could not give an exact interpretation. It is unfortunately mutilated, and we do not know what emblems it held in its hands, which are today broken. Alone in the symbolic following of the Man of the woods, this haloed and meditative young woman wearing a large open dress, takes on a clearly religious character and could possibly represent a virgin. In this case we would see there the humanized hieroglyphic of our first subject. But it is only a hypothesis and nothing allows us to develop a discourse. We will therefore skip this gracious motif regretting that it is incomplete in order to study the last of the figures, the Pilgrim.

Our traveler, without doubt, has traveled for a rather long time; yet his smile tells how happy and satisfied he is to have accomplished his vow. For his empty bag, his pilgrim staff without the calabash show us that this worthy son of the Auvergne province no longer has to worry about food and drink. Further, the shell attached to his hat, special sign of the pilgrims of St James of Compostella, proves that he comes straight back from Compostella. The tireless pedestrian brings back the open book --the book adorned with beautiful images which Flamel did not know how to explain --which a mysterious revelation allows him now to translate and to put into action. This book, although quite common, and even though everyone can easily acquire it, cannot be opened without previous revelation. God alone, through the intercession of Monsieur St James, grants, only to those whom he deems worthy, the essential enlightenment. It is the Book of Revelation, whose pages are closed with seven seals, the initiatory book presented to us by the characters in charge of exposing the higher truths of science. St James, disciple of the Savior, always keeps it. With the calabash, the blessed staff and the shell, he possesses the attributes necessary for the hidden teachings of the pilgrims of the Great Work. Here is the first secret, the one which the philosophers do not reveal and which they keep under the enigmatic expression of the Path of St James (15) . This pilgrimage, all alchemists must undertake. Figuratively at least, for it is a symbolic journey and whoever wants to gain from it, cannot leave the laboratory if only for a moment. He must constantly watch the vase, the matter, and the fire. He must day and night stay at the Work. Compostella, emblematic city, is not on Spanish ground, but in the very earth of the philosophical subject. Difficult, painful road full of surprises and danger. Long and tiring road by which the potential becomes realized and the occult manifest! The sages have veiled this delicate preparation of the first matter or common mercury under the allegory of the pilgrimage to the city of Compostella.

Our mercury, we believe it has been mentioned, is this pilgrim, this voyager to whom Michael Maier has consecrated one of his best treatises (16)! By using the dry path, represented by the earthly road followed at first by our traveler, one can successfully but progressively exalt the diffuse and latent virtue, transforming into activity that which was only potential. The operation is completed when, on the surface, appears a shining star, formed of rays emanating from a single center, prototype of the great roses of our gothic cathedrals. A sure sign that the pilgrim has successfully reached the end of his first trip. He has received the mystical blessing of St James, confirmed by the luminous imprint which radiated, it is said, above the tomb of the apostle. The humble and common shell which he bore on his hat turned into a shining star, a halo of light. Pure matter whose hermetic star consecrates the perfection: it is now our compost, the holy water of Compostella (Latin *compos*, who has received, possesses --and *stella*, star) and the alabaster of the sages (*albastrum* contraction of *alabastrum*, white star). It is also the vase of perfumes, the vase of alabaster (Greek [\*260-1]---*alabastron*, Latin *alabastrus*) and the newly blooming bud of the flower of wisdom, *rosa hermetica*, the hermetic rose.

From Compostella the return can be made either by the same path, following a different itinerary or by the wet or maritime path, the only way the authors indicate in their writings. In this case the pilgrim choosing the maritime route boards under the leadership of an expert pilot, a proven mediator captain capable of ensuring the safety of the vessel during the entire crossing. Such is the difficult part played by the *Pilote de l'Onde Vive* (17) because the sea is full of reefs, and storms are frequent.

These suggestions help to understand the error into which many occultists have fallen by taking literally the purely allegorical tales, written with the intention of teaching the ones what ought to remain veiled for others. Albert Poisson

allowed himself to fall into this strategem. He believed that Nicolas Flamel, leaving Lady Perenelle, his wife, his school, and his manuscript illuminations, had truly accomplished on foot and by the Spanish route, the vow taken before the altar of St Jacques-la-Boucherie, his parish church. We certify ---and you can trust our honesty ---that Flamel never left the cellar where his furnaces burned. He who knows what the pilgrims; staff, the calabash, and the shell of the hat of St James are, also knows that we are telling the truth. By substituting himself to the materials and by following the example of the internal agent the Great Adept obeyed the rules of the philosophers' discipline and followed the example of his predecessors. Raymond Lully tells us that he made, in 1267, immediately after his conversion and at the age of 32 the pilgrimage to St James of Compostella. All masters, therefore, have used the allegory; and these imaginary accounts which the laymen understood as realities or ridiculous tales according to the meaning of the versions, are precisely the ones where truth asserts itself with the most clarity. Basil Valentine ends his first book which serves as an introduction to the Douze Clefs (Twelve Keys) by an escapade into Mount Olympus. There he has the gods speak, and each one of them beginning with Saturn, gives his opinion, his advice, and explains his own influence on the process of the Great Work. Bernard Trevisan says very few things in forty pages; but the value of his *Livre de la Philosophie naturelle des metaux* (Book on the Natural Philosophy of Metals) is in the few pages composing in his famous *Parabole* (Parable) is in the few pages composing the secret of the Work in approximately 15 lines in the *Enigme du Mercure Philosophal* (Enigma of the Philosophical Mercury) found in the *Traite du Ciel Terrestre* (Treatise of the Terrestrial Sky). One of the most highly considered alchemical handbooks of the middle ages, *Code de Verite* (Code of Truth), also called *Turba Philosophorum*, contains an allegory where several artists play the chemical drama of the Great Work in a very poignant scene animated by the Spirit of Pythagoras. A classical and anonymous work generally attributed to Trevisan, the *Songe Verd* (The Green Dream) exposes the practice under the traditional formula of the artisan transported during his sleep to a celestial earth, peopled with unknown inhabitants living amidst a marvelous flora. Each author chooses the theme which pleases him most and develops it according to his fantasy. The *Cosmopolite* resumes the familiar dialogues of the medieval period and is inspired by Jehan de Meung (18). More modern, Cyliani hides the preparation of mercury under the fiction of a nymph who guides and directs him in this labor. As for Nicolas Flamel, he strays from the beaten paths and time-honored fables; more original if not clearer, he prefers to disguise himself under the features of the subject of the sages and leaves to whoever can understand, this revealing but assumed autobiography.

All the effigies of Flamel represented him as a pilgrim. As such he figured on the porch of the Church of St Jacques-la-Boucherie, and also that of St Genevieve-des-Ardents, and he had himself painted in that same disguise on the Arch of the Cemetery of the Innocents (19). The *Dictionnaire Historique* (The Historical Dictionary) of Louis Moreri mentions a painted portrait of Nicolas Flamel which was seen exhibited at the time of Borel ---about 1650 ---at the house of Monsieur Ardes, a physician. There again the Adept had donned the costume he preferred above all. Unusual detail, "his hood was of three colors, black, white, red", colorations of the three main stages of the Work. By imposing this symbolical formula on sculptors and painters, the alchemist Flamel hid the middle class personality of Flamel the writer, under that of St James the Great, hieroglyph of the secret mercury. These images no longer exist today, but we can still have a rather exact picture of what they looked like by the statues of the apostle, carved at the same time. A masterly work of the 14th century belonging to the Abbey of Westminster shows us St James clothed with the mantle, a satchel by his side, wearing a large hat ornamented with the shell. He holds in his left hand a closed book protected by a cover forming a case. Alone, the pilgrim's staff, on which he leaned with his right hand, has disappeared (Plate XX).

The closed book, vivid symbol of the subject which alchemists use and take with them at the beginning is the one which the second character of the man of the Woods is holding so fervently. The book, signed with characters, which enables us to recognize it, to appreciate its virtue, and its purpose. The famous manuscript of Abraham the Jew, of which Flamel takes with him a copy of the images, is a work of the same nature and similar quality. Thus fiction, substituted for reality, takes shape and asserts itself as the trip toward Compostella. We know how much the Adept is stingy in giving information about his trip which he accomplished at a stretch, "And so in the same fashion", he is content to write (20), "I began my trip and I did so well that I arrived at Mount Joy (the cairn) and then at St James where with great devotion I accomplished my vow". A description indeed reduced to its simplest expression. No itinerary, no incident, not the least indication about the duration of the trip. At that time, the English occupied the entire French territory: Flamel does not say one word about it. A single cabalistic term, Mount Joy (the cairn), that the Adept obviously uses on purpose. It is the clue to the blessed phase of the trip, long awaited, long hoped for, where the book is finally opened, the happy Mount Joy (the cairn) on whose summit shines the hermetic star (21). The matter has undergone a first preparation, the common quicksilver has turned into philosophical hydrargyrum, but we learn nothing more. The road followed is knowingly kept secret.

The arrival in Compostella implies the acquisition of the star. But the philosophical subject is yet too impure to undergo maturation. Our mercury must be progressively elevated to the supreme degree of the required purity through a series of sublimations requiring the help of a special substance before it is partially coagulated into living sulphur. To initiate his

reader to these operations, Flamel tells us that a merchant of Boulogne (22) ---whom we identify with the indispensable mediator ---put him in contact with a Jewish rabbi, Master Canches, "a man quite learned in the sublime sciences". Therefore, our three characters have their respective roles perfectly established. Flamel, we have said, represents the philosophical mercury; his very name speaks like a pseudonym chosen on purpose. Nicolas, in Greek [\*265-1] (Nicolaus), means conqueror of the stone (from [\*265-2], nike, victory, and [\*265-3] ---laos, stone, rock). Flamel is close to the Latin Flamma, flame or fire, expressing the igneous and coagulating virtue the prepared matter possesses, a virtue enabling it to fight against the fieriness of fire, to feed from it and to triumph over it. During the sublimation, the merchant acts as an intermediary (23), which requires a violent fire. In this case, [\*265-4] ---emporos, merchant, is put in for [\*265-5] ---empuros, that which is worked on by means of fire. It is our secret fire, called lunatic Vulcan by author of *The Ancient War of the Knights*. Master Canches, whom Flamel introduces as his initiator, expresses the white sulphur, principle of coagulation and dessication. The name comes from the Greek [\*265-6] ---kagkanos, for dry, arid, from the root [\*265-7] ---kagkaino, meaning to heat up, to dry up, words whose meaning expresses the styptic quality which the Ancients attributed to the sulphur of the philosophers. The esotericism is complete by the Latin word Candens, which indicates that which is white, of a pure, shining white obtained by fire, that which is fiery and burning. One could not, with one word, better characterize sulphur from a physico-chemical standpoint, or the Initiate or Cathar from a philosophical standpoint.

Flamel and master Canches, united by an indestructible friendship, are not about to travel together. The mercury, sublimated, manifests its fixed part, and the sulphurous basis marks the first stage of coagulation. The intermediary is abandoned or disappears: he will no longer be mentioned. The three are now reduced to two ---sulphur and mercury ---and realize what is commonly called the philosophical amalgam, simple chemical combination not yet radical. Here intervenes the coction, an operation whose task is to ensure the newly formed compost with an indissoluble and irreducible union of its elements, and their complete transformation into fixed red sulphur, medicine of the first order according to Geber.

The two friends agree to return by sea instead of using the terrestrial route. Flamel does not tell us the reasons for this decision, which he simply submits to the appreciation of the researchers. Be that as it may, the second part of the trip is long, dangerous, uncertain, and vain, says an anonymous author, if the least error slips into it. Indeed, in our opinion, the dry path would be preferable, but we have no choice. Cyliani warns his reader that he describes the wet way, full of difficulties and surprises, only by duty. Our Adept deems the same, and we must respect his will. It is notorious that a great number of inexperienced sailors, underwent shipwrecks during their first crossing. One must always carefully watch the ship's orientation, maneuver with prudence, watch out for the gusts of wind, foresee the storm, be constantly on the alert, avoid the abyss of Charybdis and the reef of Scylla, fight unceasingly, night and day, against the roughness of the sea. To direct the hermetic ship is not a small task, and master Canches, whom we suspect to have been pilot and conductor for the Argonaut Flamel, must have been very skilled in the matter. Such also is the case with sulphur which energetically resists the assaults, the deterrent influence of mercurial humidity, but which eventually is vanquished and dies under its blows. Thanks to his companion, Flamel was able to disembark, safe and sound, in Orleans (24), where the sea voyage was to naturally and symbolically end. Unfortunately, barely on solid ground, Canches, the good guide, dies, victim of great vomitings from which he had suffered on the waters. His grieving friend has him buried in the church of Sainte-Croix, Holy Cross (25) and returns home alone, but instructed, and happy to have attained the end of his desires.

The vomitings of sulphur are the best clues of its dissolution and mortification. Arrived at this stage, the Great Work, on the surface, takes on the appearance of a fat soup sprinkled with pepper, ibrodium saginatum piperatumi, say the texts. From then on, the mercury blackens more and more each day and its consistency becomes syrupy, and then pasty. When the blackness reaches its maximum intensity, the putrefaction of the elements is accomplished and their union realized; everything appears firm in the vase until the solid mass cracks, chips, crumbles, and is finally reduced to an amorphous powder, black as coal. You will then see", writes Philalethes (26), a remarkable black color and the entire earth will be dried up. The death of the compound took place. The winds cease and all things come to rest. It is the great eclipse of the sun and of the moon; no luminary shines on the earth any longer, and the sea disappears". Thus we understand why Flamel relates the death of his friend; why the latter, having undergone the dislocation of its parts by a sort of crucifixion, had his tomb placed under the invocation and sign of the Holy Cross. What we understand less is the funeral eulogy, rather paradoxical, pronounced by our Adept on behalf of the rabbi: "May God have his soul", he cries out, "for he died a good Christian". He probably had only in mind the fictitious torture endured by his philosophical companion.

Such are, studied in the very sequence of the account, the relationships ---too eloquent to be more coincidences ---which have contributed to establish our conviction. These unusual and precise concordances demonstrate that the pilgrimage of Flamel is a pure allegory, a very skillful and very ingenious fiction of the alchemical labor which the charitable and to which the learned man devoted himself. What remains now is to speak of the mysterious work, of the Liber which was the initial cause of the imaginary trip, and to say which esoteric truths it is entrusted to reveal.



In spite of certain book-lovers' opinions, we confess that it has always been impossible for us to believe in the reality of the Book of Abraham the Jew, nor in what its fortunate owner relates in his Figures Hieroglyphiques. In our opinion, this famous manuscript, as unknown as it impossible to find, seems to be nothing more than another invention of the great Adept, destined, like the preceding one, to instruct the disciples of Hermes. It is a summary of the characteristics which distinguish the primal matter of the Work, as well as the properties it acquires during preparation. About this topic, we will enter into some measure of detail appropriately chosen to justify our thesis and to provide useful indications to enthusiasts of the sacred art. Faithful to the rule we have imposed upon ourselves, we shall limit our explanation to important points of the practice by carefully avoiding substituting new figures for those that we have unveiled. We teach certain, positive and genuine things, things seen by our own eyes, a thousand times touched by our hands, sincerely described, so as to direct anew those onto the simple and natural path who have erred and who have been abused. The legendary work of Abraham is only known to us by the description which Nicolas Flamel left in his famous treatise (27). Our bibliographical documentation is limited to this sole narration, which includes an alleged copy of the title.

According to the testimony of Albert Poisson (28), Cardinal Richelieu would have had it in his possession; he buttresses hypothesis by the seizure of the papers of a certain Monsieur Dubois, hanged after having been tortured, accounted, rightly or wrongly, to have been Flamel's last descendant (29). Nevertheless, nothing proves that Dubois inherited the unusual manuscript, and even less proves that Richelieu seized it, since the book was never mentioned anywhere since Flamel's death. Sometimes, it is true, so-called copies of the Book of Abraham are seen here and there on the market. These books, in very small number, have no relationship among themselves, and are spread over a few private libraries. The ones that we know are nothing more than attempts at reconstruction after Flamel. In all of them, we find the title in French very exactly reproduced and conforming to the translation of the Hieroglyphic Figures, but it entitles versions so different and above all so removed from Hermetic principles, that they reveal ipso facto their sophistic origin. Flamel exalts the clarity of the text, "written in beautiful and very understandable Latin", to the extent that he takes legal cognizance of it and refuse to transmit the least excerpt to posterity. As a consequence, no correlation can exist between the alleged original and the apocryphal copies we mention. As for the pictures which would have illustrated the work in question, they also have been done according to Flamel's descriptions. Drawn and painted in the 17th century, they are actually part of the French alchemical collection of the Bibliotheque de l'Arsenal (30).

As a summary, for the text as well as for the pictures, one must simply be content to respect, in these attempts at reconstitution, the little information given by Flamel; everything else is pure invention. Finally, since no bibliographer has ever been able to discover the original, and since we are not materially able to correlate the Adept's account, we are forced to conclude that it is a nonexistent and fictitious work.

Anyway, surprises lie in store for us in the analysis of Nicolas Flamel's text. First, here is the excerpt from the Hieroglyphic Figures which contributed to spread among alchemists and bibliophiles. The quasi-certainty of the reality of the book attributed to Abraham the Jew. "And so I, Nicolas Flamel, writer, thus after the death of my parents, earned my living in the Art of Writing, drawing up Inventories, and all the accounting work for tutors and those not of legal age, I came upon a book which was golden, rather old, and quite wide for the sum of two florins; it was not made out of paper or parchment, as others are, but it was made out of fine-laminated copper, entirely engraved with strange letters and figures; as for me, I think that they might have been Greek characters or some similar ancient language. Since I did not know how to read them and since I knew quite well that they were not Latin or Gallic letters or numbers, for I understand a little of both. As for the inside, the bark pages were engraved with a very great workmanship, written with an iron stiletto, in very beautiful and very clear Roman letters which were colored. It contained 3 times 7 signets"...

Do we even need to mention the strangeness of a work constituted of such elements? Its originality borders on the bizarre, even the extravagant. The book, very large, resembles in this manner Italian-style picture books containing reproductions of landscapes, architecture, etc., prints ordinarily presented in landscape format. It is, we are told, golden, although its cover is of copper, which is not very clear. Let us pass over this detail. The pages are made of the bark of young shrubby trees; Flamel probably wants to indicate papyrus, which would give the book a respectable antiquity; but these barks, instead of having been written or painted on directly, are engraved with an iron stiletto before their coloration. We no longer understand. How could the narrator know that the stiletto which would have been used by Abraham was made out of steel rather than wood or ivory? It is for us an enigma as indecipherable as this other: the legendary rabbi wrote in Latin a treatise dedicated to his fellow Jews. Why did he use Latin, the common scientific language in the Middle Ages? By using the Hebrew tongue, which was less widespread in these days, he could have avoided casting the anathema, and shouting out Maranatha to all those who tried study it. Finally, in spite of Flamel's affirmations, this old manuscript had just been written ---one cannot think of everything ---when he acquired it. In fact, Abraham says he only want to reveal his secrets so as to come to the help of the sons of Israel, persecuted at that same period when the future Adept was reading his text: "To the Jewish people disbursed in the Gallic countries by the wrath of God, Salut, cries out the Levite, prince, priest and Hebrew

astrologer at the beginning of his book.

And so, the great master Abraham, doctor and light of Israel, reveals himself, if we take him literally, to be a bona fide mystifier and his work, fraudulently archaic, to have no authenticity, as if it were unable to hold through critical examination. However, if we consider that the book and the author never had any other existence except in Nicolas Flamel's fertile imagination, we must think that all these things, so diverse, so unusual, hold a mysterious meaning important to discover.

Let us begin the analysis with the presumed author of the fictitious book. Who is this Abraham? The Patriarch par excellence, in Greek [\*270-1] ---patriarches, is the first author of the family, from the roots [\*270-2] ---pater, father, and [\*270-3] ---arce, beginning, principle, origin, source, foundation. The Latin name Abraham, which the Bible gives to the venerable ancestor of the Hebrews, means Father of a multitude. He is therefore the first author of created things, the source of all that lives on earth, the unique primordial substance whose different specifications inhabit the three kingdoms of nature. The Book of Abraham is consequently the Book of the Principle, and since this book is devoted, according to Flamel, to alchemy, that part of science which studies the evolution of mineral bodies, we learn that it deals with the original metallic matter, basis and foundation of the sacred art.

Flamel buys this book for the sum of two florins, which means the total price of the materials and combustibles necessary for the work was valued at two florins in the 14th century. The raw material alone, in sufficient quantity, was worth about 10 sols. Philaethes, who wrote his treatise of the Introitus in 1645, brings the total cost to three florins. "And so", he says, "you will see that the Work, in its essential materials, will not exceed the price of three ducats or three gold florins. Further, the expense of making the water barely exceeds two crowns per pound" (31).

The volume, golden, rather old and quite wide, resembles ordinary books in no way; probably because it is made and composed of another material. The gilding which covers it gives it a metallic appearance. And if the Adept affirms that it is old, it is only to establish the high antiquity of the hermetic subject. "I will therefore say", asserts an anonymous author (32), "that the matter from which the stone of the philosophers is made was immediately made when man was first created, and its name is philosophical earth... But no one knows it, except the true philosophers, who are the children of the Art". Although this misunderstood book is very common, it includes many things and contains some great hidden truths. Flamel is therefore right to say that it is wide; largus in Latin means abundant, rich, copious, a word derived from the Greek [\*271-1] ---la, considerable, much, and [\*271-2] ---ergon, thing. Furthermore, the Greek [\*271-3] ---platus, large, also means in common use, widespread, well known, exposed to all eyes. There is no better way to define the universality of the subject of the sages.

Pursuing his description, our writer believes the book of Abraham to be made of the rolled bark of young shrubby trees, at least so it seemed to him. Flamel is not very assertive about this point, and for good reason: he knows very well that besides a few very rare exceptions, for the past three centuries, medieval parchment had been substituted for Egyptian papyrus (33). And, although we cannot paraphrase this laconic expression, we must recognize that there the author speaks very clearly. A shrub is a young tree, just as a mineral is a young metal. The bark of ganque which serves to envelop this mineral, allows man to identify it with certainty, owing to the external characteristics it has taken on. We have already emphasized the name given by the Ancients to their matter which they called liber, the book. Further, the mineral presents a specific configuration; the crystalline laminae forming its texture are, as in mica, superposed in the manner of the pages of a book. It owed to its external appearance the epithet of leprous and that of Dragon covered with scales, because its matrix is scaly, unpleasant and coarse to the touch. A simple piece of advice about this remark: preferably choose samples whose scales are the largest and the most defined.

"Its cover was made out of fine laminated copper, entirely engraved with strange letters or figures".

The ore often takes on a pale coloration like brass, sometimes reddish like copper; in any case, its scales seem covered with intertwined lineaments having the appearance of bizarre varied and ill-defined signs or characters. We called attention earlier to the obvious contradiction existing between the golden book and its copper binding, for it cannot describe here its internal structure. Likely the Adept wants to attract our attention, on the one hand, to the metallic specification of the substance figured by his book, and on the other hand, to the faculty possessed by this mineral to partially transmute itself into gold. This curious property is indicated by Philaethes in his Commentary on the Epistle of Ripley addressed to King Edward IV. "Without using the transmutative elixir", says the author speaking of our subject, "I can easily extract the gold and silver it contains, which can be attested by those who have seen it as well as I". This operation is not advisable, because it takes away any work value; but we can assert that the philosophical matter truly contains the gold of the sages, imperfect, white and crude gold, vile compared to precious metal, yet much higher to gold even when we only consider the Hermetic labor. In spite of its humble copper cover with engraved scales, the book of Abraham the Jew, is indeed a golden book, and

it is the famous little book of fine gold of which Bernard de Trevisan speaks in his Parable. Further, it seems that Nicolas Flamel understood the confusion that could result in the reader's mind from this duality of meaning when he writes in the same treatise: "May no one blame me if he doesn't easily understand me, for he will be more blameworthy than I, as he has not been initiated into these sacred and secret interpretations of the first agent (which is the key opening of all sciences), nevertheless he wants to understand the most subtle conceptions of the most envious (34) philosophers, which are only written for those who already know these principles, principles which can never be found in any book".

Finally, the author of the Figures Hieroglyphiques concludes his description by saying: "As for the inside, the bark pages were engraved with a great workmanship, written with an iron stiletto". Here he no longer described the physical appearance, but rather the preparation of the same subject. To reveal a secret of this magnitude and this significance could be to overstep the limits which are imposed on us. Therefore, we shall not attempt to comment in clear language, as we have done up to now, on the ambiguous and rather allegorical sentence of Flamel. We will merely attract your attention on this iron stiletto, whose secret property changes the intimate nature of our Magnesia, separates, orders, purifies and assembles the elements of the mineral chaos. To successfully perform this operation, one must know the affinities of things, have a lot of skill, and perform a lot of work, as the Adept leaves us to understand. However, so as to provide some help to the artist in the resolution of this difficulty, we would like to point out to him that, in the primitive language, which is archaic Greek, all words containing the diphthong [\*\*\* 273-1] (er) must be taken into consideration. [\*\*\* 273-2] (er) has remained, in phonetic Cabala, the sound expression dedicated to the active light, to the incarnated spirit, to the manifest or hidden corporeal fire. [\*\*\* 273-2] (er), contraction of [\*\*\* 273-3] (e-ar), is the birth of the light, springtime and morning, beginning, dawn. Through the vibration of atmospheric air the dark waves emanate from the sun and become luminous. Air ---in Greek [\*\*\* 273-4] (aer) ---is the support, the vehicle of light. Through the vibration of atmospheric air the dark waves emanate from the sun and become luminous. Ether or the sky ([\*\*\* 273-4] ---aiter) is the chosen place, the abode of pure light. Among metallic bodies, the one containing the highest proportion of fire, or latent light, is iron ([\*\*\* 273-5] ---sideros). The ease with which internal fire, through shock or friction, can fly out in the form of brilliant sparks is well known. It is important to communicate this active fire to the passive subject: only it has the power to modify its cold and sterile complexion by rendering it fiery and prolific. The sages call it green lion, wild and ferocious lion --cabalistically [\*\*\*-273-6] ---leon pher (35) ---which is rather suggestive so as to dispense from insisting any further.

In a previous work while describing a bas-relief from the basement of Notre-Dame de Paris

(36) we have pointed out the relentless fight which the bodies, placed in contact, engage in. Another translation of the hermetic combat exists on the façade of a wooden house, built in the 15th century at la Ferte-Bernard (Sarthe). There again we find the jester, the man with a tree trunk, the pilgrim, familiar images which seem to be part of a formula applied towards the end of the Middle Ages to the decoration of the modest dwellings of unpretentious alchemists. We also see the Adept in prayer as well as the mermaid, emblem of united and pacified natures, whose meaning has been commented upon elsewhere. That which especially interests us ---because the subject is directly connected to our analysis ---are the two angry, distorted and grimacing mammoets sculpted on the two outside supports of the cornice on the third floor (Plate XXI and Plate XXII). Too far removed from each other to be able to come to grips, they attempt to satisfy their native aversion for each other by throwing stones. These grotesque figures have the same hermetic meaning as that of the children on the porch of Notre-Dame. They attack each other with frenzy and try to stone one other. While in the cathedral of Paris the indication of the opposite tendencies is given by the different gender of the young fighters, it is only the aggressive character of the figures which appears on the Sarthe dwelling. Two men, of similar appearance and costume, express, one, the mineral body, and two, the other the metallic body. This external similitude further reconciles fiction with physical reality, but resolutely deviates from operative esotericism. If the reader has understood what we wish to teach, he will find without difficulty in these diverse symbolic expressions of the combat of the two natures the secret materials whose reciprocal destruction opens the first door to the work. These bodies are Nicolas Flamel's two dragons, Basil Valentine's eagle and lion, and Philalethes and the Cosmopolite's magnet and steel.

As for the operation by which the artist inserts into the philosophical subject the igneous agent which is its animator, the Ancients have described it under the allegory of the fight of the eagle and the lion, or of the two natures, one volatile, the other fixed. The Church has veiled it in the dogma, entirely spiritual and rigorously true, of the Visitation. At the end of this artifice, the book, opened, shows its engraved bark leaves. It then appears, to the eyes' astonishment and the soul's joy, covered with admirable signs which manifest its constitutional change.

Bow down, Magi of the Orient, and you, Doctors of the Law; bow your forehead, sovereign princes of the Persians, of the Arabs and of India! Watch, adore and be silent, for you could never understand. This is the divine Work, supernatural, ineffable, whose mystery no mortal will ever penetrate, In the nocturnal, silent and deep firmament shines one single star, an enormous heavenly body, resplendent, composed of all the celestial stars, your luminous guide and the torch of universal

Wisdom. See: the Virgin and Jesus are resting, calm and serene under the palm tree of Egypt. A new sun irradiates the center of the center of the wicker basket which the cystophores of Bacchus, the priestesses of Isis, the Ichthus of the Christian catacombs bore once upon a time. The ancient prophecy is at last realized. Oh miracle! God, master of the Universe, incarnates himself for the salvation of the world and is born on men's earth in the frail form of a very little child.

(1) Remark in passing, that the piled-up stones or some fissured rocks are indeed reproduced here and not waters. We find the obvious proof of this in a subject of the 16th century located in the same region: the bas-relief of Adam and Eve at Montferrand (Puy-le-Dome). On it we notice our first parents, tempted by the human-headed snake, curled around the Tree of Paradise. The ground of this beautiful composition is treated in the same fashion and the tree of life develops its roots around a pile in all ways similar to the one on top of which the Man of the Woods is standing. (2) [\*\*\* 251-1] (mustes) has for root [\*\*\* 251-3] (muo) to be silent, to conceal, from which comes the old French word musser which corresponds to the Picard word mucher, to hide, to dissimulate. (3) This is the reason for the appearance of his clothing and his local name. (4) *Le Grand Calendrier ou Compost des Bergers...*; Lyons, Louys Odin, 1633. (5) Translator's Note: Origin of the French saying "to mistake bladders with lanterns", whose analog in English is: "to believe that the moon is made of green cheese". (6) Some occultists place the Jester or the Alchemist as the last of the 21 cards of the deck, that is to say, after the card The World and it is given the highest value. Such an order would be without any great consequence ---the Jester having no number, being out of the sequences ---if we did not know that the tarot, complete hieroglyph of the Great Work contained the 21 operations or stages through which the philosophical mercury must pass before it reaches the final perfection of the Elixir. Since the work occurs precisely thanks to the jester or the prepared mercury submitted to the will of the operator, it seems logical to us to name the artisans before the phenomena which must be born from their collaboration.

(7) In Greek [\*\*\* 253-1] ---krotalon, rattle, corresponds to our crotale, or rattle snake, and we know that, in the hermetic science, all snakes are hieroglyphs of the mercury of the sages. (8) It is only in the 16th century that a crossing bar was added to the original vertical line so as to represent the cross, image of death and resurrection. (9) Philippe Berger: *Revue Archaeologique* (Archaeological Review), April 1884. (10) Translator's Note: Montjoie is the name the French gave to cairns or heaps of stone and it can translate as mounds of joy or my joy or mounts of joy as all these interpretations sound the same in French. (11) *Le Livre des Figures Hieroglyphiques*, op cit. (12) The myth of the dragon and of the knight who attacks it, plays an important role in the heroic or popular legends as well as in the mythologies of all people. The Scandinavian tales as well as the Asian ones describe to us these exploits. In the middle ages the knight Gozon, the knight of Belzunce, St Romain, etc., fight and kill the dragon. The Chinese fable is closer to reality. It tells us of the famous alchemist Hujumsin, ranked among the gods for having discovered the philosophers' stone; he had killed a horrible dragon which ravaged the country and he had attached the corpse of this monster on the top of a pillar, "which can still be seen today", says the legend. After which the alchemist was raised to the sky. (13) *Les Douze Clefs de Philosophie*, op. cit. II, p. 140. (14) The golden Square House (Carroir), a dwelling of wood, built in the 15th century has a ground floor of which only the structure remains and a gabled attic, added later. Houses, just like books and men, often have a strange destiny. An unfortunate fate caused this beautiful mansion to lose its corner towers. Built at the intersection of two streets, it forms a cut-off corner, and we know how medieval builders could take advantage of such a layout, by beveling edges, by rounding off the lateral juttings of the corbelled parts with turrets, barizans, and watchtowers. We can assume that this golden square house, if we judge by the elongated shapes of its corner pillars in an out of plumb position, must have looked like the harmonious and original type of building which was favored by medieval esthetics. Unfortunately nothing remains of it except some sculpted corbels, crude, half-worm-eaten, miserable bony extensions, fleshless patella of a wooden skeleton. (15) Thus it is still called the Milky Way. The Greek mythologists tell us that the gods walked this Way to go to the Palace of Zeus and that the heroes also used it to enter into Mount Olympus. The path of St James is the starry road, accessible to the elect ones, to the brave, knowledgeable, and persevering mortals. (16) *Viatoroum: Hoc est de Montibus Planetarum septem seu metallorum*; Rouen, Hean Berthelin, 1651. (17) *Pilot of the Live Wave*, which is the title of an alchemical work by Mathurin Eyquem, Esquire of Marineau published by Jean d'Houry, Paris 1678. (18) Translator's Note: Author of the *Roman de la Rose*. (19) Translator's Note: A cemetery for lost children who died in Paris. (20) In other words, in the disguise of a pilgrim; he had himself later represented at the Chamal house of the Innocents wearing the same disguise. (21) The legend of St James told by Albert Poisson, contains the same symbolic truth. "In 835 Theodomir, bishop of Iria, was told by a mountain dweller that, on a wooded hill some distance west of Mt Pedrose, one could see at night a soft slightly bluish star with marvelous shining quality above the same place. Theodomir went with his entire clergy to this hill; they searched in the indicated place and they found in a marble coffin a perfectly preserved body, which certain clues proved to be that of the apostle, St James". The present cathedral, destined to replace the early primitive church, destroyed by the Arabs in 997, was built in 1082. (22) Boulogne presents some analogy with the Greek [\*\*\* 265-7] (boulaïos), the one who presides over councils. Diana was nicknamed [\*\*\* 265-8] (boulaïa), goddess of good advice. (23) [\*\*\* 265-9] (mesites), root [\*\*\* 265-10] (mesos), that which is in the middle, which stands between two extremes. It is our Messiah who in the Work fulfills the mediator's function of Christ between the Creator and his creature, between God and man. (24) Orleans, French town; the

name sounds like "or leans", which in old French means "gold is here", or "there is gold her". (25) Similar to that of Christ, the passion, the martyrdom of sulphur which dies to redeem its metallic brothers, ends with the redemptive cross. (26) *Introitus apertus ad oclusum Ragis palatium*, op cit., XX, 6. (27) Nicolas Flamel: *Le Livre des Figures Hieroglyphiques*; translated from Latin to French by P. Arnauld in *Three Treatises of Natural Philosophy*, Paris, G. Marette, 1612. (28) Albert Poisson: *L'Alchimie au XIVE siecle. Nicolas Flamel (Alchemy in the 14th Century ---Nicolas Flamel)*; Paris, Chacomac, 1893. (29) Flamel died on March 22, 1418, holiday for the traditional alchemists. On that day the spring equinox opens the time for the Great Work. (30) *Recueil de Sept Figures Peintes (Memoir about Seven Painted Figures)*; *Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal*. #3047 (153 S.A.F.). On the back of the folio A there is a note from the secretary of Monsieur de Paulmy, to whom the book belonged, note corrected by Palmy's hand which says: "The seven illuminated figures of this volume are the famous figures which Flamel found in a book authored by Abraham the Jew". (31) *Introitus apertus ad oclusum Ragis palatium*, op cit. (32) *Discours d'Autheur incertain sur la Pierre des Philosophes (Discourse from an Uncertain Author about the Philosophers' Stone)*; Manuscript of the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, dated from 1590, # 19957 (Former French St Germain). A manuscript copy of the same treatise dated from April 1, 1696, belongs to the *Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal*, # 3031 (180, S.A.F.).

(33) The use of papyrus was completely abandoned at the end of the 11th century or at the beginning of the 12th. (34) Translator's Note: Envious in the old meaning of sparring with their words. (35) Translator's Note: [\*\*\* 273-9] ---Leon fer, is a phonetic rendering in Greek for the French lion vert (green lion). (36) See *Le Mystere des Cathedrales*, p. 79 (1926 edition) or p. 95 (1957 ed.)

### **THE SPELLS AND WONDERS OF THE CASTLE OF DAMPIERRE I**

In the Santoine region to which Coulonges-sur-l'Autize, the county town where once stood Louis d'Estissac's beautiful dwelling belongs, the forewarned tourist can discover yet another castle whose preservation and significantly singular decoration renders it even more interesting: the castle of Dampierre-sur-Boutonne (in the French Department of Charente-Inferieure). Built at the end of the 15th century under Francois de Clermont (1), the castle of Dampierre is presently the property of Dr Texier from Saint-Jean-d'Angely (2). By the abundance and the variety of the symbols which it offers, like so many enigmas, to the sagacity of the seeker, the castle deserves to be better known and we are pleased to particularly commend it to the attention of the disciples of Hermes.

In outer architecture, though elegant and in good taste, remains very simple and presents nothing remarkable; but it is with buildings as it is with certain people: their unobtrusive bearing and the modesty of their appearance only serve to veil that which in them is of a higher essence.

In between round towers covered with machiolated conical roofs lies the Renaissance-style main body of the building whose façade opens onto the outside through ten flattened vaults. Five of them form a colonnade on the ground level while the other five, directly superposed on the lower ones, let the light pour into the second story. These openings light up covered walks giving access to inner rooms and the whole gives the effect of a wide loggia crowning the ambulatory of a cloister. Such is the humble cover to the magnificent picture album of which the stone pages ornament the vaults of the higher gallery (Plate XXIII).

While we may know today the name of who built the new buildings destined to replace the old feudal fortress of Chateau-Gaillard (3), we are still ignorant of the unknown and mysterious individual to whom Hermetic philosophers owe the symbolic pieces which they shelter.

It is almost certain, and on this point we share Leon Palustre's opinion, that the paneled ceiling of the higher gallery, where all of Dampierre's fascination lies, was executed between 1545 or 1546 and 1550. Less certain however is the attribution of this work to individuals, no doubt well known, but who nevertheless are total strangers to it, certain authors suggested the emblematic motifs emanated from Claude de Clermont, baron of Dampierre, governor of Ardres, colonel of the Grisons and gentleman of the Privy Chamber. Now, in his *Vie des Femmes Illustres* (4), Brantome says that during the war between the king of England and the king of France, Claude de Clermont was ambushed by the enemy and died in 1545. Therefore he could not have been even remotely involved in works undertaken after his death. His wife, Jean de Vivonne, daughter of Andrew de Vivonne, Lord of the Chateignereaye, of Esnandes, and of Arelay, Counselor to and Chamberlain of the king, Seneschal of Poitou, etc., and of Louise de Daillon de Lude, was born in 1520. She became a widow at 20. Her wit, her distinguished personality and her high virtue gained her a reputation such that, just like Brantome de Daillon duLude, was born in 1520. She became a widow at 20. Her wit, her distinguished personality and her high virtue gained her a reputation such that, just like de Brantome who praised the scope of her learning, Leon Palustre (5) honors her with being the instigator of the bas-relief of Dampierre. "There", he says, "Jeanne de Vivonne took pleasure in having an entire series of more or less understandable compositions executed by sculptors of rather ordinary talents". Finally, a third attribution is not

even worth retaining. Abbot Nogues (6), by producing the name of Claude-Catherine de Clermont, daughter of Claude and Jeanne de Vivonne, expresses a totally unacceptable opinion, as Palustre says: "This future chatelaine of Dampierre, born in 1543, was but a child at the time the work was being completed".

So, not to be guilty of any anachronism, are we forced to grant the paternity of the symbolic décor of the higher gallery to Jeanne de Vivonne alone. And yet, as convincing as this hypothesis may seem, it is impossible for us to endorse it. We strongly refuse to acknowledge a woman of 25 as the beneficiary of a science demanding more than twice as many years of sustained efforts and persevering studies. Even supposing that, in her prime and in defiance of all philosophical rules, she could have been the recipient of an oral initiation from some unknown Artist, it remains, nonetheless, that she would have had to control, through obstinate and personal toil, the truth of the teaching. Now, nothing is more trying, and more disheartening than to pursue, for many long years, a series of experiments, trials and attempts demanding a constant zeal, and the renouncing of all public matters, relationships, and external preoccupation. Voluntary seclusion, and renouncing the world are indispensable conditions should one wish to acquire, along with practical knowledge, notions of a yet more secret symbolic science, that covers and occults them from the common people. Was Jeanne de Vivonne perhaps subjected to the requirements of an admirable mistress, lavishing infinite treasures, but uncompromising on all her worshippers implicit obedience and staunch loyalty? Nothing in her that we can find justifies such a conclusion. On the contrary, hers is a totally worldly life. Admitted to the court, writes Brantome "at the early age of eight, she was raised there and forget nothing of it; and it was good to hear her speak as I have seen our kings and queens take pleasure in hearing her do so for she knew nothing of it; and it was good to hear her speak as I have seen our kings and queens take pleasure in hearing her do so for she knew everything of her time and of the past; so much so that she was accepted as an oracle. So our most recent king, Henry III of France, made her lady-in-waiting to the queen, his wife". During her stay at the court, she saw five kings succeed to the throne in rapid sequence: Frances I, Henry II, Francis II, Charles IX and Henry III. Her virtue is recognized and well-known to the point of having been respected by the disrespectful Tallamant des Reaux; as for her learning, it exclusively of a historical nature. Facts, anecdotes, chronicles and biographies forming its sole content. In the final analysis, she was a woman with the gift of an excellent memory, who had listened, memorized much, and to such an extent that Brantome, her nephew and historiographer, speaking of Madame de Dampierre, says that "she was a genuine court register". The image is eloquent; Jeanne de Vivonne was a register, no doubt pleasant and instructive for consultants, but she was not anything else. Thrown so young into the intimacy of kings of France, did she even later on inhabit her castle of Dampierre at all? That was what we were wondering about while going through Jules Robuchanon's (7) beautiful book, when an account by Monsieur Georges Musset, alumnus of the Ecole des Chartres in Paris (8) and member of the Societe des Antiquaires de l'Ouest, appeared just in time to solve the problem and serve as a back up to our conviction, "But", writes G. Musset, "some heretofore unpublished documents have surfaced that seem to complicate the issue and produce inconsistencies. A recognition of Dampierre is written to the King because of his castle of Niort, on the 9th of August 1547 at the crowning of Henry II. The vassals are Jacques de Clermont, his independent son, for the bare ownership. The duty consisted of a bow made from the wood of a yew, and a sheaf of arrows without groove. It seems to result from this deed: (1) that Jeanne de Vivonne does not enjoy Dampierre nor her daughter Catherine who owns it; (2) that Claude de Clermont had a younger brother, Francois, who was under age but emancipated in 1547. There are no grounds for supposing that Claude and Francois were one and the same person, since Claude died during the campaign of Boulogne, that ended, as we know, by the treaty signed by Francis I and Henry VIII, on June 7, 1546. What happened then to Francois who isn't mentioned anywhere by Anselm? What happened to this land from 1547 to 1558? What happened to this land from 1547 to 1558? How could, out of such a stunning association of incapacities of ownership, whether usufructaries or under age individuals, emerge such a luxurious dwelling? These are mysteries that we cannot solve. We believe it is a great deal even to be able to glimpse some of the issues at play".

And so the opinion is confirmed ---according to which the philosopher to whom we owe all the embellishments of the castle ---paintings and sculptures ---is unknown to us and will perhaps remain so forever.

(1) Recueil de la Commission des Arts et Monuments Historiques de la Charente Inferieure, Vol XIV, Saintes, Frances, 1884.  
(2) Dr Jean Texier died May 22, 1953. His son, M. J. Texier, the present owner, specifically told us, in his letter dated January 15, 1965: "I am aware that at the time (1928) you exchanged several letters with my father and that is the reason why I gladly granted your publisher permission to take several pictures of the castle". We warmly thank M. J. Texier. (3) "Formerly, we could admire above the threshold of the Maison Richard, rebuilt approximately 15 years ago, a stone of respectable dimensions on which the following Greek word was carved in capital characters: [\*\*\* 282-1], in other words, that which is impregnable. It apparently came from the old castle. This stone was later used to build a pillar for the shed". In Recueil de la Commission des Arts et Monuments Historiques de la Charente-Inferieure, (Records of the Commission for Art and Historical Monuments of the Lower Charente), note written by M, Senior, with a forward by M. Fragnaud. (4) Life of Illustrious Ladies. (5) Leon Palustre: La Renaissance en France; Aunis et Saintonge (Renaissance on the French regions of

Aunis and Saintonge), p. 293. (6) Abbot Nogues: Dampierre-sur-Boutonne. Monographie Historique et archaologique (Dampierre-sur-Boutonne Historical and Archaeological Monograph), Saintes, France, 1883, p. 53. (7) Paysages et Monuments du Poitou (Landscapes and Monuments of the Poitou Region), photographs by Jules Robuchon, vol. IX: Dampierre-sur-Boutonne, by Georges Musset, Paris, France, 1893, p. 9. (8) The School of Paleontology and Librarianship and The Society of Antique Dealers of the West of France. THE

## CASTLE OF DAMPIERRE II

In a spacious room on the second story, we can notice in particular a large and rather beautiful fireplace, gilded and covered with paintings. Unfortunately, a hideous reddish wash covers, on the main frame of the mantelpiece, the subjects which once decorated it. Only a few isolated letters remain on the lower part. On the other hand, the two sides have kept their ornamentation and make us deeply regret the loss of the main composition. The pattern is the same on both sides. At the top, a forearm appears, the hand of which holds a raised sword and a pair of scales. Toward the middle of the sword, the central part of a floating phylactery is coiled, bearing on the inscription:

DAT. JVSTVS.FRENA.SVPERBIS (1).

Two golden chains, joining on top of the scale, are connected below one to the collar of a mastiff, and the other to the tether ring of a dragon whose tongue is darting out of its open mouth. Both raise their heads and glance in the direction of the hand. Both scales hold rolls of gold coins. The letter L topped by a crown is marked in one of the rolls. On another roll, there is a hand holding smaller scales and underneath the picture of a dragon with a threatening appearance.

Above these large patterns, that is to say, on the uppermost part of the sides, two medallions are painted. The first depicts a Maltese cross, with fleur-de-lis at its angles; the second bears the effigy of a graceful figurine.

The composition as a whole presents a paradigm of the hermetic science. Mastiff and dragon hold the place of the two material principles assembled and held in check by the gold of the sages, in accordance with the proper ratio and natural equilibrium, such as the image of the scales teaches us. The hand is that of the craftsman, steady when handling the sword---a hieroglyph for a penetrating, mortifying which modifies the properties of matter ---cautious when apportioning substances according to the rules of the philosophers' weights and measures. As for the rolls of gold coins, they clearly indicate the nature of the final result and one of the objectives of the Work. The mark made up of a crowned L has always been the traditional sign, in graphic notation, to mean projected gold, that is to say, alchemically produced gold. Just as vivid are the little medallions of which one represents Nature, always to be used as a guide and mentor by the artist, while the other proclaims the qualification of Rose-Cross which the learned author of these various symbols had acquired. The heraldic fleur-de-lis indeed corresponds to the hermetic rose, as an ensign and a coat of arms for the practicing knight who, thanks to divine grace, achieved the philosophers' stone. However, while this emblem brings us proof that the unknown Adept of Dampierre had knowledge, it also convinces us of the futility, the uselessness of any of our attempts to identify his true personality. We know why Rosicrucians used to call themselves invisible; therefore it is likely that, during his lifetime, he invariably surrounded himself with the indispensable precautions and took all appropriate measures to conceal his identity. He had wanted the man to keep in the background of the science, and his lapidary work to contain no other signature than the high, albeit anonymous, title of Rosicrucian and Adept.

On the ceiling of the same room where the large fireplace stands, there used to be a beam ornamented with this curious Latin inscription:

"Illustrious deeds, a magnanimous heart, a glorious renown which does not end in shame; a modest wealth properly acquired, honorably increased and always considered as a gift of God, here is that which injustice and envy cannot grant you, and which always should be a glory and an example for the family".

About this text already long gone, Dr Texier, the physician, has been kind enough to give us a few precise details: "The inscription about which you speak", he writes us, "was carved on a beam found in a second story room which, because it fell into decrepitude, had to be changed about sixty or eighty years ago. The inscription was recorded in its exact words but the beam fragment where it was written in golden letters was lost. My father-in-law, to whom this castle used to belong, remembers quite well having seen it" (2).

Paraphrasing Solomon in Ecclesiastes 3:13, where it is said that "every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God", this fragment defines in a positive way, and is sufficient to explain, the mysterious occupation to which the enigmatic lord of Dampierre was, under cover, devoting himself. In any case the inscription reveals in its author an unconventional wisdom. No labor, whatever it may be, can obtain a better acquired prosperity; the worker receives from nature herself the entire salary he is entitled to, and this salary is computed in proportion to his skill, his

efforts and his perseverance. And as practical science that has always been recognized as a genuine gift of God by all the possessors of the Magistry, the fact that this profession of faith considers an acquired fortune as a gift of God is enough to point to its alchemical origin. Its gradual and honorable increase could not, in these conditions, surprise anyone.

Two other inscriptions coming from the same dwelling are worth mentioning here. The first, painted on the mantle of a fireplace, contains a six-line stanza under a work of art composed of the letter H holding two interlaced D's decorated with human faces in profile, that of an old man, and that of a young man. This little piece, cheerfully written, glorifies the happy existence, bearing the stamp of calm and serenity, and of kind hospitality, which our philosopher led in his attractive dwelling.

DVOLCE.EST.LA.BIEN.SVYVRE.

EMMY.SOYET.PRINTANS.SOYET.HYVERS.

SOVBS.BLANCHE.NEIGE.OV.RAMEAVX.VERTS.

QVAND.VRAYS.AMIS.NOVS.LA.FONT.VIVRE.

AINS.LEVR.PLACE.A.TOVVS.EST.ISI.COMME.AVX.VIEVLS.AVX.LEVNES.AVSSI.

SWEET IS LIFE WHEN IT IS WELL LED, BE IT SPRING, BE IT WINTER, UNDER WHITE SNOW OR GREEN BOUGHS,  
WHEN TRUE FRIENDS LIVE IT WITH US. AND EVERYONE'S PLACE IS HERE THE OLD'S AND YOUNG'S ALIKE.

The Second one, which decorated a larger fireplace covered with ornaments of red, gray and gold, is a simple proverb of a beautiful ethical nature but which the superficial and presumptuous human beings of our time are loath to practice:

SE.COGNESTRE.ESTRE.ET.NON.PARESTRE.

To know oneself, to be and to not show off.

Our Adept is right; knowing oneself is what enables us to acquire the knowledge, the purpose and the meaning of life, the basis of all genuine values, and this power, which raises the hard working man who can acquire it, incites him to live in a modest and noble simplicity, the outstanding virtue of higher minds. It was an axiom that masters used to repeat to their disciples, and through which they signified to them the only means of attaining the highest knowledge: "If you want to know wisdom", they used to say, "know thyself well and you will know it".

(1) The just dampens the proud one. (2) Much later, the wooden slab bearing the inscription which we reproduce was found, amongst other pieces of wood, in a sheep pen used as a separation partition.

### **THE CASTLE OF DAMPIERRE III**

The upper gallery, whose ceiling is so curiously ornamented, takes up, between the two towers, the entire length of the building. As we have mentioned, daylight pours in through five bay windows separated by squat columns, each fitted inside with engaged supports securing the springing of the arches. Two windows with straight transoms and rectilinear lintels open at both ends of the gallery. Transversal ribbed moldings take on the flattened arch form of the bay windows and are crossed by two lengthwise parallel ribbed moldings, thus marking the frame of the panels which are the object of our study (Plate XXIV). They were described by Louis Audiat (1) long before us. However, knowing nothing of the science to which they refer and of the essential cause linking together so many bizarre images, he endowed his book with a character of inconsistency that the figures themselves take on for the layman. When reading the *Epigraphie Santone*, it would seem that whim, fantasy and extravagance presided over its execution. And so the least that can be said about this work is that it does not appear very serious, lacks any depth, is odd, and without any interest save an excessive peculiarity. Certain unaccountable mistakes further add to the unfavorable impression it makes upon us. Thus, an example, the author mistakes a cubic stone, cut, and placed on the water (Series I, Panel 5) for "a ship on rough water"; elsewhere (Series IV, Panel 7) a stooped woman planting pits near a tree becomes for him "a traveler who tramps wearily across a desert". In the first panel of the fifth series ---may our female readers forgive him this involuntary comparison ---he sees a woman in place of the devil himself, hairy, winged, horned, perfectly clear and visible. Such mistakes denote an inexcusable heedlessness in an epigraphist conscious of his responsibility and the accuracy required by his occupation.

According to Dr Texier, to whom we are obliged for this information, the figures of Dampierre were never published in totality. Nevertheless, a reproduction of them exists, drawn after the original and kept at the museum of Saintes. It is to this drawing that we have resorted for some patterns lacking in precision and so as to make our description as thorough as can be.

Apart from the subject which is sculpted in a bas-relief form, almost all the emblematic compositions include an inscription engraved within a phylactery. While the image refers straight to the practical side of the science, the epigraph mainly proposes a moral or philosophical meaning; it appeals to the worker rather than to the work and, using now an apothegm,



now a parable, it defines a quality, a virtue the artist must possess, or appoint of doctrine he ought no to ignore. And, by the very fact that they are provided with phylacteries, these figures reveal the scope of their secrecy, and their being assigned to some occult science. In fact, the Greek [\*296-1] (phylakterion), formed from [\*296-2], to keep, maintain, and from [\*296-3] (terein), to preserve, indicates the function of this ornament, in charging of keeping and preserving the occult and mysterious meaning hidden behind the natural expression of the composition it accompanies. It is the sign, the seal of this Wisdom which is on guard against the wicked, as Plato says: [\*\*\*296-4] (Sophia e peri tus ponerus phulaktiche ---Wisdom has been placed above all as guardian). Whether it bears an epigraph or not, it suffices to find a phylactery on any subject to be assured to the seeker and marked by its mere presence. And the truth of this meaning, the reality of this significance are always to be found in the hermetic science termed eternal wisdom by the ancient masters. Therefore, one should not be surprised to find streamers and parchments abundantly represented among the attributes of religious scenes or profane compositions of our great cathedrals as well as in the less restrictive framework of lay architecture.

Lined up in three rows perpendicular to the axis, the panels of the upper gallery are 93 in number. Of this number, 61 refer to the science, 24 offer monograms intended to separated them into series, 4 represent only geometric ornaments, executed at a later date, and the last 4 show an empty and smooth slab. The symbolic panels where the interest of the ceiling of Dampierre is concentrated, form a set of figures dispatched into seven series. Each series is isolated from the next three panels laid in a transverse line, and alternatively decorated with the monogram of Henry II and the interlaced crescents of Diane de Poitiers or Catherine de Medici, monograms which can be found on many buildings of the same period. We eventually came to the conclusion, a rather surprising one, that most mansions or castles bearing the double D linked to the letter H and the triple crescent have a decoration of indisputable alchemical character. But why are these same dwellings coined by the authors of monographs with the title of "castles of Diane de Poitiers" based on the sole presence of the monogram in question? Yet neither the dwelling of Louis d'Esissac at Coulonges-dur-l'Autize nor that of the Clermonts, both placed under the protection of the king's too famous favorite, ever belonged to her. Furthermore, what reason could be invoked for the monogram and the crescents that could justify their presence among hermetic emblems? To what thought, to what tradition could the initiates of the nobility have yielded when they placed their painted and sculpted hieroglyphic works under the fictitious protection of a king and his concubine --objects of public disapproval? "Henry II", writes the Abbot of Montgaillard (2), "was a foolish, brutal prince showing a deep lack of concern for the well-being of his subjects; this wicked king was constantly dominated by his wife and his old mistress; he left the reins of the state to them and did not shrink from any of the cruelties exerted on the Protestants. Of him it can be said that he extended the reign of Francis I in matters of political despotism and religious intolerance". It is therefore impossible to admit that well-read philosophers, men of education and high ethics, would have entertained the thought of offering their works as a token of esteem to the royal couple whose debauchery was to render them shamefully famous.

The truth is different, for the crescent belongs neither to Diane de Poitiers nor to Catherine de Medici. It is a symbol issuing from ancient times, known to the Egyptians and the Greeks, used by the Arabs and Saracens long before it was introduced into our Western Middle Ages. It is the attribute of Isis, of Artemis or Diane, of Selene, of Phoebe and of the Moon, the spagyric emblem of silver and the seal of the color white. It has a triple meaning: alchemical, magical, cabalistic, and this triple hierarchy meaning, synthesized in the image of interlaced crescents, embraces the scope of ancient and traditional knowledge. Consequently we should be less surprised to see the symbolic triad represented close to obscure signs, since it provides them with its support and permits to indicate to the investigator the science to which they belong.

As for the monogram, it can easily be explained, and it shows once again how the philosophers have used emblems of known meaning, and endowed them with a special, usually unknown, sense. It was the surest means they had at their disposal to hide from the layman a science figuratively exposed in full view: a revived Egyptian method whose teaching, translated in hieroglyphics on the outer walls of temples, remained worthless to those who did not possess the key. The historical monogram is formed of two D's, intertwined and connected by the letter H, the initial of Henry II. Such at least is the lay formulation of a cipher which veils under its image an altogether different meaning.

It is known that alchemy is based on the physical metamorphoses brought about by the spirit, a designation given to the universal vitality which emanates from the divinity, which maintains life and motion, provokes its arrest or death, evolves the substance and asserts itself as the only life-giver of all that which is. Now, in alchemical notation, the sign of the spirit is none other than the letter H of the Latins and of the letter eta (H) of the Greeks. We will provide later, when examining one of the panels where this character is depicted with a crown (Series VII, 2), some of its symbolic applications. For the time being, it suffices to say that the spirit, the universal agent, constitutes, in the accomplishment of the work, the main unknown, the determination of which ensures full success. However this unknown, which is beyond all bounds of human understanding, can only be acquired through divine revelation. The masters used to say again and again, "God gives wisdom to whom he pleases and transmits it through the Holy Ghost, the light of the world; that is why the science is said to be a Gift of God, formerly solely for his ministers, hence the name sacerdotal Art which it originally bore". Let us add that

during the Middle Ages the Gift of God applied to the Secretum secretorum (Secret of Secrets), which precisely signifies the secret par excellence, that of the universal spirit.

And so, the Donum Dei (Gift of God) revealed knowledge of the science of the Great Work, key to the materializing of the spirit and the light ([\*298-1] ---Helios), appears incontestably in the form of the monogram of the double D (Donum Dei) united with the sign for the spirit (H), Greek initial for the sun, the Father of Light, Helios. Nothing could better indicate the alchemical character of the figures of Dampierre than the study of which we shall now proceed to undertake.

(1) Louis Audiat: Epigraphie Santone et Aunisonne; Paris, J.B. Dumoulin, and Niort, L. Clouzot, 1870. (2) Abbot of Montagaillard: Histoire de France, vol. I, p. 186; Paris, Moutardier, 1827.

## CASTLE OF DAMPIERRE IV

First Series (Plate XXV)

Panel 1 ---Two trees of same size and similar thickness appear next to each other on the same ground; one is green and vigorous (1), the other inert and dried-up. The streamer which seems to bind them together bears these words:

.SOR.NON.OMBIBUS.AEQVE.

Fate is not equal for all.

This truth, which applies within the limits of human existence, seems to us all the more relative because destiny, whether dismal or successful, easy or unsettling, leads us all, without distinction or privilege, towards death. But if we transpose this truth within the hermetic domain, it takes on a definite positive sense, one which ought to have secured its being chosen by our Adept.

According to the alchemical doctrine, ordinary metals, torn out of their ore bearing earth to satisfy the demands of industry, forced to yield to man's whims, seem in fact to be the victims of a glaring evil spell. As an ore, they lived deep within the rock and slowly evolved toward the perfection of native gold, they are now condemned to die as soon as they are extracted, and perish under the ill-fated action of a reducing fire. The smelting process, while separating them from the nutritive elements associated with the mineralizing elements responsible for maintaining their activity, kills them by fixing the temporary and transitory form which they had acquired. Such is the meaning of the two symbolic trees, one expressing mineral vitality, the other metallic inertia. From this simple image, the intelligent and sufficiently well-read investigator of the art's principles will be able to draw useful and profitable conclusions. If he remembers that the old masters recommended to begin the work at the very point where nature completes here; if he knows how to kill the living in order to revive the dead, he will no doubt discover which metal he must take and what mineral he should choose in order to begin his first labor. Then, pondering Nature's operations, he will learn from her the manner of uniting the revived body to another living body ---for life desires life ---and, if he has understood us, he will see with his eyes and touch with his hands the material evidence of a great truth.

These words are perhaps too succinct and we regret it; but our obedience to the rules of traditional discipline does not permit us to be more precise nor to elaborate any further.

Panel 2 ---A fortress, raised on a glacis, crowned with crenels and machicolations, provided with loopholes, and capped with a dome, is pierced by a narrow barred window and a firmly bolted door. This edifice, of a powerful and forbidding appearance, receives from large clouds a shower which the inscription refers to as a rain of gold:

.AVRO.CLAVSA.PATENT.

Gold opens closed doors.

Everyone knows that. But this proverb, whose application is at the basis of privilege, favoritism and all unfair promotions, cannot have, in a philosopher's mind, the figurative meaning we know it to possess. Corrupting gold is not the point here, but rather the mythical hermetic episode found in the fable of Jupiter and Danae. Poets tell us that this princess, the daughter of Acrisius, king of Argos, was imprisoned in a tower because an oracle had foretold her father that he would be killed by his grandson. Now, the walls of a prison, however thick they may be, could not constitute a real obstacle to a god's will. Zeus, a great lover of romantic episodes and of metamorphoses, ever preoccupied with deceiving Hera's vigilance and enlarging his progeny, noticed Danae. Little troubled by the choice of means, he crept in by her side under the form of a golden shower, and, at the termination of the required time, the prisoner brought forth into the world a son who received the name of Perseus. Acrisius, most unhappy with this news, had mother and child shut up in a chest which was

jettisoned. Fishermen found the unusual vessel, carried by the currents all the way to the island of Seriphus, opened it and presented King Polydectes with the contents, who welcomed Danae and Perseus with great hospitality.

Under the guise of this wonderful tale an important secret is hidden, that of the preparation of the hermetic subject or the Work's raw material, and the obtaining of the sulfur, the stone's primum ens.

Danae represents our crude mineral, such as it is extracted from the mine. It is the earth of the sages which contains within it the active and hidden spirit, alone capable, says Hermes. Of realizing "by these things the miracle of only one thing". As a matter of fact, the word Danae comes from the Dorian Greek [\*303-1] (Dan), earth, and [\*303-2] (ae), breath, spirit. Philosophers teach that their raw material is a fragment of the original chaos and it is indeed what is meant by the name Acrisius, king of Argos and Danae's father: [\*303-3] (Akrisia), is confusion, disorder; [\*303-4] (Argos), means coarse, uncultivated, incomplete. As for Zeus, it denotes the sky, the air, and the water; to such extent that the Greeks, to express the action of raining, said: [\*\*\*303-5] (Gei o Zeus), Jupiter sends rain, or, more simply, it rains. Therefore this god appears as the personification of water, of a water capable of penetrating bodies, of a metallic water, for it is of gold or at least golden. It is precisely the case of the hermetic solvent, which, after undergoing fermentation in an oak barrel, assumes, upon decantation, the appearance of liquid gold. The anonymous author of an unpublished 18th century manuscript

(2) writes on the subject: "If you let this water run, you will see with your very eyes the gold shining in its first being with all the colors of the rainbow". The very union of Zeus and Danae indicates the manner in which the solvent must be applied; the body, reduced to a fine powder, put to digestion with a small quantity of water, is then dampened, watered little by little, gradually as it becomes absorbed ---a technique the sages called imbibation. Thus a softer and softer paste is obtained which becomes syrupy, oily, and eventually fluid and clear. Then subjected, under certain conditions, to the action of fire, a part of this liquor coagulates into a mass which falls to the bottom and is to be collected with care. This is our precious sulphur, the newborn child, the little king, and our Dauphin (or dolphin) (3), symbolic fish otherwise called echeuis, remora or pilot fish, Perseus or fish of the Red Sea (in Greek [\*\*\* 303-6] ---Perseus), etc. Panel 3 ---Four blooming flowers, erect on their stems, are in contact with the cutting edge of a bare saber. This small design has for motto:

.NVTRILETIAM.RESPONSA.FERVNTVR.

Likewise develop the announced oracles.

It is a piece of advice given the artist so that, by applying it, he can be assured of properly conducting the coction, or the Magistry's second operation. Nutri etiam responsa feruntur, entrusts him with the spirit of our philosophy by the intermediary of the petrified characters of his work.

These oracles, four in number, correspond to the four flowers or colors which appear during the evolution of the Rebis and reveal outwardly to the alchemist the successive stages of the inner work. These stages, diversely colored, bear the name of Regimens or Reigns. Ordinarily, they are reckoned to be seven. To each regimen the philosophers have attributed one of the higher divinities of the Olympus and one of the celestial planets, whose influence is felt parallel to theirs, at the time they become dominant. According to the widely-held opinion, planets and divinities develop their power simultaneously in a fixed hierarchy. To the reign of Mercury ([\*304-1] ---Hermes ---basis, ground work), the first stage of the work, succeeds that of Saturn ([\*304-2] ---Chronos ---the old man, the fool); then Jupiter governs ([\*304-3] ---Zeus ---union, matrimony), then Diana ([\*304-4] ---Artemis ---whole, fulfilled), or the Moon, whose shiny robe is now woven of white hair, now made with snow crystals; Venus, vowed to green ([\*304-5] ---Aphrodite ---beauty, grace), then inherits the throne, but soon Mars chases her away ([\*304-6] ---Ares ---fit, fixed) and this warlike prince, whose clothes are dyed with coagulated blood, is himself overthrown by Apollo ([\*304-7] ---Apollo ---the victorious), the Sun of the Magistry, emperor clothed in shiny scarlet, who definitely establishes his sovereignty and power over the ruins of his predecessors (4).

Some authors, comparing the colored stages of the coction of the seven says of creation, have coined for the complete labor the expression Hebdomas hebdomadum, the Week of weeks, or simply the Great Work, because the alchemist must closely follow, for his microcosmic realization, all the circumstances which accompanied the Great Work of the Creator. However the various regimens are more or less clear, and vary considerable as far as duration and intensity is concerned. So the masters limited themselves to mentioning only the four essential and preponderant colors because they present more sharpness and permanence than the others, namely: black, white, yellow or citrine, and red. These four flowers of the hermetic garden must be cut successively, in sequence and at the end of their flowering, which explains the presence of the weapon in our bas-relief. Consequently, too much haste is to be feared, in the vain hope of shortening the duration, sometimes quite long, by exceeding the degree of heat necessary for the regimen of the time. The ancient authors advise prudence and warn apprentices against a too detrimental impatience; praecipitatio a diabolo (precipitous action goes to the devil), they say; for in seeking to reach the goal too quickly, they only succeed in burning the flowers of the compost and

provoking the irremedial loss of the work. It is therefore better, as the Adept of Dampierre teaches, to develop the oracles, which are the colored predictions or forebodings of the regular operation, with patience and perseverance, for as long as nature may demand it.

Panel 4 ---An old demolished tower, whose door has been yanked out, allows free access. This is how the image maker represented the open prison. Inside one can still see a pair of shackles in position, as well as three stones shown in the upper part. Two other shackles, extracted from the prison, can be seen besides the ruin. This composition marks the completion of Geber's three stones or medicines, obtained sequentially and designated by the philosophers by the names of philosophical Sulphur for the first; Elixir or potable Gold for the second; Philosopher's Stone, Absolute or Universal Medicine for the last. Each one of these stones has to undergo coction in the Athanor, the prison of the Great Work, and this is the reason why the last pair of shackles is still sealed inside. The two preceding ones, having accomplished their time of "mortification and penance", have left their fetters, visible on the outside.

The small bas-relief has for motto the saying of the apostle Peter (Acts 12:11), who was miraculously delivered from his prison by an angel:

.NV(N)C.SCIO.VERE.

Now I know of a surety!

Speech of sheer joy, outburst of intimate satisfaction, cry of cheerfulness which the Adept utters before the certainty of the marvel. Until then, doubt could yet have assailed him; but in the presence of the perfect and tangible realization he no longer fears error; he has discovered the way, recognized the truth, inherited the Donum Dei (Gift of God). Nothing of the great secret is unknown to him any longer. Alas! How many among the crowd of seekers can congratulate themselves on reaching the goal, on seeing with their eyes the prison opening up, a prison forever closed for the greatest number of them!

The prison also serves as an emblem of the imperfect body, initial subject of the Work, in which the aqueous and metallic soul is firmly attached and held. "It is this imprisoned water", says Nicolas Valois (5), "that unceasingly cries out: Help me, and I shall help you, that is, release me from my prison, and if one day you can liberate me, I shall make you master of the fortress where I am. And so the water locked up in this body is of the same water-nature as that which we gave it to drink, which is called Mercury Trismegistus, and that Parmenides understands when he says: Nature contains Nature. For this imprisoned water revels in its companion who comes to deliver it from its iron shackles, blends with it and finally, converting the same prison into themselves, rejecting that which is contrary to them ---and that is the preparation ---are both converted into mercurial and permanent water. It is therefore right that our divine Water is called the Key, Light, Diana who shines in the thick of night. For it is the entrance to the entire Work and that which illuminates mankind".

Panel 5 ---For having ascertained it experimentally, the philosophers certify that their stone is nothing else but a complete coagulation of mercurial water. The fact is translated by our bas-relief, where we see the cubic stone of ancient Freemasons float on the sea waves. Although such an operation seems impossible, it is nevertheless natural because our mercury carries within itself the sulphurous principle, rendered soluble, to which it owes its subsequent coagulation. It is, however, unfortunate that the extremely slow action of this potential agent does not allow the observer to register the least sign of any reaction whatsoever in the beginning of the work. This is the cause of many artists' failure, who, quickly disappointed, abandon a difficult work which they deem to be in vain, although they have followed the right path and operated on the proper materials, canonically prepared. To them are addressed the words of Jesus, walking on the waters, to Peter, and which St Matthew recounts (Matt. 14:31):

.MODICE.FIDEI.QVARE.DVBITASTO.

O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

In truth we cannot know anything without the help of faith, and whosoever does not possess it cannot undertake anything. We have never seen skepticism and doubt build anything stable, noble or durable. We must often remember the Latin saying: Mens agit molem (The mind puts the mass into motion), for it is the deep conviction in this truth that will lead the wise worker to the happy end of his labor. It is from it, from this stout faith, that he will draw the virtues indispensable for the solution of this great mystery. The term is not exaggerated: we indeed find ourselves before a real mystery. The term is not exaggerated: we indeed find ourselves before a real mystery, as much by its development contrary to chemical laws, as by its obscure mechanism ---a mystery which the most learned scientist and the most expert Adept are unable to explain. For it is so true that nature in her simplicity seems to delight in proposing enigmas, before which our logic recoils, our reason gets confused, and our judgment misled.

Now the cubic stone, which the industrious nature engenders out of water alone ---the universal matter of the Peripatics --- and of which the art must sculpt the six facets according to the rules of occult geometry, appears in a formative stage in a curious bas-relief of the 17th century decorating the fountain of Vertbois in Paris (Plate XXVI).

As the two subjects are closely related, we will study here the more detailed Parisian emblem, thus hoping to cast some light on the symbolic expression of the image in Saintonge, which is too concise.

Built in 1633 by the Benedictine monks of St Martin-des-Champs, this fountain was originally erected inside the priory leaning against the surrounding wall. In 1712 the monks offered it to the city of Paris, for public use, along with the grounds needed to rebuild it, provided "that the site would be established in one of their convent's ancient towers and that an outer door would be placed there" (6). The fountain was thus placed against the so-called Tower of Vertbois, located on rue St Martin and took the name of St Martin's fountain which it kept for more than a century. The small structure, restored at the expense of the government in 1832, is made up of "a shallow, rectangular niche flanked by two Doric pilasters, with vermiculated embossments, which support an architraved cornice. On the cornice is built a kind of small helmet crowned by a winged cartouche. A sea conch tops the cartouche. The upper part of the niche is occupied by a frame in the center of which a vessel is sculpted" (7). The stone bas-relief measures 80 cm in height by 105 cm in width; the author is unknown.

And so it is that all the descriptions of the fountain of Vertbois, in all likelihood copied one from the other, are content to mention without further description, a vessel as the main motif. The drawing by Moisy, who was commissioned to illustrate Amaury Duval's account, doesn't enlighten us any further. His purely fanciful vessel, represented in profile, bears no trace of its singular freight, and one would seek in vain among the winding of marine volutes the large and beautiful dolphin accompanying it. Moreover, a good many people, unconcerned about details, see in this subject the heraldic ship (8) of Paris without suspecting that it proposes to the inquiring mind the enigma of an altogether different truth and of a less general order.

True, the accuracy of our remark could be questioned, and, where we identify an enormous stone, trimmed to the ship of which it is an integral part, one could but notice an ordinary package of some kind of merchandise. In this case however, one would be at a loss to explain the raised sail, incompletely brailed up on the mainmast's yard, a peculiarity which sheds light on the unique and voluminous package, thus unveiled on purpose. Hence is the intention of the work's creator manifest; it is an occult cargo, normally veiled to indiscreet surveys, rather than a package traveling on the deck.

Furthermore, viewed from the rear, the ship seems to move away from the onlooker and shows that its displacement is ensured by the mizen-sail (9), exclusive of the others. Alone it has the wind dead aft; alone, it transmits the energy of the ship gliding over the water. Now the cabalists write artimon (mizzen-mast) and pronounce antemon or antimony, a vocable behind which they hide the name of the subject of the sages. Anthemon in Greek means flower, and it is known that the raw material is called the flower of all the metals; it is the flower of flowers (flos florum); the root of this word, [\*311-1] (anthos) also conveys youth, glory, beauty, the most noble part of things, everything that possesses luster and shines like fire. We should not be surprised that Basil Valentine in his Triumphant Chariot of Antimony gave to the prime substance of the particular work he describes Fire Stone.

As long as it remains fixed to the hermetic ship (10), this stone, as we have said, must be considered as being in the process of elaboration. It is therefore essential to help it pursue the crossing so that neither tempests nor rocks (11) nor the thousand incidents of the journey can delay its arrival at the blessed haven its traveler, to anticipate, to avert possible causes of shipwreck, to maintain the vessel loaded with the precious cargo straight on its route, such is the task of the artisan.

This progressive, slow development explains why the stone is represented here in the appearance of a roughhewn block meant to receive the ultimate cutting in order to become our cubic stone. The cables fastening it to the ship clearly indicate, by their being crossed on its visible facets, the transitory condition of its evolution. It is known that the cross in the speculative order is figurative of the spirit, the dynamic principle, while it is used, in the practical domain, as the graphic sign for the crucible. Within it, within this vessel, the concentration of the mercurial water is brought about by bringing together its constituent molecules under the will of the metallic spirit and owing to the permanent help of fire. For spirit is the only force capable of changing dissolved bodies into new compact masses, in the same way that it compels crystals born of mother solutions to take on the specific, invariable form by which we can identify them. This is why the philosophers have compared the molecular binding of the mercurial solid, under the secret action of spirit, to that of a bag firmly compressed by criss-crossed bindings. The stone appears tied like a schina (from the Greek [\*311-2] ---sekadzo ---to lock, to close) and this corporification is made perceptible by the cross, the image of the Passion, i.e., during work at the crucible, each time that heat is cautiously applied at the required degree and following the appropriate rhythm. We should then make explicit sense of cable, which the Greeks called [\*311-3] ---kalos ---homonymous with the adverb [\*311-3] ---kalos --- meaning in an appropriate and effective manner.

It is the most critical stage of the work, the one when the stone's first coagulation, greasy and light, makes its appearance on the surface and floats on the waters. At that time, we must redouble precaution and prudence in the application of fire if we don't want to redden it prematurely and precipitate it. At first it manifests in the shape of a thin film, very fast broken, of which the fragments detached from the edges shrink, join together, thicken, and take on the form of a flat iron ---the isle of the Cosmopolite and the mythical land of Delos -- animated with gyratory movements and subjected to ceaseless shiftings. This isle another image of the hermetic fish, born from the sea of the Sages ---our mercury that Hermes calls *mare patens* --- the pilot fish of the Work, the first solid state of the embryonic stone. Some have called it *echeneis*, according to legend, held back and fixed the largest of ships, the dolphin, whose head we see emerging in our bas-relief, possesses just as positive a meaning. Its Greek name, [\*312-1] (*delphis*), indicates the matrix, and no one ignores that philosophers call mercury the receptacle and matrix of the stone.

Nevertheless, and so that no one is mistaken, let us say once more that we are not at all speaking of common mercury here, although its liquid quality could put us on a false trail and allow comparison with the secret water, the metallic humid radical. Being the masterful initiate that he was, Rabelais (12) gives in a few words the true characteristics of the philosophical mercury. In his description of the subterranean temple of the Holy bottle (*Pantagruel*, Bk. 5, Ch. 42) (13), he speaks of a circular fountain which occupies the center and deepest part of the temple. Around this fountain stand seven columns "these are the stones", says the author, "assigned by the ancient Chaldeans and magi to the seven heavenly planets; and in order that we should understand this in a less subtle sense, above the first and exactly perpendicular to the center of the sapphire hung a figure of Saturn holding his scythe with a golden crane at his feet, most cunningly enameled in the proper colors of Saturnine bird, in their proper order. Above the second, or hyacinthine, was Jupiter in Jovetian tin, facing left, with a golden eagle enameled in its natural colors on his breast. Above the third was Phoebus in refined gold, with a white cock on his right hand. Above the fourth, in Corinthian (14) bronze, Mars with a lion at his feet. Above the fifth Venus in copper, the same metal as that of which Aristonides made the statue of Athamas. At her feet was a dove. Above the sixth was mercury in quicksilver, fixed, firm and malleable with a stork at his feet". The text is categorical and cannot lend itself to misunderstanding. The mercury of the sages, as all authors certify, presents itself as a body of metallic appearance, with the consistency of a solid, and consequently immobile compared to quicksilver, of mediocre volatility in the fire, and finally liable to fix itself by a simple coction in a sealed vessel. As for the stork which Rabelais attributes to mercury, its meaning is drawn from the Greek word [\*313-1] (*pelargos*), stork, formed from [\*313-2] (*pelos*), pallid brown or black, and [\*313-3] (*argos*), white, which are two colors of the bird and of the philosophical mercury; [\*313-1] (*pelargos*) also designates a pot made of white and black clay, the emblem of the hermetic vase, i.e., of mercury whose water, alive and white, loses its light, its brightness, mortifies itself and becomes black, surrendering its soul to the stone's embryo that is born from its decomposition and is nourished by its ashes.

So as to bear testimony to the fact that the fountain of Vertbois was originally consecrated to the philosophical water, the mother of all metals and basis of the sacred Art, the Benedictine monks of St Martin-des-Champs had the diverse attributes relative to this fundamental liquor sculpted on the cornice which serves as a support to the bas-relief. Two oars and one caduceus intercrossed bear Hermes' petasus, represented under the modern form of a winged helmet, upon which a little dog watches. Some ropes coming out of the visor spread their coils on the oars and the winged wand of the god of the Work.

The Greek [\*313-4] (*plate*) by which the oar (15) was designated simultaneously proposes the meaning of vessel and of winnowing basket. The latter is a kind of wicker shell attributed to Mercury and which the cabalist writes "vent" (wind) (16). This is why the Emerald Table, speaking of the stone, allegorically conveys that "the wind carried it in its belly". This "van" (winnowing basket) is none other than the matrix, the vessel carrier of the stone, the emblem of mercury principal subject of our bas-relief. As for the caduceus, it is well known that it is the property of the messenger of the gods with the winged helmet and *talaria*. We will only say that the Greek word [\*314-1] (*kerukeion*), caduceus, by its etymology recalls the cock, [\*314-2] (*keruss*), consecrated to Mercury as the herald of the light. All these symbols evidently converge towards one and the same object, also indicated by the small dog positioned on top of the small helmet, whose special meaning ([\*314-3] --- *kranos* ---head, summit) marks the important part, in other words the culminating point of the Art, the key to the Great Work. Noel, in his *Dictionnaire de la Fable*, writes that "the dog was consecrated to Mercury as the most vigilant and most clever of all the gods". According to Pliny, the flesh of young dogs and served at the meals prepared for them. The image of the dog positioned on the helmet, shield of the head, furthermore constitutes a genuine rebus still suitable to mercury. It is a figurative translation of *cynocephalus* ([\*314-4] ---*kunokephalos* ---that which has a dog's head), a mystical form highly worshipped by the Egyptians, who granted it to a few higher deities, and especially to the god Thoth, who later became the Hermes of the Greeks, the Trismegistus of the philosophers, the Mercury of the Romans.

Panel 6 ---A gambling die is placed on a little garden table; in the foreground grow three herbaceous plants. As sole sign this bas-relief bears the Latin adverb:

.VTCVMQVE.

That is to say, i.e., in an analogous fashion, which could lead us to believe that the discovery of the stone might be due to chance and that knowledge of the Magistry would remain dependent on a fortunate cast of the dice. But we know for a fact that the science, the true gift of God, the spiritual light obtained through revelation, cannot be prone to such hazards. Not that one could not fortuitously discover, in this case as in any other, the flick of the wrist required by such a difficult operation; however, of alchemy amounted only to the acquisition of a special technique, of some laboratory artifice, it would amount to very little and would not exceed the value of a simple formula. Now, the science goes much beyond the synthetic fabrication of precious metals, and the philosophers' stone itself is but the first positive step enabling the Adept to raise himself all the way to the most sublime knowledge. Even if we remain in the physical domain, which is that of material manifestations and fundamental certainties, we can assert that the Work is not subject to the unexpected. It has its laws, principles, conditions, secret agents, and is the result of too many combined actions and diverse influences to obey empirical laws. It must be unveiled, its process must be understood, its causes and its accidents well known before proceeding with its implementation. And whoever cannot see it "in spirit" wastes his time and his energy in wishing to find it through practice. "The wise man's eyes are in his head", says Ecclesiastes 2:14, "but the fool walketh in darkness".

The gambling die therefore has another esoteric meaning. Its shape, which is that of the cube ([\*315-1] ---kubos ---gambling dice, cube), designates the cubic or chipped stone, our philosophers' stone and the cornerstone of the Church. But to be properly raised, this stone requires three successive repetitions of the same series of seven operations, which brings the total to 21 operations. This number corresponds exactly to the sum of the points marked on the die's six faces, since by adding up the first seven numbers one obtains 21. And the three series of seven are once again arrived at by adding up the same numbers of points by boustrophedon writing (17):

1 --6 --3 6 --5 --4

Positioned at the intersections of the sides of an inscribed hexagon, these numbers will translate the circular motion appropriate to the interpretation of another figure, emblematic of the Great Work, that of the serpent Ouroboros, aut serpens qui caudam devoravit (the Ouroboros serpent, or the serpent which devours its tail). In any case, this arithmetic figure, in perfect agreement with the work, consecrates the attribution of the cube or die to the symbolic expression of our mineral quintessence. It is the Isiac table carried out by the cubic throne of the great goddess.

By analogy, it is therefore sufficient to throw the die thrice on the table ---which amounts in praxis to redissolving the stone three times ---to obtain the latter with all its qualities. These are three growing stages which the artist has represented here by three plants. Finally, the reiterations essential to the perfection of the hermetic labor provide the reason for the composition of the hieroglyphic book of Abraham the Jew, Flamel tells us, of three times seven leaves. Likewise, a splendid illuminated manuscript, made at the beginning of the 18th century (18), contains 21 painted figures, each conforming to the 21 operations of the Work.

(1) At the foot of this tree in full foliage, the soil has been dug in the shape of a basin, so as to better retain the water that is poured. In the same way, the metal, dead by reduction, will be revived through frequent imbibitions. (2) *La Clef du Cabinet Hermetique* (The Key to the Hermetic Cabinet), "manuscript copied from the original belonging to M. Desaint, physician. Rue Hyacinth in Paris". (3) Translator's Note: Traditionally in French history, since 1349, the heir to the king of France, usually the first male offspring, was called the Dauphin, because he reigned over the Dauphine in the Alps, as the heir to the kings of England reigns over Wales. Dauphin in French also means dolphins, which is no longer considered a fish nowadays but a mammal. (4) We restrict ourselves to enumerate the successive stages of the second Work without proposing a particular analysis. Great Adepts, and Philaethes particularly in his *Introitus*, have provided a thorough study of the subject. Their descriptions reveal such awareness of the subject that it would be impossible for us to say more or to say it better. (5) Nicolas Flamel: *Les Cinq Livres* (The Five Books), Book I: *De la Clef du Secrets des Secrets*, Ms., op cit. (6) *Fontaines de Paris* (Fountains of Paris), drawn by Moisy. Captions and comments by Amaury Duval, Paris, 1812. (7) *Inventaire General des Richesses d'Art de la France*. Paris. *Monuments civils* (Comprehensive Survey of the Art Treasures of France. Paris. Secular Monuments), Paris, Plon, 1879, vol. 1. (8) Translator's Note: The author uses the word "nef" in French which means both a ship and the nave of a cathedral. (9) Translator's Note: Mizen-sail is in French "voile d'artimon". (10) Translator's Note: The word "nef" is used here, meaning both a ship and the nave of a cathedral. (11) Translator's Note: The term "ecueil" used in French also means pitfalls. (12) His works are signed by the pseudonym *Alcofribas Nasier*, the anagram of Francois Rabelais, followed by the title *Abstractor of Quintessence*, which in the Middle Ages used to designate in the popular language the alchemists of the time. The famous doctor and philosopher unquestionably declares himself to be an Adept and a Rosicrucian and put his writings under the aegis of the sacred Art. Moreover, in the Prologue to *Gargantua*, Rabelais indicates rather clearly that his work belongs to the category of hermetic and acroamatic closed books, the

understanding of which requires an extensive knowledge of symbols. (13) *Garagantua and Patagruel*, by Rabelais; Translated by J.M. Cohen, Penguin Classics, 1955. (14) The attribution of bronze to Mars proves that Rabelais knew the alchemical correspondence between planets and metals perfectly. In Greek, [\*313-4] (kalkos), meaning either copper or bronze, was used by the ancient Hellenic poets to define not copper or one of its compounds, but indeed iron. The author is thus right to assign it to the planet Mars. As for the Corinthian bronze, Pliny asserts that it presented itself under three forms. It has sometimes the luster of silver, sometimes that of gold, and could also be the result of an alloy of gold, silver and copper in approximately equal ratios. This last bronze was believed to have been accidentally produced by the fusion of precious metals with copper during the Corinth fire started by Mummius (146 BC). (15) In phonetic cabala, rame (French for oar), equivalent to aviron (French for paddle), also designates the philosophical water. [\*313-5] (rama), used for [\*313-6] (rasma), signifies sprinkling, watering, from the root [\*313-7], meaning to flow. (16) Translator's Note: "Van" (winnowing basket) and "vent" (wind) have the same pronunciation in French. (17) Translator's Note: Boustrophedon, an ancient form of writing in which the lines run alternately from right to left and left to right. (18) *La Generation et Operation du Grand-Oeuvre* (The Generation and Operation of the Great Work), manuscript from the Palais des Arts Library, in Lyons, France, #88 (Delandine, 1899), folio.

## THE CASTLE OF DAMPIERRE V

Second Series (Plate XXVII)

Panel 1 ---Thick clouds intercept the light of the sun and cast a shadow over a wild flower accompanied by the motto:

.REVERTERE.ET.REVERTER.

Return, and I shall return.

This quite legendary herbaceous plant was called Baraas by the Ancients. It was appropriately found on the flanks of Mt Lebanon above the path leading to Damascus (i.e., cabalistically, leading to mercury as the feminine principle: [\*319-1], Damar, woman, wife). It was seen blooming solely in the month of May, when Spring removes from the earth its shroud of snow. As soon as night fell, says Noel, "the plant starts to burst into flames and gives off a light like a small torch; but as soon as the day appears, this light disappears, and the herb becomes invisible; even the leaves that we have wrapped in handkerchiefs are no longer there, which sanctions the opinion of those who say that this plant is haunted by demons, because according to them it possesses an occult property that breaks charms and spells. Others assert that it has the power to transmute metals into gold, which is the reason why the Arabs call it the herb of gold; but they would not dare to pluck it or even come near it because it is said that they have experienced, several times, that this plant causes the sudden death of anyone who plucks it from the earth without taking the necessary precautions, and, since they are ignorant of these precautions, they leave it aside and don't touch it".

From this little theme, the artifice of the dissolution of the sulphur by the mercury is esoterically drawn: the plant expresses the vegetative virtue of the latter and the sun, the fiery nature of the former. The operation is all the more important because it leads to the acquisition of the philosophical mercury, a living, animated substance derived from a pure sulphur, radically united to the primitive and celestial water. We have previously stated that the outer mark allowing the certain identification of this water is a starred and radiant shape which coagulation caused to appear on its surface. Furthermore the astral signature of the mercury, as it was common to call the mark in question, asserts itself with even more clarity and vigor as the animation progresses and becomes more complete. The two paths of the Work require two different manners of undertaking the animation of the initial mercury. The first belongs to the brief way and requires only one technique by which the fixed is gradually dampened ---because any dry matter avidly drinks its own humidity --until the repeated affusion of the volatile on the body causes the compound to swell and turn into a pasty or syrupy mass, as the case may be. The second method consists on digesting the totality of the sulphur in three or four times its weight in water, decanting the resulting solution, then drying up the residue and reiterating the operation with a proportional quantity of fresh mercury. When the dissolution is complete, the feces, if any, are separated and the collected liquors are subjected to a slow distillation in a bath. Thus the superfluous humidity is released, leaving the mercury at the required consistency without any loss of its qualities, and ready to undergo hermetic coction.

This second practice is that which our bas-relief symbolically expresses.

It can easily be understood that the star ---the outer manifestation of the inner sun ---recurs each time a fresh portion of mercury is bathing the undissolved sulphur and the latter immediately ceases to be visible only to reappear during decantation, i.e., at the departure of the astral matter. "Return", says the fixed, "and I shall return". In seven successive repetitions the clouds conceal from view now the star, now the flower, according to the phases of the operation, so that the



artist can never, in the course of the work, glimpse simultaneously the two elements of the compound. And this truth happens to be confirmed until the end of the Work, since the coction of the philosophical mercury ---otherwise called heavenly body or star of the wise ---transforms itself into fixed sulphur, the fruit of our emblematic plant, whose seed is thus multiplied in quality, quantity and virtue.

Panel 2 ---At the center of this panel a fruit, which is usually taken to be a pear, but could as likely be an apple or a pomegranate, draws its meaning from the caption beneath which it appears:

.DIGNA.MERCES.LABORE.

Work worthily rewarded.

This fruit is none other than the hermetic gem, the philosophers' stone of the Great Work or the Medicine of the ancient sages, also called the Absolute, Little Coal or precious Carbuncle (*carbunculus*), the shining sun of our microcosm and the star of eternal wisdom.

It is a double fruit for it is picked from the Tree of Life when specially reserved for therapeutic uses, and from the Tree of Knowledge if the preferred use is metallic transmutation. These two properties correspond to two states of the same product, the first characterizing the red stone, translucent and diaphanous, destined for medicine as potable gold, and the second, the yellow stone, whose metallic orientation and fermentation by means of natural gold have rendered it opaque. For this reason, De Cyrano Bergerac (1), in his description of the emblematic tree at the foot of which he rests, endows the fruit of the magistry with two colors. "It was", he writes, "a plain Country, and so open that as far as my sight could reach, I did not discover so much as one Bush; and nevertheless when I awoke, I found myself under a Tree, in respect of which the tallest Cedars would but appear as Grass. The Trunk of it was of Massive Gold, its Branches of Silver, and its Leaves of Emeralds, which upon the resplendent Verdure of their precious surface, represented, as in a Looking- Glass, the Images of the Fruit that hand about them. But judge ye whether the fruit owed anything to the Leaves; the enflamed Scarlet of a large Carbuncle, composed one half of each of them; and the other was in suspense, whether it held its matter of a Chrysolite, or of a piece of gilt Amber; the blown Blossoms were large Roses of Diamonds, and oriental Pearls the Buds".

According to the artisan's skill, care, and prudence, the philosophical fruit of the tree of knowledge shows a more or less important virtue. For it is undeniable that the philosophers' stone used for the transmutation of metals is never endowed with the same power. Historical projections provide us with certain evidence of it. In the operation performed by J.B. van Helmont in his laboratory at Vilvorde near Brussels in 1618, the stone transmuted into gold 18,740 times its weight in flowing mercury. Richtausen, with the help of a product given by Labujardiere, obtained a result equivalent to 22,334 times per unit. The projection achieved by Seton in 1603 at the house of the merchant Koch of Frankfurt-am-Main was acted on a proportion equal to 1,155 times. In Dippel's retort, the powder Lascaris gave to Dierbach transmuted approximately 600 times its weight of quicksilver. However, another piece given by Lascaris displayed more efficacy; in the operation performed at Vienna in 1716 in the presence of Counselor Pantser von Hess, Count Charles-Ernest von Rappach, Count Joseph von Wurben and Freudenthal, and the brothers Count and Baron von Mettemich, the ratio reached a power in the vicinity of ten thousand. Furthermore, it is not useless to know that the maximum production is achieved by the use of mercury, and that the same quality of stone gives variable results depending upon the nature of the metals used as the basis for the projection. The author of Letters of the Cosmopolite affirms that if one part of Elixir converts into perfect gold a thousand parts of common mercury, it will only transform twenty parts of lead, thirty of tin, fifty of copper and one hundred of silver. As for the white stone, it will, in the same degree of multiplication, act on approximately half of these quantities.

But while the philosophers spoke little of the variable yield of the chrysopeus, on the other hand they displayed more prolixity toward the medical properties of the Elixir, as well as on the surprising effects that it enables one to obtain in the plant kingdom.

"The white elixir", says Batsdorff (2), "enables marvels on illnesses of all animals and especially on those women suffer from, for it is the true potable moon of the Ancients". The anonymous author of The Key to the Great Work (3) mentioning Batsdorff's text once more, asserts that "this medicine possesses other even more incredible virtues. When it is at the white stage of the Elixir, it has so much sympathy with women that it can renew their bodies and render them as robust and vigorous as they were in their youth. For this effect, a bath is first prepared with several fragrant herbs with which they should scrub themselves clean; then they go into a second bath without herbs, but in which 3 grains of the white elixir were dissolved in a pint of wine spirit and then poured into the water. They remain in this bath for a quarter of an hour, after which, without drying themselves, a great fire is to be prepared to dry this precious liquor. The ladies then feel so strong within themselves, and their body is rendered so white that they could not imagine it without having experienced it. Our godfather Hermes agrees with this operation, but besides these baths, desires that, at the same time and for seven

consecutive days, this Elixir be taken internally; and he adds, if a lady does the same thing every year, she will live exempt from all diseases to which other ladies are subject without experiencing any discomfort".

Huginus a Barma certifies that "the stone fermented with gold can be used in medicine in this manner: one scruple or 24 grains are to be taken, dissolved according to the art in two ounces of spirit of wine, and two to three and up to four drops will be prescribed depending on the illness' requirements, in a little wine or in some other suitable vehicle" (4). According to the ancient authors, all ailments are radically healed in one day that lasted for a month; in twelve days if they are a year old; in a month if they appeared more than a year ago.

But for this, as for many other things, we must know how to put ourselves on guard against excess imagination; the too enthusiastic author of *The Key to the Great Work* sees marvels even in the spirituous dissolution of the stone: "Burning golden sparks", says the writer, "must come out of it and an infinity of colors must appear in the vase". It is going a little too far in the description of phenomena which no philosopher points out. Furthermore, he does not acknowledge any limits to the virtues of the Elixir: "Leprosy, gout, paralysis, kidney stone, epilepsy, dropsy could not resist the virtue of this medicine". And as the healing of these reputedly incurable diseases doesn't seem sufficient to him, he eagerly adds to the list even more admirable properties. "This medicine causes the deaf to hear, the blind to see, the mute to speak, the lame to walk; it can totally renew a man by causing his skin to change, his teeth, fingernails and white hair to fall out, in stead of which now ones will grow, in the color desired". We are now drifting into humor and buffoonery.

Going by what the majority of sages say, the stone can give excellent results in the plant kingdom, particularly in what concerns fruit trees. In the spring, if we pour a solution of the Elixir highly diluted with rain water on the soil close to their roots, they can be made resistant to all causes of decay and barrenness. They produce even more and bear healthy and delicious fruits. Batsdorff goes so far as to say that it could be possible, using this process, to cultivate exotic vegetables in our latitude. "Delicate plants", he writes, "which have difficulty growing in climates of an opposite temperament to that which is natural to them, by being watered with it, become as vigorous as if they were in their native soil proper and set by nature".

Among the other marvelous properties attributed to the philosophers' stone, some ancient authors quote many examples of the transformation of crystal into ruby and quartz into diamond by means of a kind of progressive soaking. They even consider the possibility of rendering glass ductile and malleable, a thing which, in spite of Cyliani's assertion (5), we will take care not to certify because the Elixir's proper mode of action ---contraction and hardening ---seem contrary to obtaining such an effect. Be that as it may, Christophe Merret quotes this opinion and speaks about it in the Preface to his treatise (6) in the following way: "As for the malleability of glass", he says, "upon which alchemists base the possibility of their Elixir, it seems to be corroborated, albeit not very firmly, by the following passage from Pliny, Book XXXVI, Ch. LXXVI: 'Moreover, it is said, that during the reign of Tiberius the Emperor, there was devised a certain temper of glass, which makes it pliable and flexible to wind and turn without breaking: but the artificer who devised this was put down, and his work house, for fear lest vessels made of such glass should take away the credit from the rich plate of brass, silver, and gold, and make them of no price: and verily this bruit hath run current a long time (but how true, it is not so certain)'.

"Other authors recounted the same fact after Pliny, but with somewhat different circumstances. Dio Cassius, Book LVII (7), says: 'About this time one of the largest porticos in Rome began to lean one side, and was set upright in a remarkable way by an architect whose name no one knows because Tiberius, jealous of his wonderful achievement, would not permit it to be entered into the records. This architect, then, whatever his name may have been, first strengthened the foundations round about, so that they should not collapse, and wrapped all the rest of the structure in fleeces and thick garments, binding it firmly together on all sides by means of rope; then with the aid of many men and windlasses he raised it back to its original position. At the time Tiberius both admired and envied him; for the former reason he honored him with a present of money, and for the latter he expelled him from the city. Later the exile approached him to crave pardon, and while doing so purposely let fall a crystal goblet; and though it was bruised in some way or shattered, yet by passing his hands over it he promptly exhibited it whole once more. For this he hoped to obtain pardon, but instead the emperor put him to death'. Isidore confirms the same thing; he only adds that the emperor, indignant, threw the glass on the pavement, but the workman, having taken out a hammer and having fixed it, was asked by Tiberius whether anyone else knew the secret, and after the workman assured him under oath that none other than himself knew it, the emperor had his head cut off for fear that if he divulged it, gold would fall into contempt and metals would lose their value".

When taking exaggeration and legendary additions into account, it remains true nevertheless that the hermetic fruit carries in itself the highest gift which God, through nature, can give to men of good will on earth.

Panel 3 ---The effigy of the Ouroboros serpent stands on the capital of an elegant column. This curious bas-relief is characterized by the axiom:

.NOSCE.TE.IPSUM.

The Latin translation of the Greek inscription which was represented on the fronton of the famous temple at Delphi:

Know thyself!

We have already encountered, in some ancient manuscripts, the same maxim thus paraphrased: "You who want to know the stone, know thyself well and you shall know it". Such is the statement of the law of analogy which gives in effect the key to the mystery. Now that which precisely characterizes our figure is that column responsible for the emblematic serpent's support is reversed in relation to the inscription's direction. An intentional, deliberate, and premeditated arrangement giving to the whole the appearance of a key as well as of the graphic sign with which the Ancients used to record their mercury. Key and pillar of the Work are moreover epithets applied to mercury, because it is the mercury that the elements assembled in appropriate proportions and natural quality; from it everything proceeds because it alone has the power to dissolve, mortify and destroy the bodies, to dissociate them, to separate their pure parts, and to join them with spirits and this to generate new metallic beings different from their parents. The authors are therefore right to assert that everything that the sages search for can be found in mercury per se, and this should indicate the alchemist to direct his efforts to the acquisition of this indispensable body.

However in order to succeed we advise him to act methodically and to study in a simple, and rational fashion, the manner in which nature operates in living beings in order to transform the absorbed food, rid it of useless substances through the digestion process, into black blood, and then into red blood, the generator of organic tissues and vital energy. Nosce te ipsum. The alchemist will thus recognize that the mineral producers of mercury, which are also the authors of its feeding, growth and life, must first be chosen with discernment and worked with care. For, although theoretically everything can be used for this composition, nevertheless some are too far removed from the active metallic nature to be truly useful to us, either because of their impurities or because their maturation was arrested or pushed beyond the required term. Rocks, stones, and metalloids belong to the first category; gold and silver enter the second one. The agent we need lacks vigor in the metalloids and its debility cannot help us in any way; in gold and silver, on the other hand, we would search in vain: nature has separated it from the perfect bodies during their appearance on the physical plane.

By expressing this truth, we do not mean to say that gold and silver should absolutely be proscribed, or claim that these metals are excluded from the Work by masters of the science. But we fraternally warn the disciple that neither gold nor silver, even modified, enter into the composition of mercury. And were we to discover, in some classical authors, a contrary assertion, we should never believe that the Adept, such as Philalethes, Basil Valentine, Nicolas Flamel, and Bernard Trevisan, actually meant philosophical gold or silver, and not the precious metals with which they neither have nor show anything in common.

Panel 4 --Lying on the bottom of an upside down bushel, a candle burns. The epigraph of the rustic motif reads:

.SIC.LVCEAT.LUX.VESTRA.

May your light so shine.

For us, the flame points to the metallic spirit which is the purest, and clearest part of the body, its soul and light proper, although its essential part is the least in terms of quantity. We have often said that the quality of the spirit, being airy and volatile, always forces it to rise and that its nature is to shine as soon as it is separated from the coarse and corporal opacity which coats it. It is written that one does not light a candle to put it under a bushel but to place it in a candlestick so that it can light everything which surrounds it (8). In the same way we see in the Work the need to render manifest this inner fire, this light or this soul invisible under the hard crust of heavy matter, The operation used by the ancients philosophers to reach this goal, they called sublimation, although it has but a very remote connection with the ordinary sublimation of spagyrist. For the spirit, ready to disengage itself as soon as it has been given the means, cannot however totally abandon the body; but it creates for itself a garb closer to its nature, more adaptable to its will, from the clear and purified particles it can gather around itself so as to use it as its new vehicle. It then reaches the outer surface of the blended substance and continues to move upon the face of the waters, as it is said in Genesis 1:2, until there was light. From then on, through coagulation, it takes on a white shiny color, and its separation from the mass has become exceedingly easy, since the light of itself has moved on the bushel, leaving it to the artist to collect it.

Let us learn also, in order for the student to ignore nothing of the practice, that this separation, or sublimation of the body and manifestation of the spirit, must occur gradually and must be reiterated as many times as deemed expedient. Each of these reiterations takes the name of eagle, and Philalethes asserts that the fifth eagle resolves the moon, but seven to nine

eagles need to be performed in order to attain the characteristic splendor of the sun. The Greek word [\*327-1] (aigle), wherefrom the sages have drawn the term of eagle, means brilliance, sharp clarity, light, torch. To make the eagle fly, according to the hermetic expression, is to make the light shine by uncovering it from its dark envelope and bringing it to the surface. We should add that, contrary to chemical sublimation, the spirit being in small quantity compared to the body, our operation yields little of the vivifying and organizing principle which we need. So, according to the philosopher of Dampierre's advice, the prudent artist will strive to make the hidden manifest and to "make that which is below to be above", if he wishes to see the inner metallic light radiate outwardly.

Panel 5 ---A moving streamer reinforce here the symbolic meaning of a drawing which today has disappeared. If we believe the Epigraphy from the Saintonge Region, it represented "a hand holding a pike". All that is left today is the phylactery and its inscription reduced by the last two letters:

.NON.SON.RALES.NVS.AMOR[ES].

These are not our loves.

But this lone Spanish phrase of vague meaning does not authorize any serious commentary. Rather than spread an erroneous interpretation, we would prefer to remain silent about this incomplete motif.

Panel 6 ---The causes for impossibility invoke for the preceding bas-relief are equally valid for this one. A little quadruped, which the scaly state of the limestone does not allow us to identify, seems to be enclosed in a bird cage. This motif has suffered much. From its motto barely two words can be read:

LIBERTA.VER

Belonging to the sentence preserved by some authors:

.AMPANSA.LIBERTA.VERA.CAPL.INTVS.

This is where the abuse of freedom gets you.

The topic is in all likelihood the spirit, at first free, and then imprisoned inside the body as in a very strong cage. However it also seems obvious that the animal, in the usual attitude of a bird, brought through its name or its species a special, precise meaning easy to identify in the work process. As these elements, essential for an exact interpretation, are lacking, we are forced to move to the next panel.

Panel 7 ---Lying on the ground, an unhooked lantern whose little half-open door reveals its extinguished candle. The phylactery marking the subject contains a warning reserved for the use of the impatient and fickle artist:

.SIC.PERIT.INCONSTANS.

So perishes the inconstant one.

Like the lantern without a light, his faith ceases to shine; easily defeated, unable to react, he falls and in vain seeks in the surrounding darkness this light which can only be found within.

But while the inscription presents no ambiguity, the image, on the other hand, is much less clear. This stems from the fact that the interpretation can be given in two ways in consideration of the method employed, and also of the path followed. We first discover an allusion to the fire of the wheel, which, for fear of its ceasing resulting in the loss of the matters, should not for even one moment cease its activity. Already in the long way, a slowing down of its energy, a lowering of the temperature constitute accidents detrimental to the regular progress of the operation; for, even if nothing is lost, the length of time, already substantial, is increased even more. An excess of fire spoils everything; however, if the philosophical amalgam is merely reddened and not calcined, it is possible to regenerate it by redissolving it, according to the Cosmopolite's advice, and by resuming the coction with more caution. Completely extinguishing the fire on the other hand causes the irremediable ruin of the content, although if analyzed the latter does not seem to have undergone any change. Therefore, during the entire course of the work the hermetic axiom told by Lintaut must be remembered which teaches that "gold, once dissolved into spirit, if it feels the cold, is lost with the entire Work". Consequently, do not activate the flame inside your lantern too much and watch that you do not let it go out: you would be between Scylla and Charybdis (9).

Applied to the short way, the symbol of the lantern provides another explanation to one of the essential points of the Great Work. It is no longer the elemental fire, but the potential fire --the secret flame of the matter itself ---which the authors veiled from the layman in the form of this familiar image, What then is this mysterious, natural, and unknown, fire which the

artist must be capable of introducing into his subject? Here is a question that no philosopher has wished to resolve, even by resorting to the help of an allegory. Artophys and Pontanus speak of it in such an abstruse fashion that this important thing remains incomprehensible or goes unnoticed. Limojon de Saint Didier asserts that this fire is of the nature of limestone. Basil Valentine, ordinarily more verbose, is content to write: "Then light the lamp of wisdom and seek with it the gross thing that was lost". Trismosin is barely clearer: "Build", he says, "a fire in your glass or in the earth which holds it enclosed". Most of the other authors designate this inner light, hidden within the darkness of substance, by the epithet of fire of the lamp. Batsdorff describes the philosophical lamp as one always needing to be abundantly supplied with oil and its flame as always needing to be fed by way of an asbestos wick. The Greek [\*329-1] (asbestos) means inextinguishable, of unlimited duration, tireless, inexhaustible, qualities attributed to our secret fire, which says Basil Valentine, "whines in the darkness, although it does not burn". As for the lamp, we find it in the Greek term [\*329-2] (lamptem), lantern, torch, which used to designate the fire vase where wood was burned to provide light. Such indeed is our vase, dispensing the fire of the sages, that is, our matter and its spirit, or, to say it all, the hermetic lantern. Finally, a term close to [\*330-1] (lampas), lamp, the word [\*330-2] (lampe), expresses all that which rises and comes to the surface, scum, foam, scoria, etc. And this indicates, for whomever possesses a smattering of hermetic knowledge, the nature of the body, or, if you prefer, of the mineral casing containing this fire of the lamp which only needs to be stirred up by ordinary fire to perform the most surprising of metamorphoses.

Yet another word for the benefit of our brothers. Hermes, in his Emerald Table, utters these solemn, true, and important words: "You separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, gently, with great industry. It rises from the earth to the sky, gently, with great industry, and then descends from the sky into the earth and thus receives the virtue of higher and lower things". Note therefore that the philosopher recommends to separate, to divide, and not to destroy or sacrifice one to save the other. For if it were so, we ask you, from which body would the spirit rise and into which earth would the fire descend to again?

Pontanus affirms that all superfluities of the stone are converted under the action of fire into a unique essence and that as a consequence whoever claims to separate anything however small understands nothing about our philosophy. Panel 8 --- Two vases, one in the form of an embossed and engraved flagon, the other a common earthen pot, are represented in the same frame occupied by this saying of St Paul:

.ALIVD.VAS.IN.HONOREM.ALIVD.IN.CONTVMELIAM.

One vessel for honorable uses, another for base uses.

"But in a great house", says the Apostle (10), "there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor, and some to dishonor".

Our two vases appear well defined, clearly marked and in absolute agreement with the precepts of hermetic theory. One is the vase of nature made of the same red clay God used to form the body of Adam with. The other is the vase of the art, whose entire material is composed of pure, clear, red, incombustible, fixed, and diaphanous gold, of an incomparable brightness. And these are our two vessels which truly represent only two distinct bodies containing the metallic spirits, the only agents we need.

If the reader is acquainted with the traditional manner of writing of the philosophers ---which manner we try to imitate correctly so that the Ancients can be explained through us and so we can be controlled by them, it will be easier for him to understand what the hermeticists meant by vessels. For these vessels represent not only two matters, or rather one matter in two states of its evolution, but they also symbolize our two ways based on the use of these different bodies.

The first of these ways which uses the vase of the art is time-consuming, painstaking, thankless, accessible to wealthy people, but is in a place of great honor in spite of the expenditures it entails, because it is the one which authors preferably describe. It is used as a support for their reasoning as well as for the theoretical development of the Work, requires an uninterrupted labor of twelve to eighteen months, and starts with natural gold prepared and dissolved in the philosophical mercury which is then cooked in a glass matrass. This is the honorable vase reserved for noble use of these precious substances which are the exalted gold and mercury of the sages.

The second way demands, from beginning to end, only the help of a coarse clay abundantly available, of such a low cost that in our time ten francs are sufficient to acquire a quantity more than enough for our needs. It is the clay and the way of the poor, of the simple and the modest, of those whom nature fills with wonder even by her most humble manifestations. Extremely easy, it only requires the presence of the artist, for the mysterious labor perfects itself by itself and is achieved in seven to nine days at the most. This way, unknown to the majority of practicing alchemists, is elaborated from start to finish

in one crucible made of fireproof clay. It is the way that the great masters called woman's work and child's play; it is to it that they apply the old hermetic axiom: una res, una via, una dispositione. One matter, one vessel, one furnace. Such is our earthen vase, a despised, plain vase of common use, "which everyone has before his eyes, which costs nothing, which can be found at everyone's house, yet which none can recognize without a revelation".

Panel 9 ---Cut through its middle, a snake, in spite of the fatal nature of its wound, yet believes itself able to survive for a long time in this state:

.DVM.SPIRO.SPERABO. He is made to say:

As long as I breathe, I hope.

The serpent-like image of mercury, by its two sections, represents the two parts of the dissolved metal which will become fixed later, one by the other, and whose joining will give it its new nature, its physical individuality, its efficiency.

For the sulphur and mercury of metals, when extracted and isolated under the disintegrating energy of our first agent, or secret solvent, on their own by simple contact are reduced to the form of a viscous oil ---a fatty and coagulable smoothness which the ancients called metallic humid radical and mercury of the sages. It is evident from this that it can logically be considered as representing a liquefied and reincrusted metal, i.e., artificially put back into a state close to its original form. But as these elements are merely associated and not radically united, it seems reasonable that our symbolist thought of representing mercury in the shape of a sectioned reptile whose two parts each keep their activity and their reciprocal virtues. And this is what justifies the statement of faith affixed on the stone emblem: As long as I breathe, I hope. In this state of simple mixture, the philosophical mercury keeps the balance, the stability, and the energy of its constituents, although the latter are yet destined to mortification, and decomposition which prepare and achieve their mutual and perfect interpenetration. As long as the mercury has not felt the grip of the igneous mediator, it can be indefinitely preserved provided it is carefully kept away from the combined action of air and light. This is what certain authors give us to understand when they assert that "philosophical mercury always keeps its excellent qualities if it is kept in a tightly sealed bottle", and it is known that in alchemical language every container is said to be closed, stoppered or luted, when it is kept in complete darkness

(1) De Cyrano Bergerac, *The Comical History of the States and Empires of the World of the Sun*; translated by A. Lovell, Henry Rhodes, London, 1687, p. 81. (2) Batsdorff: *Le Filet d'Ariadne, pour entrer avec seurete dans le Labirinthe de la Philosophie Hermetique*; Paris, L. d'Houry, 1695, p. 136. (3) *Le Clef du Grande-Oeuvre, ou Lettre du Sancelrien Tourangeua* (The Key to the Great Work or Letters from the inhabitant o the Sancerre and Tours Region); Paris, Cilleau, 1777, p. 54. (4) Huginus a Barma: *Le Regne de Saturne change en Siecle d'Or* (Saturn's Reign turned into a Golden Century); Paris, P. Derieu, 1780, p. 190. (5) "I shall not describe here the very strange operations I performed, to my great surprise, in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, as well as the means to render glass malleable, and making pearls and precious stones more beautiful than those of nature ---not wanting to be a perjurer nor to seem to exceed the limits of human understanding"; Cyliani: *Hermes Devoile* (Hermes Unveiled) (6) Neri, Merret and Kunckel: *L'Arte de la Verrerie* (The Art of Glassmaking); Paris, Durnad et Pisot, 1752. (7) Dio Cassius: *Dio's Roman History*, translated by E. Carey, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1924, Book LVII, vol, 7, pp. 173-4. (8) Matt. 5:15; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16. (9) Translator's note: In other words, you would fall out of the frying pan into the fire. The expression was left as is because if the reference to the Roman locations, and mythological monsters. (10) II Timothy 2:20.

## THE CASTLE OF DAMPIERRE VI

Third Series (Plate XXVIII).

Panel 1 ---Raised on its stand and half plunging into the bucket, a grindstone awaits only the knife grinder to be put into motion. However, the subject's epigraph which should emphasize its meaning, conversely seems not to bear any connection with it; we can't help being surprised to read this curious inscription:

.DISCIPVLVS.POTIOR.MAGISTRO.

Is the student superior to the master?

We will readily agree that there is no need of an exhaustive apprenticeship to have a grindstone turn, and we have never heard that the most skilled of low-wagers with his rudimentary machine had earned the right to fame, As useful and honorable as it is, the occupation of knife grinder does not lay claim to the contribution of an innate talent, special knowledge, a rare technique, or any master's certificate. It is therefore certain that the inscription and the image have

another sense, clearly esoteric, whose interpretation we intend to provide (1).

Envisioned in its different uses, the grinding stone is one of the philosophical emblems meant to express the hermetic solvent, or the first mercury without which it is completely useless to undertake anything nor hope for anything profitable. It is our only matter capable of setting into motion, animating, and revivifying common metals, because the latter easily dissolve in it, divide themselves there, and adapt themselves under the influence of a mysterious affinity. Although this primitive subject possesses neither the quality nor the power of philosophical mercury, it nevertheless possesses everything it needs to become so, and indeed becomes so, provided the metallic seed, which it lacks, is added to it. Thus art comes to help nature, by allowing this skillful and marvelous worker to perfect that which, for lack of means, materials or favorable conditions, she had to leave unfinished. This initial mercury, the subject of the art and our true solvent, is precisely the substance which the philosophers named the unique matrix, the mother of the Work; without her, it would be impossible for us to achieve the preliminary decomposition of metals nor, consequently, to obtain the humid radical or mercury of the sages, which truly is the stone of the philosophers. In such a way that whoever claims to make the mercury or the stone with all the metals as well as whoever asserts the unity of the first matter and mentions it as the only thing necessary is indeed speaking truthfully.

It is not by chance that the hermeticists chose the grinding stone (2) as the hieroglyphic sign of the subject and our Adept certainly obeyed the same traditions by providing a place for it in the panels of Dampierre. We know that grinding stones have a circular form and that the circle is the conventional signature of our solvent and so of all the bodies susceptible to evolve by fiery rotation. We again find mercury represented in this fashion on three pates of The Art of the Potter (3), that is to say, in the shape of a millstone, sometimes moved by a mule ---cabalistic image of the Greek word [\*336-1] (mule), grinding stone ---sometimes by a slave or a person of rank dressed like a prince. These engravings translate the twofold power of the natural solvent which acts on metals like the grinding stone on grains or the sharpening stone on steel: it divides them, crushes them, sharpens them. So much so that, after having dissociated and partially digested them, the natural solvent becomes acidified, takes on a caustic quality and becomes more penetrating than it was before.

Medieval alchemists used the verb *acuer* (to sharpen) to express the operation that gives the solvent its cutting properties. Now *acuer* comes from the Latin *acuo*, to sharpen, to whet, to make cutting and penetrating, which corresponds not only to the new nature of the subject, but equally agrees with the role of the sharpening stone.

Of this work, who is the master? Obviously the one who sharpens and moves the grinding stone around ---this knife grinder missing from the bas-relief ---that is to say, the active sulphur of the dissolved metal. As for the disciple, he represents the first mercury, with a cold and passive quality, which some call faithful and loyal servant and others, die to its volatility, *servus fugitivus*, the fugitive slave. We could therefore answer the philosopher's question by saying that, given the very difference in their conditions, the student will never rise above the master; but on the other hand it can also be asserted that with time, the disciple in turn becomes master, will become his tutor's alter ego. For while the master lowers himself down to the level of his inferior in the dissolution, he will raise it along with him in the coagulation, and the fixation will make them similar tone another, equal in virtue, in valor, and power.

Panel 2 ---The head of Medusa, placed on a pedestal, shows its stern rictus and its hair intertwined with serpents; it is ornamented with the Latin inscription:

.CVSTOS.RERUM.PRVDENTIA.

Prudence is the guardian of things.

But the word *prudential* has a more extended meaning than *prudence* or *foresight*; it further denotes science, wisdom, experience, knowledge. In this bas-relief, epigram and figure are in accord to represent the secret science concealed under the multiple and varied hieroglyphs of the panels of Dampierre.

Indeed, the root of the Greek name [\*337-1] (Medusa) is [\*337-2] (*medos*) and expresses the thought which concerns us, our favorite study; *medos* further formed [\*337-3] (*medusone*) whose meaning evokes prudence and wisdom. On the other hand, mythologists teach us that Medusa is known to the Greeks under the name of [\*337-4] (*Gorgon*), which also served to qualify *Minerva* or *Pallas*, the goddess of Wisdom. We would perhaps discover in this connection the secret reason for the *aegis* ---the shield of *Minerva*, covered with the skin of *Almathea*, that was the she-goat, wet nurse of *Jupiter*, and decorated with the mask of the serpent-headed Medusa (4). Apart from the connection which can be established between the goat and the ram ---the latter bearer of the golden fleece and the former provided with the cornucopia ---we know that *Athena's* attribute had the power to petrify. It is said that Medusa changed into stone those whose eyes met hers. Finally, the very names of Medusa's sisters, *Euryale* and *Stheno*, also contribute their part to the revelation. *Euryale*, in Greek [\*338-1]

(Euralos), means that of which the area is large, vast, spacious; Stheno comes from [\*338-2] (Sthenos), force, power, energy. And so the three Gorgons symbolically express the idea of power and scope proper to the natural philosophy.

These converging connection which we are forbidden to exhibit more clearly, allow us to conclude, apart from the fact, esoterically precise but which we have barely touched upon, that our motif has the purpose of pointing to wisdom as the source and guardian of all our knowledge, the infallible guide of the laborer to whom she will reveal the secrets hidden in nature.

Panel 3 ---Lying on the altar of sacrifice, a forearm is consumed by fire. The sign of this fiery emblem holds in two words:

.FELIX.INFORTVNIVM.

Happy unhappiness!

Although the topic seems a priori quite obscure and without equivalent in the hermetic literature and iconography, yet it yields to analysis and perfectly agrees with the Great Works' technique.

The human forearm, which the Greeks simply called the arm [\*338-1] (brachion), is the hieroglyph for the short, abridged way (ars brevis). As a matter of fact, our Adept, toying with words as the learned cabalist he is, hides under the substantive brachion, arm, a comparative of [\*338-2] (brachus), written and pronounced in the same fashion. The latter means short, brief, of short duration, and forms several compounds, including [\*338-3] (brachutes), brevity. Thus the comparative brachion, meaning brief, the homonym of brachion, arm, takes on the specific meaning of brief technique, ars brevis.

But the Greeks used yet another expression to qualify the arm. When they evoked the hand, [\*338-4] (cheir), they applied by extension the idea to the entire upper limb and gave it the figurative value of a skilled artistic production of a special process, of a personal style of work, in short, a tour de main, a flick of the wrist, whether acquired or revealed. All these acceptations of the word exactly characterize the fine points of the Great Work in its swift, simple and direct realization, for it only requires the application of a very energetic fire to which the flick of the wrist boils down. Now this fire on our bas-relief is represented not only by the flames, it is also represented by the limb itself which the hand indicates as being the right arm; and it is well known from the proverbial expression that "to be the right arm" always applies to the agent responsible for the executing of the will of a superior ---the fire in the present case. Apart from these reasons ---which are necessarily abstract because they are veiled in the form of a stone with a concise image ---there is another one, practical, which comes to uphold and conform in the practical domain the esoteric affiliation of the first ones. We shall state it by saying that whosoever being ignorant of the flick of the wrist of the operation yet takes the risk to undertake it, must fear everything from the fire; that person is in real danger and can hardly escape the consequences of a thoughtless and reckless action. Why then, one could say to us, not to provide this means? We will answer this by saying that to reveal an experiment of this sort would be to give the secret of the short way and that we have not received from God nor from our brothers the authorization to uncover such a mystery. It is already much that, prompted by our solicitude and charity, we warned the beginner whose lucky star leads to the threshold of the cave, that he should be on his guard and redouble his prudence. A similar warning is rarely encountered in the books, and quite succinct as to what concerns the Ars Brevis, but which the Adept of Dampierre knew as perfectly as Ripley, Basil Valentine, Philalethes, Albertus Magnus, Huginus a Barma, Cyliani, or Naxagoras.

Nevertheless, and because we deem it useful to warn the neophyte, it would be wrong to conclude that we are trying to dishearten him. If he wants to risk the adventure, let it be for him the trial by fire to which the future initiates of Thebes and Hermopolis had to be put through before receiving the sublime teachings. Isn't the inflamed arm on the altar the expressive symbol of the sacrifice, of the renunciation the science demands? Everything is paid for down here, not with gold, but with work, with suffering, often by leaving a part of oneself; and one could not pay too much for the possession of the least secret, of the tiniest truth. Therefore should the candidate feel endowed with faith and armed with the necessary courage, we fraternally wish him to come forth safe and sound from this difficult experience, which most often ends with the explosion of the crucible and the projection of the fumace. And then he could cry out, like our philosopher: Happy unhappiness! For the accident, forcing him to ponder the mistake he committed, will undoubtedly lead him to discover the means to avoid it and the flick of the wrist for the proper operation.

Panel 4 ---Affixed on a tree trunk covered with leaves and laden with fruits, an unfolded streamer bears the inscription:

.MELIVS.SPE.LICEBAT.

Indeed, one could have hoped for better.



This is an image of the solar tree which the Cosmopolite mentions in his allegory of the green forest, which he tells us belongs to the nymph Venus. About this metallic tree, the author, recounting the way the old man Saturn works in the presence of the lost puffer, says that he took some fruit from the solar tree, put it into ten parts of a certain water ---very rare and very hard to find ---and easily performed its dissolution.

Our Adept means here to speak of the first sulphur, which is the gold of the sages, the green, unripe fruit of the tree of knowledge. While the Latin phrase betrays some disappointment relative to a normal result, which many artists would very much like to obtain, it is because by means of this sulfur the transmutation can no longer be hoped for. Indeed, the philosophical gold is not the stone, and Philalethes carefully warns the student that it is only its first matter. And since this sulfur principle, according to the same author, requires an uninterrupted work of approximately 150 days, it is logical and particularly humane to think that such an apparently mediocre result could not satisfy the artist who anticipated reaching the Elixir in one bound, as it can happen in the short way.

Arrived at this point, the apprentice must recognize the impossibility of continuing the work, by pursuing the operation which gave him the first sulfur. If he wants to go on further he must retrace his steps, undertake a second cycle of new trials, work for a year, sometimes longer, before he reaches the stone of the first order. But if discouragement does not overtake him, let him follow the example of Saturn and redissolve in the mercury, according to the indicated proportions, this green fruit which divine goodness has allowed him to pluck. And he will then with his own eyes, see all the appearances of a progressive and perfect maturation follow each other. We could not remind him too much, however, that he is committed to a long, difficult path covered with thorns and dug with potholes; that as the art plays a larger part than nature, the opportunities for mistakes ---and the schools ---are more numerous. Let him preferably concentrate his attention on the mercury, which the philosophers sometimes called double, not without cause, sometimes ardent or sharp and actuated with its own salt. He must know before he accomplishes the dissolution of the sulphur that his first water ---the one that gave him the philosophical gold ---is too simple and too weak to serve as nourishment for the solar see. And in order to overcome the difficulty, let him try to understand the allegory of the Massacre of the Innocents by Nicolas Flamel, as well as the explanation which Limojon (5) gives of it as clearly as a master of the art can do it. As soon as he'll know, in terms of metals, what are these spirits of the bodies designated by the blood of the slaughtered innocents, and the manner in which the alchemist operates the differentiation of the two mercuries, he will have passed the obstacle and nothing, later on, except his impatience could frustrate him from the anticipated result.

Panel 5 ---Two pilgrims, each carrying a rosary, meet in the vicinity of a building ---a church or chapel ---which can be noticed in the background. Of these two men, quite old, bald, wearing a long beard and the same kind of clothes, one helps himself walking with a staff, the other, whose skull is protected by a thick hood, seems to show a sharp surprise at the adventure, and cries out:

.TROPT.TART.COGNEV.TROPT.TOST.LAISSE.

Known too late, abandoned too early.

Words of a disappointed puffer, happy to finally recognize at the end of his long road the so ardently desired humid radical, yet grieved to have lost in vain the physical vigor indispensable for the realization of the Work with this better companion. For it is indeed our faithful servant, mercury, which is here represented under the appearance of the first old man. A slight detail catches the acute student's attention; the rosary he holds forms, with his pilgrim's staff, the image of the caduceus, Hermes, symbolic attribute. On the other hand, we have often said that the dissolving matter is commonly acknowledged, among all philosophers, as the old man, the pilgrim, the traveler of the great Art, as taught by Michael Maier, Stolcius and numerous other masters.

As for the old alchemist, so happy about this meeting, while he knew not up to now where to find the mercury, now shows rather well how familiar this matter is to him, since his own rosary, a very eloquent hieroglyph, represents the circle surmounted by the cross, a symbol of the terrestrial globe and the signature of our little world. We then understand why the unfortunate artist regrets such a belated knowledge as well as his ignorance of so common a substance that he had within reach without ever having thought that it could procure him the mysterious water he vainly sought elsewhere.

Panel 6 ---In this bas-relief three trees of equal height are represented next to each other. Two of them show their dried up trunks and branches while the last, which remained healthy and vigorous, seems to be both the cause and the result of the others' death. This motif is ornamented with the motto:

.SI.IN.VIRIDE.IN.ARIDO.QUID.

If such is the case in green things, what would it be in dry things?

Our philosopher thus poses the principle of the analogical method, the unique means, the only resource the hermeticist has at his disposal for the resolution of natural secrets. So it could be answered, according to this principle, that that which occurs in the vegetable kingdom must find its equivalent in the mineral kingdom. As a consequence, if the dry and dead leaves yield their part of nourishment and vitality to the survivor planted next to them, it is logical to consider the latter as being their heir, the one to whom, in dying, they gave the complete enjoyment of the means from which they drew their sustenance. Seen from this angle and point of view, it appears to us as their son or descendant. The three trees also constitute a clear symbol of the way in which the stone of the philosophers, the first being or subject of the Philosophers' Stone, is born.

The author of *Le Triomphe Hermetique* (6), rectifying the erroneous assertion of his predecessor, Pierre-Jean Fabre, asserts without ambiguity that "our stone is born from the destruction of two bodies". We will specify that, of these bodies, one is metallic, the other mineral, and that they both grew in the same earth. The tyrannical opposition of their opposite temperaments prevents them from ever coming to terms with each other except when the artist's will forces them to, by submitting these absolute antagonists to the violent action of fire. After a long and arduous battle they die exhausted. From their decomposition a third body is engendered, the heir of the vital energies and compounded qualities of its deceased parents.

Such is the origin of our stone, equipped ever since its birth with a dual metallic predisposition, which is dry and igneous, and with the dual mineral virtue, whose essence is to be cold and humid. Thus can the stone realize in its state of perfect equilibrium the union of the four natural elements encountered at the basis of all experimental philosophy. The heat of the fire is tempered by the coldness of the air, and the dryness of the earth is neutralized by the humidity of the water.

Panel 7 ---The geometric figure which we encounter here frequently ornamented the frontispieces of medieval alchemical manuscripts. It was commonly called Solomon's Labyrinth, and we mentioned elsewhere that it was reproduced on the stone floors of our great Gothic cathedrals. This figure bears as a motto:

.FATA.VIAM.INVENIENT.

The fates will well find their way. Our bas-relief, specifically characterizing the long way, reveals the formal intention, expressed by the plurality of Dampierre's motifs, to primarily teach the other drawings of the same subject usually show three, which entrances, by the way, correspond to the three porches of the gothic cathedrals placed under the invocation of the Virgin mother. One entrance, absolutely straight, leads directly to the median chamber ---where Theseus slayed the Minotaur ---without encountering the least obstacle; it conveys the short, simple, easy way of the Work of the Poor. The second, which likewise leads to the center, only opens onto it after a series of detours, twists and turns, and convolutions; it is the hieroglyph for the long way and we have said that it refers to the preferred esotericism of our Adept. Finally, a third gallery of which the opening is parallel to that of the preceding ones, ends abruptly as a dead end a short distance from the threshold, and leads nowhere. It causes the despair and ruin of those who have gone astray, of the presumptuous ones, and of those who, without serious study and solid principles, nevertheless set out on the way and chanced the adventure.

Whatever their shape, whatever the complexity of their layout, the labyrinths are eloquent symbols of the Great Work, considered with regard to its material realization. Therefore we understand them as being in charge of expressing the two great difficulties which the Work contains: (1) having access to the inner chamber; (2) having the possibility of getting out of it. Of these two points, the first concerns the knowledge of matter ---which ensures entry ---and that of its preparation ---which the artist accomplishes in the center of the maze. The second concerns the mutation of the prepared matter with the aid of the fire. The alchemist thus retraces, in the opposite direction, though with prudence, slowness and perseverance, the course he quickly followed at the beginning of his labor. So as not to get lost, the philosophers advise him to mark his path from his starting point ---for the operations, which we could call analytical ---with the help of this Thread of Ariadne, without which he would be at great risk as he would not be able to make it back ---that is to say, he would become lost in the work of synthetic unification. It is to the second stage or period of the Work which the maze's Latin inscription applies. As a matter of fact, from the moment when the compost, formed of the vitalized bodies, begins its evolution, the most impenetrable mystery covers with its veil the order, the measure, the rhythm, the harmony and the progress of this admirable metamorphosis, that man has the ability neither to comprehend nor to explain. Resigned to its own fate, submitted to the torture of the fire in the darkness of its narrow prison, the regenerated matter follows the secret path mapped out by destiny.

Panel 8 ---Erased drawing, sculpture of which the relief is vanishing. Only the inscription remains and the clarity of its engraving contrasts with the bare uniformity of the surrounding limestone; there one can read:

.MICH.CELVM.

The sky is mine!

Exclamation of passionate enthusiasm, exuberant joy, proud cry, one would say, of an Adept in possession of the Magistry. Perhaps. But is it really what the author's thought wanted to convey? Allow us to doubt it, for, founding our opinion on so many serious and positive motifs, of epigraphs with level-headed meanings, we prefer to see here the expression of a radiant hope directed towards the knowledge of celestial things rather than the presumptuous and odd idea of an illusory conquest of the empyrean. It is obvious that the philosopher, having reached the tangible result of the hermetic labor, no longer ignored the power, the preponderance of the spirit, or the truly prodigious influence it exercises over inert substance. Strength, will, even knowledge belong to the spirit; life is the consequence of its activity; movement, evolution, and progress are its results. And as everything partakes of its nature, as everything is generated and is unveiled by it, it is reasonable to believe that in the final analysis everything must necessarily return to it. It then suffices to observe its manifestations in heavy matter, to study the laws it seems to abide by, to know its guidelines, in order to acquire some notions about the primary things and laws of the universe. So can we keep hoping to obtain, by the simple examination of spiritual labor in the hermetic work, the elements of a less vague conception of the divine Great Work, of the Creator, and of created things. That which is below is like that which is above, Hermes said; it is by the persevering study of all that is accessible to us that we can raise our intelligence up to the comprehension of the inaccessible. There is the newly-born idea, in the philosophers' ideal, of the fusion of human and divine spirit, of the return of the creature to the Creator, of the unique, pure, and ardent fire, from which the industrious, immortal, martyred spark must, by order of God, have escaped in order to be joined to vile matter until the completed accomplishment of its earthly periplus.

Panel 9 ---Our predecessors only recognized in this little subject the symbol attributed to the King of France, Henry II. It is made of a simple lunar crescent, accompanied by this motto:

.DONEC.TOTVM.IMPLEAT.ORBEM.

Until it fills the entire earth.

We do not believe that the interpretation of this emblem, to which Diane de Poitiers remains a total stranger, can lend itself to the last ambiguity. The newest of the "sons of science" does not ignore that the moon, the spagyric hieroglyph for silver, marks the final goal of the white stage of the Work and the transition period of the red stage of the Work. It is during the reign of the moon that the characteristic color of silver, that is to say white, appears. Artepheus, Nicholas Flamel, Philethes, and numerous other masters teach that, at this early stage of the coction, the rebis offers the appearance of a thin and silky threads, of hair spreading on the surface and progressing from the periphery towards the center, hence the name capillary whiteness, which is used to designate this coloration. The moon, say the texts, is then in its first quarter. Under the influence of fire, the whiteness gains in depth, overtakes the entire mass and turns lemon-yellow on its surface. It is the full moon; the crescent has enlarged to form the perfect lunar disk: it has completely filled the orb. The matter is provided with a certain degree of fixity and dryness, sure signs of the completion of the little Magistry. If the artist wishes to go no further or if he cannot pursue the Work all the way to the red stage, all he needs to do is to continue to multiply the stone by repeating the same operation in order to raise its power and virtue. And these reiterations can be repeated as many times as the matter permits, that is, until it becomes saturated with its spirit and until this spirit "fills the entire earth". Past the saturation point, its properties change; too subtle, it can no longer be coagulated; it remains then as a thick oil, luminous in darkness, henceforth without any action on living beings as on metallic bodies.

What is true of the white stage of the Work is also true of the great Magistry. In the latter, it suffices to increase the temperature as soon as the lemon-yellow whiteness is obtained, without touching or opening the vessel however, and provided that, in the beginning, the red ferment was substituted for the white sulfur. This, at least, is what Philaethes recommends and that Flamel does not, although their apparent disagreement is easily explained if one masters the guidelines concerning the paths and operations. Be that as it may, by pursuing the action of the fourth degree of fire, the compost dissolves by itself, new colors follow one another until a weak red, called peachtree flower, becoming gradually more intense as the dryness spreads, announces the success and perfection of the work. Cooled, the matter shows a crystalline texture made, it seems, of small agglomerated rubies, rarely free, always of heavy density and bright luster, frequently coated with an amorphous, opaque, and reddish mass called by the ancients the cursed earth of the stone. This residue, easy to separate, is of no use and must be discarded.

(1) We'll never blame enough those who, hidden and almighty, decided at Paris the unexplainable destruction of the very ancient street named Nonnains d'Hyeres, which was in no way breaching public health regulations and presented the remarkable harmony of its 18th century facades. This vandalism, committed at a large scale, resulting in the loss of the curious sign that used to ornament the building located at the civic number 5, approximately at the height of the second floor, at the corner of the narrow rue Hotel-de-Ville. Emerging out of the stone, as a round boss, the motif of large size,

which preserved its original colors, showed a knife grinder in the dress of the time: black three-corned hat, red redingote, white stocking, The man applied himself to sharpening iron, in front of his sturdy wheelbarrow, putting the two major elements into motion, the hidden fire of his grindstone and the rare water that appears to be distributed by a large clog as a thin trickle. (2) Translator's note: "Meule", the word used in the French text means both the grinding stone and the millstone. (3) Cyprian Piccolpassi: *Les Trois Livres de l'Art du Potier*; transl. By Master Claudius Popelyn; Paris, Libr. Internationale, 1861. (4) Translator's Note: The author uses the term *Medua Ophiotrix*. (5) *Limojon De Saint Didier: Lettre aux vrays Disciples d'Hermes*, in *Le Triomphe Hermetique*; Amsterdam, H. Wetstein, 1699. (6) *Ibid.*, p. A4.

## THE CASTLE OF DAMPIERRE VII

Fourth Series (Plate XXIX)

Panel 1 ---This bas-relief shows us a rock that a raging sea is attacking, and threatens to swallow up; but two cherubs blow on the waves and still the tempest. The phylactery accompanying this figure exalts "Constancy in Peril":

.IN.PERICVLIS.CONSTNTIA. A philosophical virtue which the artist must know to keep during the course of the coction, and especially at its beginning, when the unleashed elements collide with one another and violently push back each other, Later, in spite of the length it this thankless stage, the yoke is less painful to bear, for the effervescence quiets down and peace finally emerges as a result from the triumph of the spiritual elements ---air and fire ---symbolized by the little angels, the agents of our mysterious elemental conversion. But about this conversion, perhaps it is not superfluous to give here some precise details about the manner in which the phenomenon is accomplished, about which subject, in our opinion, the Ancients remained excessively noncommittal.

Every alchemist knows that the stone is formed of the four elements united by a perfect cohesion, in a state of natural and perfect equilibrium. What is less known is the manner in which these four elements are resolved into three physical principles which the artist prepares and assembles according to the rules of the art, taking into account the required conditions. And these primary elements, represented in our panel by the sea (water, the rock (earth), the sky (air), and the cherubs (light, spirit, fire), are reduced into salt, sulphur, and mercury, the material and tangible principles of our stone. Of these principles, two are reputed to be simple, sulfur and mercury, because they are found naturally combined in the body of metals; only one, the salt, appears to be constituted partly of a fixed substance, partly of a volatile matter. We know, from chemistry, that salts, formed from an acid and a base, reveal through decomposition the volatility of the one and the fixity of the other. As salt partakes both of the mercurial principles by its cold and volatile humidity (air), and of the sulphurous principle by its fiery and fixed dryness (fire), it therefore serves as a mediator between the sulphur and mercury components of our embryo. Thanks to its double quality, the salt enables the realization of the conjunction, which would otherwise be impossible without it, between one and the other antagonists, the actual parents of the hermetic little king. Thus, the four primary elements are assembled two by two in the stone during its formation because the salt possesses in itself the fire and air needed for the combination of the sulfur-earth and the mercury-water.

Yet, even though saline compounds are close to sulfurous and mercurial natures (because fire always seeks terrestrial food and air mixes readily with water) they do not have such an affinity for the material and ponderable principles of the Work, the sulfur and the mercury, that their presence alone, their catalysis, would be capable of preventing any discord in this philosophical marriage. On the contrary, it is only after long disputes and numerous shocks that air and fire, breaking their saline association, act together to restore concord between enemies that a simple difference of evolution had separated.

Henceforth we must conclude, in the theoretical explanation of the conversion of elements and their indissoluble (1) union at the stage of the Elixir, that the salt is the unique instrument of a durable harmony, the instigator of a stable peace prolific in fortunate results. And this peaceful mediator, not content to ceaselessly intervene during the slow, tumultuous and chaotic elaboration of our mixtion, still contributes his own substance to nourish and fortify the newly formed body. The image of the Good Shepherd who gives his life for his sheep, the philosophical salt, its role finished, dies so that our young monarch can live, grow, and extend his supreme will over the entire metallic nature.

Panel 2 ---Humidity had eaten away the back slab, and deprived it of the relief it once possessed. The imprecise and rough rugosity which still exists could belong to some plants. The inscription has suffered much; only certain letters have resisted the ravages of time: ..MRI...V.RV..

With so few elements, it is impossible to reconstruct the phrase; however, according to the work entitled *Landscapes and Monuments of Poitou*, which we have already cited, the plants would be ears of wheat and the inscription should read:

.MIH.MORILLVCRVM.

Death is a gain for me.

It is an allusion to the necessity of our mineral seed's mortification and decomposition. For, just as the grain of wheat could not germinate, produce, and multiply if putrefaction had not previously liquefied it into the earth. Similarly it is indispensable to provoke the disaggregation of the philosophical rebis where the seed is included, in order to generate a new being of a similar nature. Yet capable of augmenting itself in weight and volume, as well as in power and virtue. In the center of the compound, the imprisoned, living, immortal spirit, always ready to manifest its action, is only waiting for the decomposition of the body, the dislocation of its parts, to accomplish the purification and then the rebuilding of the cleansed and clarified substance with the aid of fire.

Thus it is the still coarse matter of the philosophical mercury which speaks in the epigraph *Mihi mori lucrum*. Not only does death grant it the physical benefit of a bodily envelope much more noble than the first, but it moreover gives it a vital energy which it did not possess and a generative faculty of which a bad constitution had previously deprived it.

Such is the reason why our Adept, in order to provide an appreciable image of the hermetic regeneration, by the death of the compost, has the ears sculpted, under the motto in parables, of this little subject.

Panel 3 --Issuing from thick clouds, a hand whose forearm is ulcerated, holds an olive branch. This coat of arms, of a morbid character, bears the sign:

.PRVDENTI.LINITVR.DOLOR.

The Sage knows how to assuage his pain.

The olive branch, a symbol of peace and concord, marks the perfect union of the generating elements of the philosophers' stone. Now this stone, by the certain knowledge it brings, by the truths it reveals to the philosopher, enables him to overcome the moral sufferings which affect other men and to vanquish physical pains by suppressing the cause and the effects of many illnesses.

The very elaboration of the Elixir demonstrates to him that death, a necessary transformation, albeit not a real annihilation, must not distress him. Much to the contrary, the soul, freed from the burden of the body, enjoys in full flight a marvelous independence totally bathed in this ineffable light only accessible to pure spirits. He knows that the phases of material vitality and spiritual existence succeed one another according to the laws that rule their rhythm and their periodicity. The soul leaves its earthly body only to animate a new one. Yesterday's old man is tomorrow's child. The vanished are met again, the lost ones are found, the dead are reborn. And the mysterious attraction which binds together beings and things of a similar evolution, reunites, without their knowledge, those who still live and those who no longer are. For the initiate, there is no genuine, absolute separation, and mere absence cannot cause him grief. He will easily recognize his affections even though they are donned in a different envelope because the spirit, of immortal essence and gifted with eternal memory, knows how to cause him to discern them...

These certainties, materially controlled throughout the labor of the Work, assure him an indefectible moral serenity, a calm amidst excitements, a contempt for mundane pleasures, a resolute stoicism, and, above all, this powerful comfort granted him by the secret knowledge of his origins and destiny.

On the physical plane, the medicinal properties of the Elixir shelter its fortunate possessor from physiological defects and misery. Thanks to it, the sage knows how to assuage his pain. Batsdorff (2) certifies that it cures all outer illnesses of the body --ulcers, scrofula, excrescences, paralysis, wounds and such other afflictions, when dissolved in an appropriate liquor and applied to the wound by means of a cloth soaked in the liquor. On the other hand, the author of an illuminated alchemical manuscript (3) also praises the high virtues of the medicine of the sages. "The Elixir", he writes, "is a divine ash, more miraculous than not, giving of itself as can be seen according to necessity, refusing itself to no one, as much for the health of the human body and the nourishment of this decaying and transitory life, as for the resurrection of the imperfect metallic body" In truth, it surpasses all the theriaca and the most excellent medicines that men could possibly make, however subtle they might be. It renders the man who possesses it blessed, sober, prosperous, distinguished, daring, robust, magnanimous". Finally, Jacques Tesson (4) advises the new converts wisely on the use of the universal balm. "We have spoken, says the author by addressing the subject of the art, about the fruit of blessing which have come out of you; now we will say how you must apply to yourselves; it is to help the poor and not for worldly display; it is to heal the needy and the handicapped, and not the great and powerful of the world. For we must be careful to whom we give it and know whom we must heal among the infirmities and illnesses that afflict the human species. Administer this powerful remedy only under an inspiration from God who sees all, knows all, ordains all".

Panel 4 ---Here is now one of the major symbols of the Great Work: the figure of the Gnostic circle formed by the body of the snake which devours its tail, having for motto the Latin word

.AMICITIA.

Friendship.

The circular image is indeed the geometric expression of unity, affinity, equilibrium and harmony. All the points of the circumference being equidistant from the center and in close contact with one another they create a continuous, enclosed orb which has no point of beginning, and cannot have not an end, just as God in metaphysics is infinity in space and eternity in time.

The Greeks called this serpent the Ouroboros, from the words [\*353-1] (oura), tail, and [\*353-2] (boros), devouring. In the Middle Ages it was likened to the dragon by imposing on it an esoteric attitude and value similar to those of the Hellenic serpent. Such is the reason for the association with reptiles, whether natural or legendary, which were almost always found among the old authors. Draco aut serpens qui caudam devoravit; serpens aut lacerta viridis quae propriam caudam devoravit, (5) etc., they frequently wrote. On monuments, on the other hand, the dragon, allowing more movement and vividness in the decorative composition, seemed to be more favored by artists; it is the one preferably represented. This can be observed on the north portal of the church Saint-Armel at Ploermel (in the Department of Morhiban, Brittany, France) where several dragons, hooked in the sloping of the gables, form a wheel by biting their own tails. The famous stalls of Amiens also offer the curious figure of a dragon with the head of a horse and a winged body, ended by a decorative tail, the extremity of which the monster is devouring.

Given the significance of this emblem ---it is, with the seal of Solomon, the distinctive sign of the Great Work ---its meaning remains susceptible to various and sundry interpretations. The hieroglyph for the absolute union, for the indissolubility (6) of the four elements and the two principles restored to unity in the philosophers' stone, this universality allows the use and attribution to the various stages of the Work, since all of them aim at the same goal and are oriented towards the assemblage, the homogeneity of the first natures, towards the mutation of their native antipathy into a solid and stable friendship. Generally, the head of the dragon or of the Ouroboros marks the fixed part and its tail the volatile part of the compound. So does the commentator of Marc Fra Antonio (7) understand it: "This earth", he says, "while speaking of sulphur, by its igneous and innate dryness, attracts to itself its own humidity and consumes it; and because of it, it is compared to the dragon which devours its tail. Besides, it attracts and assimilates its humid counterpart only because it is of the same nature". Other philosophers make a different application, for example Linthaut (8), who connects it to the colored periods: "There are", he writes, "three principal colors which must show themselves in the Work, the black, the white, the red. The blackness, the first color, is called venomous dragon by the Ancients when they say: the dragon will devour its own tail". The esotericism is equivalent in *The Most Precious Gift of God* by Georges Auruch. David de Planis Campy, farther removed from the doctrine, only sees in it a version of the spagyric cohobations.

As for ourselves, we have always understood the Ouroboros as a complete symbol of the alchemical work and of its result. But, whatever the opinion of the scientists of our time may be about this figure, we can nevertheless be certain that all the attributes of Dampierre placed under the aegis of the serpent biting its tail, are exclusively related to the Great Work and present a specific character conforming to the secret teaching of the hermetic science.

Panel 5 ---Yet another vanished subject about which nothing can be deciphered. Only a few incoherent letters appear on the disintegrating limestone:

...CO.PIA...

Panel 6 ---A large six-ray star is shining on the waves of a moving sea. Above it the streamer bears this Latin motto engraved on it whose first word is written in Spanish:

.LVZ.IN.TENEBRIS.LVCET.

Light shines in the darkness.

You might wonder why we hold to be water what others consider to be clouds. But by studying the manner in which the sculptor represents water and clouds elsewhere, you will readily be convinced that there is not on our part any error, mistake or dishonesty. By this marine star, nevertheless, the author of the picture does not intend to represent the common asterias, vulgarly called starfish. The latter only has five radiating rays, whereas ours has six distinct branches. We must therefore see here an indication of a starry water, which is none other than our prepared mercury, our Virgin mother and her symbol,

Stella maris (the Star of the Sea), the mercury obtained in the form of a white and shining metallic water which philosophers denominate star once more (from the Greek [\*355-1] ---aster ---brilliant, shining). Thus the work of the art renders manifest and external that which before was diffuse in the coarse, vile, and dark mass of the primitive subject. From the obscure chaos, it makes the light flash forth after having assembled it and, from that point on, this light shines in the darkness like a star in the night sky. All chemists have known and know this subject although very few know how to obtain it from the radiant quintessence so deeply buried in the earthiness and the opacity of the body. This is why Philalethes (9) recommends to the student not to despise the astral signature, revealer of the prepared mercury. "Direct your course by the aspect of the North Star, which our Magnet will cause to appear to thee. The Wise man will rejoice, but the Fool will disesteem these things, nor will he learn Wisdom, even though he behold the Central Pole turned outwards, marked with the notable sign of the Omnipotent".

Strongly intrigued by the star, the significance and meaning of which he could not fathom, Hoefler (10) turned to the Hebrew Cabala. "Iesod ([\*356-1])", he writes, "signifies at once the basis and the mercury, because mercury is the basis, the foundation of the art of transmutation. The nature of mercury is indicated by the name: [\*356-2] (Living God), whose letters produce, by addition of their numerical values, the number 49, which is also given by the sum of the letters [\*356-3] (cocaf), star. But what interpretation can we give of the word cocaf? Let us listen to the Kabbala: 'The characteristic of the true mercury consists in covering itself, through the action of heat, with a film more or less approximating the color of gold; and this can be done in the space of a single night'. Here is the mystery indicated by the word cocaf, star". This exegesis does not satisfy us. A film, whatever color it might be, does not in any way resemble a starred radiation and our own works answer for an effective signature which presents all the geometric and regular characteristics of a perfectly drawn star. And so do we prefer the less chemical but truer language of the ancient masters to this kabalistic description of the red oxide of hydrargyrum. "It is in light's nature", said the author of a famous book (11), "to not be able to appear to our eyes without being clothed with a body of some kind, and this body must also be appropriate to receiving light; therefore where light is there must necessarily also be the vehicle of this light. Here is the easiest means to not err. Look then, with the light of your spirit, for the light clothed with darkness, and learn from it that the most vile of all subjects in the ignoramus' opinion". In an allegorical tale concerning the preparation of mercury, Trismosin (12) is yet more categorical; he asserts as we do, the visual reality of the hermetic seal. "At daybreak", says our author, "above the person of the king a very bright star was seen to come out and the light of the say illuminated the darkness". As for the mercurial nature of the support of the star (which is the sky of the philosophers), Nicolas Valois (13) makes it rather clear in the following passage: "The sages", he says, "name their sea the entire Work, and as soon as the body is reduced to water, the same one from which it was originally made, the latter being called sea water because it is truly a sea in which several helmsmen were shipwrecked, not having this celestial body as their guide, which will never fail those who have known it once. It is this star which led the wise men to the birth of the Son of God, and the same one which makes us see the birth of this young king". Finally, in his Catechism or Instruction for the Rank of Adept, an appendix to his work called the Flaming Star, Baron Tschoudy informs us that the Freemasons called the heavenly body of the philosophers in that particular manner. "Nature", he says, "is not visible although it acts visibly, for it is but a volatile spirit, that operates in bodies and that is animated by the universal spirit we know in common Masonry under the respectable emblem of the Flaming Star".

Panel 7 ---At the bottom of a tree loaded with fruit, a woman is planting several pits into the earth. On the phylactery, one extremity of which is connected to the trunk and the other is unfolding above the person, we can read this Latin phrase:

TV.NE.CEDE.MALIS.

Do not succumb to errors.

It is an encouragement to persevere in the path followed and in the method used, which our philosopher is giving to the good artist, which artist takes pleasure in naively imitating the simplicity of nature, rather than vainly chasing moonbeams (14).

The ancients often called alchemy the celestial agriculture, because it offers in its laws, circumstances and conditions the most intimate of connection with terrestrial agriculture. There is scarcely a classical author who does not draw his examples from, and does not establish his demonstrations on agricultural labor. The hermetic analogy thus appears founded on the art of the farmer. Just as one needs a seed to obtain an ear of corn ---nisi granum frumenti (if not with the seed of wheat) ---in the same way, it is essential first to possess the metallic seed, in order to multiply the metal. Now each fruit bears its seed within itself and each body, whatever it may be, possesses its own. This difficult point, which Philalethes calls the pivot of the art, consists in knowing how to extract, from metals or from minerals, this first seed. It is the reason why the artists, at the beginning of his work, must completely decompose that which has been assembled by nature because whosoever ignores the means of destroying metals also ignores the means of perfecting them. Having obtained the ashes of the body, these

undergo calcinations, which will burn their heterogeneous, combustible parts, and will only leave the central salt, an incombustible and pure seed the flame cannot vanquish. The sages have given it the names of sulphur, first agent, or philosophical agent.

But any seed capable of germinating, growing, and fructifying requires proper soil. The alchemist also has need of a proper soil appropriate to the species and the nature of the seed; once more he has to ask the mineral kingdom for it. Yes, the second work will cost him more fatigue and time than the first. And this is also in agreement with the art of the farmer. Do we not see all the farmer's care directed toward the perfect and exact preparation of the soil? While the sowing is done quickly and effortlessly; the earth, on the other hand, demands to be tilled and ploughed several times, requires a fair spreading of the fertilizer, etc., a hard, long, and exacting work and its analogy can be found in the Philosophical Great Work.

Let then the true disciples of Hermes study all the simple and efficient means likely to separate the metallic mercury, the mother and wet nurse of this seed from which our embryo is to be born; let them apply themselves to purifying this mercury and to exalting its powers, after the fashion of the farmer who increases the fecundity of the humus by frequently airing it out and by incorporating into it the necessary organic products. Above all, let them beware of the sophistic processes, capricious formulas used by ignorant or greedy ones. Let them ask nature, let them observe in what way it operates, let them know how to discern what its fashions are, and let them exercise their wits to imitate it closely. If they do not allow themselves to be rebuffed and if they do not succumb to errors profusely distributed even in the best of books, they will doubtlessly eventually see success crown their efforts. The totality of the art can be summed up in discovering the seed, sulphur, or metallic nucleus, in casting out into a specific earth or mercury and then in submitting these elements to fire according to a regimen of four increasing temperatures which constituted the four seasons of the Work. However the greatest secret is the one of the mercury, and it is in vain that one will search for its operation in the books of the most famous authors. Therefore, it is preferable to go from the known to the unknown by the analogical method, should one desire to approach the truth about a subject which caused the despair and ruin of so many investigators more enthusiastic than profound.

Panel 8 ---This bas-relief only bears the image of a circular shield and the historical injunction of the Spartan Mother:

.AVT.HVNC.AVT.SVPER.HVNC.

Either with him or on him.

Nature is addressing here the son of science preparing himself to undertake the first operation. We have already said that this quite tricky, practical operation invokes a real danger, since the artist must provoke the old dragon, the guardian of the orchard of the Hesperides, force it to fight, and then slay it without mercy if he does not want to be slain. To vanquish or die, such is the veiled meaning of the inscription. Our champion, in spite of his valor, could not use too much prudence for the future of the Work and his own destiny depends upon this first success.

The figure of the shield ---in Greek [\*359-1] (aspis), shelter, protection, defense ---indicates to the student the need for a defensive weapon. As for the attacking weapon, it is the spear --[\* 359-2] (logche), fate, destiny ---or tuck [\*359-3] (dialepsis), separation ---which he must use. Unless he would rather resort to the means used by Bellerophon, riding Pegasus, to kill the Chimera. Poets claim that he buried, deep in the monster's throat, a wood stake, hardened with fire and covered with lead. The Chimera, irritated, would vomit flames; the lead melted, flowed into the beast's entrails, and this simple strategem got him the upper hand.

We shall, above all, call the beginner's attention to the spear and shield which are the best weapons a knight, expert and sure of himself, can use; the weapons that will signify, should he emerge victorious from the fight, his symbolic coat of arms by securing him the possession of our crown.

Thus does one, from a farmer, become a herald[\*359-4] ---kerus ---the root of another Greek word [\*359-5] ---kerukiophoros --one who bears the Caduceus). Others, of the same courage and convinced of their own strength, abandoned the sword, the spear and the glaive for the cross. Those were even more victorious for the material and demonic dragon never resisted the spiritual and almighty effigy of the Savior, the ineffable sign of the Spirit and of Light Incarnate: In hoc signo vinces (15) .

It is said that for the wise ones, a few words suffice and we deem that we already have said enough for those who will take the trouble to try and understand us.

Panel 9 ---A country flower with the appearance of a poppy receives the light from the sun which is shining above it. This bas-relief has suffered from unfavorable atmospheric conditions or perhaps from the bad quality of the stone; the inscription



which ornamented a streamer, traces of which we can still see, has been completely erased. As we have previously analyzed a similar object, (Series 2, panel 1), and as this motif can be the subject of several very different interpretations, we will keep silent for fear of a possible error, given the absence of its specific inscription.

(1) Translator's Note: In French "indissoluble" and "insolubl" are the same words, thus referring both to the physical and abstract properties. (2) *Le Filet d'Ariadne* (Ariadne's Net), op. cit., p. 1. (3) *La Generation et Operation du Grande-Oeuvre* (The Creation and Operation of the Great Work), Library of Lyons, France. Ms. quoted. (4) Jacques Tesson: *Le Grande et Excellent Oeuvre des Sages,,,* (The Great and Excellent Work of the Sages...); Ms from the 17th century, Library of Lyons #971(900). (5) Dragons or serpents devouring their tails; serpents or green lizards devouring their own tails. (6) Translator's Note: "indissolubility" also indicates "insolubility" as both ideas are expressed by the same word in French. (7) *La Lumiere sortant par soy-mesme des Tenebres, ou Veritable Theorie de la Pierre des Philosophes* (The Light coming by itself out of the Darkness, or True Theory of the Stone of the Philosophers), written in Italian verses; Paris, Libr. d. Houry, 1687, p. 271. (8) Henri de Linthaut: *Commentaire sur le Tresor des Tresors de Christophe de Gramont* (Commentary on the Treasure of Treasures by Christophe de Gramont); Paris, Claude Morillon, 1610, p. 133. (9) Translator's Note: Eirenaeus Philalethes, *Alchemical Works, Secrets Revealed: or, An Open Entrance to the Shut Palace of the King*, ch. 4. (10) Ferdinand Hofer: *Histoire de la Chimie* (History of Chemistry); Paris, Firmin Dido, 1866, p. 248. (11) *La Lumiere sortant par soy-mesme des Tenebres* (The Light coming by itself out of the Darkness), op. cit. (12) Salomon Trismosin: *La Toyson d'Or* (The Golden Fleece); Paris, Ch. Sevestre, 1612. (13) *Les Cinq Livres de Nicholas Valois* (The Five Books of Nicolas Valois), ms. cit. (14) Translator's Note: or, chimera. (15) With this sign, you shall overcome.

### THE CASTLE OF DAMPIERRE VIII

Fifth Series (Plate XXX)

Panel 1 ---A horned and hairy vampire, equipped with membranous, nervate, and clawed wings, with feet and hands in the shape of talons, is represented squatting. The inscription has this nightmarish character speak in Spanish verses:

.MAS.PENADO.MAS.PERDIDO.Y.MENOS.AREPANTIDO.

The more prejudicial you have been to me, the more you lost me, and the less I repented it.

This devil, an image of material coarseness as opposed to spirituality, is the hieroglyph for the first mineral substance such as it is found in metal-bearing deposits where miners go in order to tear it therefrom. It was formerly represented as the figure of Satan, in Notre-Dame de Paris, and the faithful, as a token of their scorn and aversion, came to put out their candles by plunging them in its mouth, that it held open. It was for the people, Master Pierre of Coignet (1), our corner stone and the original block on which the entire Work is built.

It must be agreed that to be symbolized under such a deformed and monstrous appearance --dragon, serpent, vampire, devil, Tarasque. Etc. ---this unfortunate subject must have fallen into disgrace with Nature. In truth, its appearance has nothing seductive about it. Black, scaly, often covered with red spots or a yellow, crumbly and dull coating, having a strong and nauseous odor which the philosophers define as *toxicum et venenum*, it stains fingers when it is touched and seems to assemble within itself all that which can displease. Yet it is, this primitive subject of the sages, vile and despised by the ignorant ones, which is the only one, the sole dispense of the celestial water, our first mercury, and the great Alkahest (2). It is it, the loyal servant and the salt of the earth, what Madame Hillel-Erlanger calls Gilly and which causes his master to triumph over the influence of Vera (3). Thus it has been called the universal solvent, not because it is capable of dissolving all bodies in nature ---as many wrongly believe ---but because it can do everything in the small universe which the Great Work constitutes. In the 17th century, a time of impassioned discussions between chemists and alchemists on the principles of the old sciences, the universal solvent was the subject of ardent controversies. J.H. Pott (4), who applied himself to noting the many formulas of menstrual, and who strove to provide their rationale, brings us, more than anything, the proof that none of the formulas' inventors understood what the Adepts meant by their solvent. Although they certified that our mercury is metallic and homogeneous to metals, most of the seekers persisted in extracting it from matters more or less removed from the mineral kingdom. Some thought they were preparing it when they saturated the ruinous volatile spirit (ammonia) with any acid, and then circulated this mixture; others exposed thickened urine to air with the purpose of introducing the airy spirit into it, etc. Becher (*Physica Subterranea*, Frankfurt 1669) and Bohn (*De Alkali et Acidi Insufficiencia* ---Letter on the Insufficiency of Acid and Alkali) think that "the alkahest is the purest mercurial principle which can be removed either from mercury or from sea salt by specific processes". Zobel (*Margarita Medicinalis*) and the author of *Lullius Redivivus* prepare their solvent by saturating the Spirit of Sal Ammoniac (hydrochloric acid) with the Spirit of Tartar (potassium tartrate) and some crude tartar (impure potassium carbonate). Hoffman (5) and Poterius volatilized the salt of tartar by first dissolving it in water, exposing the liquor to putrefaction in an oak-wood vessel, and

then submitting the precipitated earth to sublimation. "A solvent which leaves all the other ones far behind, assures Pott, is the precipitate resulting from the mixture of the corrosive sublimate and the sal ammoniac. Whosoever knows how to use it properly, will be able to consider it a true alkahest". Le Fecre, Agricola, Robert Fludd, de Nuysement, Le Breton, Etmuller, and others still prefer the spirit of dew as well as analogous extracts that have been prepared "with stormy rains or with the fatty film which floats on mineral waters". Finally, according to Lenglet-Dufresnoy, (6), Olaus Borrichius (*De Origine Chemiae et in conspectus Chemicorum Celebriorum*, num. XIV) "notes that Capt. Thomas Parry, an Englishman, saw this same science (alchemy) practiced in 1662 at Fez in Barbary, and that the great alkahest, the first matter of all the philosophers has been known for a long time in Africa by the most skilled Mohammedan artists".

To sum it up, all alkahest recipes proposed by authors who above all aim at the liquid form attributed to the universal solvent are useless, if not false, and only good for spagyrics. Our first matter is solid; the mercury which it provides always presents itself as saline in appearance and with a hard consistency. And this metallic salt, as Bernard Trevisan quite rightly said, is extracted from the Magnesia "by the reiterated destruction of the latter, by dissolving and by sublimating". With each operation the body fragments itself, disaggregates little by little, without apparent reaction, by abandoning many impurities; the extract, purified by sublimations, also loses heterogeneous parts so that its virtue becomes condensed in the end into a small mass of a volume and weight much inferior to that of the original mineral subject. This is what the Spanish axiom quite exactly justified, for the more reiterations, the more the broken and dissociated body is wronged and the less the quintessence which comes from it has reason to repent of it; on the contrary, it augments in strength, in purity, and in activity. By this very act our vampire acquires the strength of penetrating metallic bodies, of attracting their sulphur, or their true blood, and allows the philosopher to liken it to the nocturnal vampire of oriental legends.

Panel 2 ---A crown made of leaves and fruit: apples, pears, quince, etc., is also tied by ribbons the knots of which are also tightening four little laurel twigs. The epigraph which frames it teaches us that no one will obtain it if he doesn't abide by the laws of combat.

NEMO.ACCIPIT.QVI.NON.LEGITIME.CERTAVERIT.

Monsieur Louis Audiat sees in this subject a laurel crown; this should not surprise us; his observations are often imperfect and he is not preoccupied by the study of details. In fact, it is not the ivy wreath with which poets of Antiquity were crowned, nor the sweet laurel on the foreheads of victors, nor the palm leaves dear to the Christian martyrs, nor the myrtle, vine leaves, olive branches of the Gods, that are represented here, but quite simply the fruit-bearing crown of the sage. His fruit marks the abundance of his earthly goods acquired by the skillful practice of celestial agriculture: so much for profit and utility; a few laurel twigs, of such a discrete relief that they are barely noticed: so much for the honor of the hard-working artist. And yet this rustic garland which wisdom offers to the learned and virtuous investigators is not easily won. Our philosopher says it straight out: hard is the battle the artist must wage against the elements if he wants to overcome the great trial. Like the knight-errant, he must direct his steps toward to mysterious garden of the Hesperides and provoke the horrible monster defending the entrance. Such is, in keeping with the tradition, the allegorical language through which the sages intend to reveal the first and the most important of the Work's operations. In truth, it is not the person of the alchemist who defies and fights the hermetic dragon, but another beast, equally robust, in charge of representing him and that the artist, as a prudent spectator, always ready to intervene, must encourage, help, and protect. He is the fencing master of this strange and merciless duel.

Few authors have mentioned this first encounter and the danger it represents. To our knowledge, Cyliani is without doubt the Adept who went the farthest in the metaphoric description he presents of it. However, we have found nowhere else as detailed a tale, i.e., as exact in its images, as near to the truth and to reality as the great hermetic philosopher of the modern times: de Crano Bergerac. This brilliant man is not known enough, whose work, purposely mutilated, probably encompassed the entire scope of the science. As for us, we scarcely need M. de Sercy's testimony (7), asserting that Cyrano "received from the Author of Light and from the Master of Sciences (Apollo) lights which nothing can darken and knowledge at which no one can arrive", to recognize in him a true and powerful initiate.

De Cyrano Bergerac stages two fantastic beings representing the principles of Sulphur and Mercury, issuing from the four primary elements: the sulphurous Salamander, which thrives in the midst of flames, symbolizes the air and fire of which the sulphur possesses the dryness and the igneous ardor, and the Remora, the mercurial champion, heir to the earth and water and its cold and humid qualities. These names chosen on purpose owe nothing to whim or fantasy. [\*367-1] (Salamandra) in Greek seems formed of [\*367-2] (sal), the anagram for [\*367-3] (als), salt, and of [\*367-4] (mandra), stable; it is the salt of the stable, the salt of urine of the artificial saltpeter bed, the saltpeter of the old spagyrics ---sal petri, salt of stone ---which they still designate under the name of Dragon. The Remora, in Greek [\*367-5] (echeneis), is this famous fish which was supposed to stop (according to some) or to direct (according to others) ships sailing in northern seas, subject to the

influence of the North Star. It is the echeneis of which the Cosmopolite speaks, the royal dolphin which the characters of the Mutus Liber exert themselves to capture, the same one which accompanied and pilots, on the bas-relief ornamenting the fountain of Vertbois, the ship loaded with an enormous hewn stone. The echeneis is the pilot of the running waters, our mercury, the faithful friend of the alchemist, the one which has to absorb the secret fire, the igneous energy of the Salamander and finally, remains stable, permanent, always victorious, under the safekeeping and protection of his master. These two principles, of opposite natures and tendencies, of contrary disposition exhibit a relentless antipathy against each other, and an irreducible aversion for one another. Face to face, they furiously attack each other, defend themselves ruthlessly, and the truceless and merciless fight only ceases with the death of one of the antagonists. Such is the esoteric duel, appalling yet real, which the illustrious Cyrano (8) related in these terms"

"I had advanced about 400 Furlongs, when I perceived in the middle of a great Plain, as it were, two Bowls, which having rustled and turned a long time round one another, approached and then recoiled: And I observed that when they knocked one against the other, then were these great Claps heard; but going a little further on, I found that what at a distance I had taken for two Bowls, were two Animals; one of which, though round below, formed a Triangle about the middle, and his lofty head with ruddy locks, which floated upwards, spired into a Pyramide; his Body was bored like a Sieve, and through these little holes, that served him for Pores, thin flames glided, which seemed to cover him with a Plume of Fires.

"Walking about there, I met with a very venerable old Man, who observed that famous conflict, with no less curiosity than myself. He made me a sign to draw nigh, I obeyed, and we sat down by one another... "He thereupon spake to me in this manner: 'In this Globe where we are, we should see the Woods very thin sow'n, by reason of the great number of the fiery Beasts that destroy them; were it not for the Animals' Frozen-Noses, which are at the desire of the Forests their Friends, come daily to cure these Sick Trees: I say cure, for no sooner have they, from their Icy Mouth, blown upon the coals of that Plague, but they put it out.

"In the World of the Earth, from whence both you and I come, the fiery Beast is called the Salamander; and the Animal Frozen-Nose, is known by the name of Remora. Now you must know; that the Remoras lived toward the extremity of the Pole, at the bottom of the Mare Glaciale; and it is the cold of these Fishes, evaporated through their Scales, which makes the Sea Water in these quarters to freeze, though it be Salt...

"That Stygian-Water wherewith the Great Alexander was poisoned, and whose Coldness petrified his Bowels, wa the Piss of one of these Animals... And so much for the Animals Frozen-Nose.

"But as to the Fiery Beasts, they lodge on Land under Mountains of burning Bitumen, such as Aetna, Vesuvius and other. The Pimples which you see upon the Breast of this beast, that proceed from the Inflammation of his Liver, are...

"Here we put a stop to our Talk, that we might be more attentive to that famous Duel. The Salamander attacked with much ardour; but the Remora defended impenetrable. Every dash they gave one another, begot a clap of Thunder; as it happens in the Worlds thereabouts, where the Clashing of a hot Cloud with a cold, causes the same Report. At every glance of Rage which the Salamander darted against its Enemy, out of its Eyes flashed a reddish Light, that seemed to rekindle the Air in flying; it sweat boyling Light, that seemed to kindle the Air in flying; it sweat boyling Oyl, and pissed Aqua-fortis. The Remora on the other hand, that gross, square and heavy Animal, presented a Body scaled all over with Ysicles. Its large Eyes lookt like two Chrystal-plates, whose glances conveyed so chilling a light, that on what member of my Body it fixed them, I felt a shivering Winter-cold. If I thought to put my Hand before me, my Fingers were nummed; nay, the very Air about infected with its quality, condensed into Snow, the Earth hardened under his Steps; and I could reckon the Footings of the Beast, by the number of Chil-blancs, that welcomed me when I trode upon them.

"In the beginning of the Fight, the Salamander by the vigorous activity of its first heat, had put the Remora into a sweat; but at length that Sweat cooling again, glazed all the Plain with so slippery an Enamel, that the Salamander could not get up to the Remora without falling. The Philosopher and I knew very well, that the trouble of falling and rising so many times, had made it weary; for these Thunderclaps so dreadful before, that proceeded from the shock he gave its Enemy, were no more than the dull Sound of those little After claps, which denote the end of a Storm; and that dull Sound, deadened by degrees, degenerated into a Whizzing, like that of a hot Iron plunged into cold Water. When the Remora perceived, that the Fire was near an end, by the Weakness of the shock which was hardly felt by it, it raised it self upon an Angle of its Cube, and with all its weight fell upon the Breast of the Salamander with so good success, that the heart of the Salamander, wherein all the rest of its heat was contracted, bursting, made so fearful a Crack, that I know nothing in nature to compare it to. Thus died the Fiery Beast, under the lazy resistance of the Animal Frozen-nose.

"Sometimes after the Remora was gone, we approached the place of Battle; and the old Man having daubed his hands over with the Earth laid hold on the Dead Body of the Salamander. Give me but the Body of this Animal, said he, and I've no

need for Fire in my Kitchen; for provided it be hung upon the Pot-hood, it will Boil and Roast all that's laid upon the Hearth. As for the Eyes, I'll carefully keep them; if they were cleaned from the Shades of Death, you'd take them for two little Suns. The Ancients of our World knew well what use to make of them; they called them burning-lamps (9), and never hung them up but in the Pompous Monuments of the Illustrious Persons. The Moderns have found some of them, by digging into these famous Tombs; but their ignorant Curiosity made them put them out, thinking to find behind the broken membranes, the Fire which they saw shine there".

Panel 3 ---A 16th century piece of artillery is represented at the moment of firing. It is surrounded with a phylactery bearing this Latin sentence:

.SI.NON.PERCVSSERO.TERREBO.

While I may reach no one, at least I will terrify.

It is of course obvious that the creator of this subject meant to speak figuratively. We understand that he is directly addressing lay-people, investigators lacking science, therefore incapable of understanding these compositions, but who nevertheless will be surprised, by their number as well as by their singularity and their lack of coherence. The contemporary sages will take this ancient work to be that of an insane person. And just as a canon wrongly aimed only surprises by its noise, our philosopher thinks with reason that if he cannot be understood by all, everyone will be astonished by the enigmatic, strange, and discordant characteristics which so may inexplicable symbols and scenes take on.

Thus do we believe that the curious and picturesque aspect of these figures holds the attention of the spectator without enlightening him. This is what seduced M. Louis Audiat as well as the other authors who turned their attention to Dampierre; in the final analysis, their descriptions are nothing but the noise of confused, vain, and insignificant words. Albeit useless to the instruction of the curious one, they nevertheless bring us the testimony that, in our opinion, no observer has been able to discover the general idea hidden behind those motifs nor the far-reaching scope of the mysterious teaching which emerges from them.

Panel 4 ---Narcissus strives to catch, in the basin where he admired himself, his own image, the cause of his metamorphosis into a flower, so that he can relive thanks to the water that brought him death:

VT.QVAS.PERIIT.VIVERE.POSSIT.AQVAS.

Narcissuses are plants with white or yellow flowers, and these flowers are what made mythologists and symbolists distinguish them; indeed they offer the respective colorations of the two sulfurs charged with orienting the two magisteries, All alchemists know white sulphur should be exclusively used for the silver Work and yellow sulphur for the solar Work, carefully avoiding to mix them according to Nicholas Flamel's excellent piece of advice or a monstrous generation without future and without virtue would otherwise result from it.

Narcissus is here the emblem of the dissolved metal. Its Greek name [\*371-1] (Narkissos) comes from the root [\*371-2] (Narke) or [\*371-3] (Narka), numbness, torpor. Reduced metals, whose life is latent, concentrated, and somnolent, appear for this very reason to remain in a state of inertia analogous to that of hibernating animals or patients under the influence of a narcotic ([371-4 ---narkoticos ---Greek root [\*371-5] ---Narke). They are said to be dead compared to alchemical metals which the art has exteriorized and vivified. As for the sulphur, extracted by the solvent ---the mercurial water of the basin --- it remains Narcissus' sole representative, i.e., the dissociated and destroyed metal. But just as the image reflected in the waters' mirror bears all the apparent characteristics of the real object, in the same way the sulphur keeps the specific properties and the metallic nature of the decomposed body. So that this sulphur principle, the true seed of metal finding nutritive, living, and vivifying elements in the mercury, can thereafter generate a new being, similar to itself, however, of a superior essence, and capable of obeying the will of evolutionary dynamism.

It is therefore with reason that Narcissus, metal transformed into flower, or sulphur ---for sulphur, say the philosophers, is the flower of all metals ---hopes to regain existence, thanks to the specific virtue of the waters which provoked its death. If he cannot extract his image from the water which imprisons it, this latter at least will enable hi to materialize it as a "double" in which he will have been preserved.

Thus that which causes the death of one of the principles gives life to the other, as the initial mercury, the metallic living water, dies so as to provide the dissolved sulphur of the metal, the elements of its resurrection. This is why the ancients have always asserted that the living had to be killed for the dead to be resuscitated. The practical application of this axiom assures the sage of the possession of the live sulphur, principal agent of the stone and of the transformations which are to be expected from it. It allows him yet to realize the second axiom of the Work: to join life to life, by uniting the mercury, the

first born from nature, to this active sulphur so as to obtain the mercury of the philosophers, a pure, subtle, responsive, and living substance. Here is the operation that the sages have reserved under the expression of chemical wedding, or mystical marriage of the brother and the sister ---for they both are of the same blood and of the same origin ---of Gabritius and Beya, of the Sun and the Moon, of Apollo and Diana. This last word provided cabalists with the famous sigh of Apollonius of Tyana, under which one thought to recognize a so-called philosopher although the miracles of this fictional character, of incontestably hermetic characteristics, were for the initiates marked with the symbolic seal, and devoted to alchemical esotericism.

Panel 5 ---Noah's ark floating on the waters of the Flood while near it a small boat threatens to sink. In the sky of the subject the following words can be read:

.VERITAS.VINCIT.

Truth is victorious.

We believe we already mentioned that the ark represents the totality of the materials, prepared and united under the names of compound, rebis, amalgam, etc., and which properly constitute the molten core of the earth (archaeus), the igneous matter, basis of the philosophers' stone. The Greek word [\*372-1] (arke) means beginning, principle, source, origin. Under the agency of an external fire, exciting the inner fire of the archaeus, the entire compost becomes liquid and this liquid substance that fermentation agitates and puffs up, takes among the authors the characteristics of a powerful flood. First yellowish and muddy, it is given the name of brass which is none other than the name of the mother of Diana and Apollo, Latona (10). The Greeks called her [\*372-2] (leitōs), with the Ionic sense of common good, common possession, common house ([\*372-3] ---to leiton), meaning the protective envelope, common to the double embryo (11). Let us note in passing that the cabalists, with one of the puns for which they were famous, have taught that fermentation had to occur by means of a wooden vessel or better yet, in a cask cut in half to which they applied the qualifier of hollow oak tree. Latona, the princess becomes in the language of the Adepts, La Tonne (French for the tun), le tonneau (French for the cask), which explains why beginners have such a difficult time identifying the secret vessel where our matters are fermenting.

After the required length of time, one can see ascending to the surface, floating and ceaselessly moving under the effect of boiling a very thin film, as a meniscus, which the sages have named the island of the philosopher (12), the first manifestation of the thickening and coagulation. This is the famous island of Delos, in Greek [\*373-1] (Delos), that is to say apparent, clear, certain, which assures an unhoped for shelter for Latona fleeing Juno's persecutions and fills the artist's heart with pure joy. This floating island which Poseidon with one blow of his trident caused to emerge from the bottom of the sea is also Noah's saving ark carried by the waters of the Flood. "Cum viderem quod aqua sensim carassoit", said Hermes, "duriorque fieri inciperet, gaudebam; certo ebim sciebam, ut invenirem quod querebam" (13).

Progressively and under the continuous action of an internal fire the film develops, thickens, and spreads until it covers the entire surface of the melted glass. The moving island is then fixed and this spectacle gives to the alchemist the assurance that, for Latona, the time for labor has come. At that moment, mystery reassumes its right. A heavy, dark, blackish-blue cloud rises and passes off into the air from the hot and stabilized island, covers with darkness this parturient earth, envelopes and hides all things with its opacity, fills the philosophical sky with Cimmerian darkness ([\*373-2] ---kimbericon ---mourning clothes) and, in the great eclipse of the sun and the moon, it conceals from the eyes the supernatural birth of the hermetic twins, the future parents of the stone.

The Mosaic tradition says that God, towards the end of the Flood, caused a hot wind to blow on the waters which evaporated them and lowered their level. The mountain tops then emerge from the huge sheet of water and the Ark then comes and lands on Mount Ararat in Armenia. Noah, opening the vessel's windows releases the crow, which is for the alchemists, and in his own minute genesis, the replica of the Cimmerian darkness, of these sinister clouds that accompany the hidden elaboration of new beings and regenerated bodies.

By this agreement of evidences, and the physical evidence of the work itself, truth is victorious in spite of those who deny, of the men of little faith always ready to dismiss into the domain of illusion and fantasy, the positive reality of which they could not understand because it is not known, and taught even less.

Panel 6 ---A woman kneeling at the foot of a tomb, on which this bizarre word can be read, TAIACIS, seems to be moved by the deepest despair. The streamer embellishing this figure bears the inscription:

VICTA.JACET.VIRTUS.

Virtue lies vanquished.

Andre Chenier's (14) motto, says Louis Audiat as an explanation, without taking into account the time elapsed between the Renaissance and the French Revolution. The topic here is not the poet but the virtue of the sulphur, or the gold of the sages which rests under the stone, waiting for the total decomposition of its perishable body. For the sulphurous earth, dissolved in the mercurial water, prepares through the death of the compound the release of this virtue, which is actually the sulphur's soul, or fire proper. And this virtue is a temporary prisoner of the bodily envelope or the Spirit of God moves upon the face of the waters, until the formation of the new body, just as Moses teaches in Genesis 1:2.

It is therefore, the hieroglyph for the mortification that we have before our eyes, and one that recurs in the engravings of the Pretiosa Margarita novella with which Petrus Bonus of Lombardy has illustrated his drama of the Great Work. Many philosophers took up this mode of expression and veiled under funereal or macabre topics, the putrefaction specifically applied to the second Work, that is to say the operation charged with decomposition and liquefying the philosophical sulphur, issuing from the first labor, into a perfect Elixir. Basil Valentine shows us a skeleton standing in its own coffin, in one of his Twelve Keys and he depicts a burial scene in another. Flamel not only illustrated the humanized symbols of the Great Art in the Cemetery of the Innocents, but he also decorated his tombstone that is now exhibited in the Chapel of the Museum of Cluny with a corpse eaten by worms, and this inscription:

From the earth have I come and unto the earth I return.

Senior Hadith locks up inside a clear sphere a fleshless, dying person. Henri de Lintaut draws, on a page of the manuscript Aurora, the inanimate body of a crowned king lying down on a tombstone while his spirit, in the shape of an angel rises toward the lantern lost in the clouds. As for us, in the fashion of these great masters, we have exploited the same theme in the frontispiece of The Mystery of the Cathedrals.

As for the woman who, on the tomb of our panel, translates her regrets with disorganized gestures, she represents the metallic mother of sulphur; the curious word engraved on the stone covering her child: Taiacis belongs to her. This baroque term. Issuing perhaps from our adept's whim, is in truth but a Latin sentence with the words grouped together and written backwards so as to be read starting from the end: Sic ai at, alas! Thus, at least (can he be reborn). Supreme hope within supreme grief. Jesus himself had to suffer in his flesh, die, and remain three days in his sepulcher, in order to redeem mankind, and to finally resuscitate in the glory of his human incarnation, and in the accomplishment of his divine mission.

Panel 7 --Represented in full flight, a dove holds in its beak an olive branch. This subject is distinguished by the inscription:

.SI.TE.FATA.VOCANT.

If Fate calls you to it.

The emblem of the dove with the green branch is given to us by Moses in his description of the universal Flood. He says indeed (Gen. 8:11) that Noah, having sent forth a dove, it came in to him in the evening, bringing the green branch of an olive tree. This is par excellence the sign of the true path and the proper progression of the operations. For as the labor of the Great Work is a short version and a reduction of Creation, all the circumstances of the divine work must be found on a smaller scale in that of the alchemist. As a consequence, when the Patriarch sets forth the crow from the Ark, we must understand that in our work it has to do with the first durable color, that is to say black, because when the death of the compound becomes effective, the matters putrefy and take on a very dark blue coloration whose metallic reflection allows comparison with the feathers of a crow. Furthermore, the biblical tale speculates that this bird, held back by corpses, does not come back to the ark. Nevertheless, the analogical reason that makes us attribute the term crow to the color black, is not only founded on a resemblance; the philosophers have also given to the compost that has reached the point of decomposition the expressive name of "corps bleu" (blue body --that gave the old French medieval curse) and the cabalists that of "corps beau" (15) (beautiful body) not that it is pleasant to see but because it brings the first evidence of activity of the philosophical matters. However, in spite of the sign of auspicious presage which the authors agree to recognize in the appearance of the black color, we recommend only to greet these demonstrations with reserve, by attributing to them no more value, even in the midst of foreign substances, provided these substances are treated according to the rules of the art. This criterion then is insufficient, although it justifies the well known axiom that all dry matter dissolves and corrupts in the humidity which is natural and homogeneous to it. This is the reason why we warn the beginner and we advise him, before giving way to a short-lived joy, to prudently wait for the manifestation of the color green, the symptom of the dryness of the earth, the absorption of the water, and the growth of the newly formed body.

And so, brother, if heaven deigns to bless your work and, in the word of the adepts, si te fata vacant, if fate calls you to it, you will first obtain the olive branch, the symbol of peace and union of the elements; then the white dove which will have

brought it to you. Only then will you be sure to possess this admirable light, this gift of the Holy Ghost which Jesus sent on the 50th day ([\*376-1] ---Pentekoste) ---to his beloved apostles. Such is the material consecration of the initiatory baptism and the divine revelation. "And straightway coming up out of the water", says St Mark (1:10) "John saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him".

Panel 8 ---Two forearms whose hands are joining, emerge out of a row of clouds and bear the motto:

.ACCIPPE.DAQUE.FIDEM.

Receive my word and give me yours.

This motif is on the whole nothing but a translation of the sign used by the alchemists to express the element water. Clouds and arms compose a triangle with its summit directed downward, a hieroglyph for water, opposed to fire, which is symbolized by a similar triangle, but directed upward.

Surely we could not recognize our first mercurial water in this emblem of union, since the two hands holding each other in a pact of fidelity and attachment belong to two separate individualities. We have said, and we repeat here, that the initial mercury is a simple product and the first agent in charge of extracting the sulphurous and igneous part from metals. However, while the separation of sulphur by this solvent allows it to retain a few portions of mercury or allows this latter to absorb a certain quantity of sulphur, although these combinations can receive the denomination of philosophical mercury, nevertheless, we should not hope to achieve the stone by means of this mixture alone. Experience demonstrates that a philosophical mercury that has been subjected to distillation easily abandons its fixed body, leaving the pure sulphur at the bottom of the retort. On the other hand, and in spite of the assertions of authors who agree to give mercury preponderance in the work, we notice that the sulphur designates itself as the essential agent, since in the final analysis, it is the sulphur which remains exalted in the final product of the work under the name of Elixir, or multiplied under that of the philosophers' stone. So, whatever it may be, mercury remains submitted to sulphur because it is the servant and the slave which, allowing itself to be absorbed, disappears and merges with its master. Consequently, as the universal medicine is resulting from a true generation, and as generation can only be accomplished with the help of two factors, of similar species but different sex, we must recognize that the philosophical mercury is powerless to produce a stone, because it is alone. Yet it holds in the work the role of female, but this latter, say d'Espagnet and Philalethes, must be united to a second male, if we want to obtain the compound known under the name of Rebis, the first matter of the Magistry.

This is the mystery of the hidden word, or verbum dismissum, which our Adept received from his predecessors, and that he passes on to us under the veil of the symbol, and for the preservation of which he asks us for ours, that is to say the oath not to uncover that which he deemed needed to be kept hidden: accipe daque fidem (Receive my word and give me yours).

Panel 9 ---On a rocky soil two doves unfortunately beheaded, stand opposite each other. They have as an epigraph the Latin proverb:

.CONCORDIA.NVTRIT.AMOREM.

Concord nourishes love.

Eternal truth whose application we find everywhere on earth and that the great Work confirms by the most striking examples that it is possible to encounter in the order of mineral things. The hermetic work as a whole is indeed nothing but a perfect harmony, realizes in accordance with the natural tendencies of inorganic bodies among themselves, of their chemical affinity, and, if the word is not too excessive, of their reciprocal love.

The two birds composing the subject of our bas-relief represent the famous Doves of Diana, objects of despair for so many seekers and the famous enigma devised by Philalethes to cover the artifice of the double mercury of the sages. By proposing this obscure allegory to the sagacity of work candidates, the great adept did not give detail as to the origin of these birds; he only teaches in the briefest fashion that "the doves of Diana are inseparably enveloped in the eternal embraces of Venus". Diana with "the lunar horns", this first mercury of which we have spoken many times under the name of universal solvent. Its whiteness, its silvery luster, also brought it the name of Moon of the Philosophers and Mother of the Stone; it is in this sense that Hermes means when he says, speaking of the Work "the Sun is its father and the Moon its mother". Lamoignon de Saint-Didier, to help the investigator decipher the enigma writes in *The Interview Between Eudoxus and Pyrophilus*: "Finally consider the means by which Geber teaches us to make the required sublimations of the art; as for myself I cannot do more than to make the same wish that another philosopher made: Sidera Veneris, et comiculatae Dianae tibi propitia sunt" (16).

Therefore the Doves of Diana can be seen as the two parts of the dissolving mercury ---the two points of the Lunar crescent --as opposed to one point for Venus who must hold her favorite doves very closely embraced. The correspondence is confirmed by the dual quality, volatile and airy, of the initial mercury whose emblem has always been taken among birds and from the very matter out of which mercury comes, a chaotic, sterile, rocky earth on which the doves are resting. When, say the Scriptures, the Virgin Mary had accomplished, in conformity to the law of Moses, the seven days of purification (Ex. 13:2), Joseph accompanied her to the temple of Jerusalem so as to introduce the Child and to present an offering, in accordance with the law of the Lord (Lev. 12: 6,8) that is to say, two little turtledoves or two young pigeons. Thus appears in the sacred text the mystery of the Ornithogal, this mystery milk of birds ---[\*3791] ---Ornithon) of which the Greeks spoke as a most extraordinary and extremely rare thing. "To milk the milk of birds ([\*379-2] ---Ornithon gala amelgein) was among them a proverb which meant to succeed, to know the favors of destiny and success in all undertaking. And we must agree that one must be chosen by Providence to discover the Doves of Diana and to possess the ornithogals, the Hermetic synonym of the milk of the virgin, dear to Philalethes. [\*379-3] (Omis), in Greek, not only indicates a bird in general, but more specifically, the rooster and the hen from which perhaps the word [\*379-4] (ornithos gala), hen's milk (17) has been derived, obtained by shaking an egg yolk in hot milk. We will not dwell on these relationships because they would unveil the secret operation hidden behind the expression of Doves of Diana. Let us nevertheless say that the plants called ornithogals are bulbed lilaceae, with flowers of a beautiful white color, and it is known that the lily is, par excellence, the emblematic flower of Mary.

(1) Translator's note: The name given to it, Master Pierre of Coignet, means literally, the Master Stone of the Corner. (2) The term alkahest, attributed sometimes to Van Helmont, sometimes to Paracelsus, would be the equivalent of the Latin alcali est and would provide the reason why so many artists have worked to obtain it by starting to work with alkalies. For us, alkahest derives from the Greek words [364-1] (alka), a Dorian word used for [\*364-2] (alke), strength, vigor, and [\*\*\* 364-3] (eis), place or still from [\*364-4] (astria), hearth, the place or the hearth of energy. (3) Irene Hillel-Erlanger: *Voyages en Kaleidoscope* (Travels in Kaleidoscope); Paris, G. Cres, 1919. (4) J. H. Pott: *Dissertations Chymiques; Dissertation sur les Soufres des Metaux*; thesis defended in Hall in 1716; T. Herissant, Paris, 1759 (5) Hoffman: *Notes sur Poterius in Opera Omnia*; 16 vol., Geneva 1748-1754. (6) *Histoire de la Philosophie Hermetique*; Paris, Coustelier, 1742, vol. 1, p. 442. (7) Dedication to the French edition of *The Comical History of the States and Empires of the World of the Sun*; Paris, Bauche, 1910, addressed by M. de Sercy to M. de Cyrano Mauvieres, brother of the author. (8) *De Cyrano Bergerac: The Comical History of the States and Empires of the World of the Sun; History of the Birds*; translated by A. Lovell, H. Rhodes, London, 1687, p. 160-168. (9) The ardent lamps, also said to be perpetual or inextinguishable, are one of the most surprising realizations of hermetic science. They are made of liquid Elixir, brought to a radiant state and maintained in a vacuum pushed as far as possible. In his *Dictionnaire des Art et des Sciences*, Paris, 1731, Th. De Comeille says that in 1401, "a peasant unearthed near the Tiber river some distance from Rome, a lamp of Pallas which had been burning for more than 2000 years and, as was mentioned by the inscription, that nothing could put out. As soon as a hole was made in the clay the flame was immediately extinguished". Under Pope Paul III's pontificate (1534-1549), a perpetual lamp was also discovered in the tomb of Tullia, daughter of Cicero, which was still burning and giving a bright light although the tomb had not been opened for 1550 years. The Rev. S. Mateer of the Missions of London, reports a lamp from the temple of Trevaudrum of the kingdom of Travancore (S. India); "This lamp, made of gold, has been shining 'in a hollow covered by a stone' for more than 1230 years and is still burning today".

(10) Translator's note: Brass in French is "laiton", very close to the word Lato or Latone meaning Latona. (11) Linguists believe, moreover, that Leto is close to Lathein, secondary aorist infinitive form of Lanthanein, meaning kept hidden, concealed to the eyes, to be hidden or unknown, which is in accordance with the dark sentence we will soon see. (12) Cf. in particular *The Cosmopolite in Traite du Sel* (Treatise on Salt), p. 78, and the author of the *Songe Verd* (Green Dream). (13) When I saw this water gradually thickening and hardening, then I rejoiced for I knew for certain that I would find what I was looking for. (14) Translator's note: Andre Chenier (1762-1794) was a French poet who died during the French Revolution. He lived roughly 200 years after the panels at Dampierre were carved. (15) Translator's note: Corbeau (raven, crow) and Corps beau (beautiful body) sound exactly alike in French. (16) "May the stars of Venus and the horn of Diana be favorable to you". (17) Translator's note: The French for eggnog is "laite de poule" (i.e., hen's milk).

## THE CASTLE OF DAMPIERRE IX

Sixth Series (Plate XXXI)

Panel 1 ---Piercing the clouds, a man's hand throws seven sphere against a rock and they rebound toward him. This bas-relief is ornamented with the inscription:

.CONCVDSSVS.SVRGO.



Hit, I bounce back. An image and reaction just like the hermetic axiom: Solve et coagula, dissolve and coagulate. A similar subject can be found at Bourges on one of the ceiling panels of the Chapel Lallemand; but the spheres are replaced by chestnuts. Yet this fruit, which, because of its spiky pericarp, was given the common name of hedgehog (Greek [\*383-1] --- echino --urchin, sea urchin), is a rather exact figuration of the philosophers' stone such as it can be obtained through the brief way. Indeed it appears to be made of a sort of crystalline and translucent, more or less spherical nucleus, of a color similar to that of balas ruby, enclosed in a more or less thick, russet, opaque, dry capsule covered with asperities, which at the end of the Work is often cracked, sometimes even opened like the hull of walnuts and chestnuts. These are indeed the fruits of the hermetic labor that the heavenly hand throws against the rock, the emblem of our mercurial substance. Each time the fixed and perfect stone is taken again by the mercury in order to dissolve itself in it, to nourish itself from it once more, to augment not only in weight and volume, but also in energy, it returns through the coction to its original state, color, and appearance. It can be said that after having such the mercury it goes back to its starting point. These are stages of falling and rising, of solution and coagulation characterizing the successive multiplications that give for each rebirth of the stone a theoretical power twice that of the previous one. Nevertheless, and although many authors envision no limit to this exaltation, we think with some other philosophers that it would be unwise, at least as far as transmutation and medicine are concerned, to go beyond the seventh reiteration. This is the reason why Jean Lallemand and the Adept of Dampierre have only represented seven spheres or chestnuts on the motifs about which we speak.

Unlimited for the speculative philosophers, the multiplication however is limited for practical considerations. The more the stone progresses the more penetrating it becomes and the quicker its elaboration; at each stage of augmentation, it only requires the eighth of the time required for the preceding operation. Generally ---and we are talking here about the long way ---the fourth reiteration requires seldom more than two hours; the fifth thus takes a minute and a half, while twelve seconds would suffice to achieve the sixth; the instantaneousness of such an operation would make it unpractical. On the other hand, the intervention of the continuously increasing weight and volume would force us to keep aside a great part of the resulting product, for want of the required corresponding ration of mercury, the preparation of which is time-consuming and fastidious. Finally, the stone multiplied to the fifth and sixth degrees would demand, given its igneous power, an important mass of pure gold to orient it toward the metallic ---otherwise we would be liable to lost the whole thing. From any standpoint, it is preferable not to push the subtlety too far of an agent already gifted with such a considerable energy, unless, leaving aside the scope of metallic and medical possibilities, you want to possess this Universal Mercury, shiny and luminous in darkness, in order to make a perpetual lamp. But the passing from the solid to the liquid state which must be accomplished here, as it is eminently dangerous, can only be attempted by a very learned and most skillful master.

From that which proceeds, we must conclude that the material impossibilities mentioned about transmutation tend to ruin the thesis of an increasing and indefinite geometric progression based on the number ten, dear to pure theoreticians. Let us guard against thoughtless enthusiasm and never let our judgments be outwitted by the specious arguments and the brilliant but hollow theories of the lovers of the marvelous. Science and nature keep enough marvels in store to satisfy us, without it having to feel the need to add to it the vain fantasies of imagination.

Panel 2 ---This bas-relief presents a dead tree with cut branches, and pulled out roots. It bears no inscription save two signs of alchemical notation engraved on a cartouche; one, a schematic figure of a level, expresses Sulphur; the other an equilateral triangle pointing up, indicated Fire.

The dried up tree is a symbol of the common metals reduced from their ores and molten. The high temperatures of metallurgical ovens have caused all the activity they possessed in their natural mineral bed to be lost. This is why the philosophers qualify them as dead and recognize them as being improper to the labor of the Great Work until they have been revived or reincrudated, to use the expression hallowed by usage, by this inner fire, which never completely leaves them. For the metals, fixed in the industrial form we know them to have, yet preserve at the very depth of their substance, the soul that common fire has caused to cave in and condense but was not able to destroy And this soul, the sages have named fire or sulphur because it is truly the agent of all the mutations, of all the accidents observed in metallic matter, and the incombustible seed that nothing can totally ruin, neither the violence of strong acids, not the fire of the fumaces. This great principle of immortality charged by God Himself to ensure and maintain the perpetuity of the species, and to reform the perishable body, subsists and can be found even in the ashes of calcined metals when the latter undergo the disaggregation of their parts and see the consumption of their bodily envelopes.

Therefore the philosophers deemed, not without reason, that the refractory qualities of the sulphur, its resistance to fire, could only belong to fire or to some spirit of an igneous nature. This is what led them to give it the name under which it is designated and which certain artists believe to come from its appearance although it bears no relation whatsoever to common sulphur. In Greek sulphur is said [\*385-1] (theion), a term whose root is [\*385-2] (theios), which means divine, marvelous, supernatural; [\*385-3] (to theion) not only expresses divinity but also the magical, extraordinary aspect of a

thing. As for the philosophical sulphur, considered the God and animating force of the Great Work, it reveals by its actions a formative energy comparable to that of the divine Spirit. So, and although we should yet attribute precedence to mercury --in order to remain in the sequence of the successive acquisitions ---we must acknowledge that it is to sulphur, the incomprehensible soul of metals, that our practice owes its mysterious and somehow supernatural nature.

Therefore, look for sulphur in the dead trunk of common metals and you will obtain at the same time the natural and metallic fire which is the main key of the alchemical labor. "This is", says Limojon de Saint-Didier, "the great mystery of the art since all the others depend upon the understanding of this one. I would be satisfied, adds, the author, if I were allowed to unequivocally reveal this secret to you, but I cannot do that which no philosopher believed to be in his power to do. All that you can reasonably expect from me is to tell you that the natural fire is a potential fire which does not bum the hands but renders its efficiency apparent whenever it becomes excited by an external fire".

Panel 3 ---An hexagonal pyramid, made of riveted sheet metal, bears, hooked on its side panels, various emblems of chivalry and hermeticism, pieces of a suit of armor and honorable pieces: targes, armet, arm-guard, gauntlets, crown, and garlands. Its epigraph is taken from a verse of Virgil (Aeneid XI, 641):

.SIC.ITVR.AS.ASTRA.

Thus is one immortalized. This pyramidal construction, the shape of which recalls the hieroglyph adopted to designate fire, is note other than the Athanor, a word by which the alchemists signified the philosophical furnace essential to the Work's maturation. Two side doors have been installed, facing each other: they block out glass windows which allow observation of the phases of the work. Another one, placed at the basis gives access to the fire; finally, a little cover near the top serves as a heat register and exhaust vent for the gases produced by the combustion. Inside if we rely on the very detailed descriptions given by Philalethes, Le Tesson, Salmon, Pierre Vicot, Huginus a Barma, etc., the Athanor is designed so as to receive an earthen or metallic plate called nest or arena because the egg undergoes incubation in the warm sand (Latin arena, sand). As for the combustible agent used for heating, it often varies although many authors admit they prefer thermogenic lamps.

At least this is what the masters teach about their furnaces. But the Athanor, the dwelling of the mysterious fire, claims kinship with a less common design. It is more in accordance with hermetic esotericism, it seems to us, to understand that it is through this secret furnace ---the prison of an invisible flame ---that the substance is prepared, the amalgam or the rebis, used as an envelope ad matrix of a central core where these latent capabilities are sleeping, which the common fire will soon activate. As matter alone is the vehicle of the natural and secret fire, the immortal agent of all our achievements, it alone remains for us the true and unique Athanor (from the Greek [\*\*\* 386-1] (athanatos), which renews itself and never dies). Philelthes tells us about the secret fire, which sages could not do without as it is the one responsible for all metamorphoses within of the compounds, that it is of metallic essence and sulphurous origin. It is acknowledged as a mineral because it is born from the primary mercurial substance, the unique source of all metals; and sulphurous because this fire during the extraction of the metallic sulphur has taken on the specific qualities "of the father of metals". It is therefore a twofold fire --- the twofold fiery man of Basil Valentine ---who contains at once the attractive, agglutinating, and organizing virtues of mercury and the drying, coagulating, and fixative properties of sulphur. Whoever has at all any smatterings of philosophy, will easily understand that this twofold fire, the animating agent of the rebis, as it only needs heat to go from potentiality to actuality and to make its power effective, could not be the one of the furnace although it metaphorically represents our Athanor, that is to say the topos of energy, of the principle of immortality enclosed in the philosophical compound. This twofold fore is the pivot of the art, and according to Philalethes expression, the first agent which causes the wheel to turn and the axle to move", and so it is often called fire of the wheel, because it seems to develop its action according to a circular fashion, whose aim is the conversion of the molecular structure, a rotation symbolized by the wheel of fortune and by the Ouroboros.

And so matter destroyed, mortified, then recomposed into a new body, thanks to the secret fire which is aroused by the one of the furnace, gradually raises itself with the help of multiplications, up to the perfection of the pure fire, veiled under the figure of the immortal Phoenix: sic itur ad astra (thus is one immortalized). Similarly, the workman, faithful servant of nature, acquires with the knowledge of the sublime, the high title of knight, the esteem of his peers, acknowledgement by his brothers, and the honor, which is more enviable than all worldly glory, to be among Elias' disciples.

Panel 4 ---Closed by its narrow lid, with a fat albeit split belly, a common clay pot fills with its plebian and cracked majesty the surface of this panel. Its inscription states that the vase of which we see the image, must open by itself and manifest by its destruction the completion of that which it holds: .INTVS.SOLA.FIENT.MANIFESTA.RVINA.

Only the inside makes the ruin manifest.

Among so many diverse figures, so many emblems with which it fraternizes, our subject seems to be all the more original because its symbolism relates to the dry path, also called the Work of Saturn, as rarely translated into iconography as it is described in texts. Based upon the use of solid and crystallized materials, the brief way (*ars brevis*) only requires the help of a crucible and the application of high temperatures. This truth, Henckel (1) had glimpsed, when he remarks that the "artist Elias, quoted by Helvetius, claims that the preparation of the philosophers' stone is accomplished, from start to finish, in four days time; and that he has indeed shown the stone still adhering to the sides of the crucible; it seems to me, the author continues, that it would not be so absurd to question whether that which the alchemists called long months, would not really be only days ---that is to say a very short period of time ---and whether there did not exist a method whereby the entire operation would consist in holding, for a very long time, the matters in a great degree of fluidity which could be obtained by a violent fire maintained by the action of bellows; but this method cannot be undertaken in all laboratories and perhaps not everyone would find it practical".

Nevertheless, contrary to the humid way, whose glass utensils allow for easy control and accurate observation, the dry way cannot enlighten the operator at any time in the process of the Work. So, although the time factor reduced to a minimum constitutes a serious advantage in the practice of the *ars brevis*, the necessity of high temperatures, on the other hand, presents the serious inconvenience of an absolute uncertainty as to the progress of the operation. Everything happens in the deepest mystery inside the crucible which is carefully sealed, buried at the core of the incandescent coals. It is therefore important to be very experienced and to know the fire's behavior and power well as one could not find in it, from the beginning to the end the least of indication. All the characteristic reactions of the humid way having been indicated among the classical authors, it is possible for the studious artist to acquire indications precise enough to allow him to undertake his long and difficult work. Here on the contrary, it is without any guide that the traveler, brave to the point of rashness, enters this arid and burnt desert. No road laid out, no clue, no landmark; nothing save the apparent inertia of the earth, of the rock, of the sand. The shiny kaleidoscope of the colored stages does not brighten up his uncertain walk; it is as a blind man that he continues his path, without any other certainty save that of his faith, without any other hope but his confidence in divine mercy.

Yet at the end of his path, the investigator will notice a sign, the only one whose appearance indicates success and confirms the perfection of the sulphur by the total fixation of mercury; this sign consists in the spontaneous bursting of the vessel. Once the time has elapsed, by laterally uncovering a part of its side, we notice, when the experiment has succeeded, one or more lines of a dazzling clarity, clearly visible on the less brilliant background of the envelope. These are the cracks revealing the happy birth of the young king. Just like at the end of incubation the hen's egg breaks under the effort of the chick, similarly the shell of our egg breaks as soon as the sulphur is produced. There is, among these results, an evident analogy in spite of the different causes, for in the mineral Work, the breaking of the crucible can logically be attributed only to a chemical action, unfortunately impossible to conceive or explain. Let us note however that the rather well known fact often occurs under the influence of certain combination of lesser interest. Thus, for example, while leaving aside, after having cleansed them well, new crucibles which have only been used once, for the fusion of metallic glass, the production of *hepar sulphuris*, or diaphoretic antimony, they are found cracked after a few days without one being able to explain the obscure reason of this late phenomenon. The considerable spacing of their bulges shows that the fracture seems to occur by the push of an expansive force acting from the center towards the periphery at room temperature and long after the actual use of these vessels.

Finally, let us also point out the remarkable match which exists between the motif of Dampierre and that of Bourges (Hotel Lallemand, in the ceiling of the chapel). Among the hermetic panels of the latter, one can also see an earthen pot tilted, whose opening, bell-mouthed and rather wide, is enclosed with a parchment's membrane tied on the edges. Its belly with holes in it lets beautiful macles of different sizes escape from it. The indication of the crystalline form of the sulphur obtained by the dry way is thus very clear and confirms by its added details, the esoteric quality of our bas-relief.

Panel 5 ---A celestial steel-clad hand brandishes the sword and the spatula. On the phylactery one can read these Latin words:

.PERCVTIAM.ET.SANABO.

I shall wound and I shall heal.

Jesus said the same thing: "I shall kill and I shall resuscitate". An esoteric thought of the utmost importance in the performance of the Magistry. "It is the first key", declares Limojon Saint-Didier (2), "the one that opens the dark prisons in which the sulphur is imprisoned, it is the one which knows how to extract the seed from the body and which forms the stone of the philosophers by the conjunction of the male with the female, of the spirit with the body, of the sulphur with the

mercury. Hermes obviously demonstrated the operation of this first key by these words: "De cavernis metallorum occultus est, qui lapis est venerabilis, colore splendidus, mens sublimes et mare patens" (3).

The cabalistic artifice under which our Adept has hidden the technique that Limojon means to teach us, consists in the choice of a double instrument represented on our panel. The sword that wounds, the spatula used to apply the healing balm are in truth but one and the same agent endowed with the twofold power of killing and resurrecting, of mortifying and of regenerating, of destroying and of organizing. Spatula in Greek is [\*390-1] (spate), and this word also means glaive, sword and has its root in another Greek word [\*390-2] (spao), to pull out, to root out, to extract. Therefore we indeed have here the exact indication of the hermetic meaning given by the spatula and by the sword. From then on, the investigator in possession of the solvent, the sole factor susceptible of having an action on the bodies, of destroying them and of extracting the seed from them, will only need to look for the metallic subject which will seem to be the most appropriate to fulfill his task. And so the dissolved and pulverized metal, "broken to pieces", will yield to him this fixed and pure seed, the spirit which it bears within itself, the brilliant gem decked with magnificent colors, the first manifestation of the stone of the sages. Phoebus nascent, and the effective father of the Great Elixir. In an allegorical dialogue between a monster withdrawn at the bottom of a dark cavern, equipped with "seven horns filled with water" and the alchemist-errant plying the good-natured sphinx with questions. Jacques Tesson (4), has this mythical representative of the seven vulgar metals speak in these terms: "You must understand, says the sphinx, that I have come down from the celestial regions, and that I have fallen down here in these caves of the earth, where I have nourished myself for a while, but that I do not desire anything more than to return there and that the means to do this is that you kill me, and then that you resuscitate me, and with the instrument with which you kill me, you shall also resuscitate me. For as the white dove says, whoever has killed me will make me live again".

We could make an interesting remark about the means or instrument expressly represented by the arm-guard the celestial arm is equipped with, because no detail should be neglected in a study of this type, but we deem it is appropriate not to say everything and would prefer to leave it to whoever will want to trouble himself to decipher this additional hieroglyph. The alchemical science is not taught; everyone must learn it by himself, not in a speculative way, but indeed with the help of a persevering work, by multiplying trials and errors, so as to always submit the products of thinking to the control of experience. Whoever fears this manual labor, the heat of the furnaces, the dust of coal, the danger of unknown reactions, and the wakefulness of long vigils, will never know anything.

Panel 6 ---An ivy plant is represented coiled around a trunk of a dead tree whose branches have all been cut by human hands. The inscription which completes this bas-relief bears the words:

.INIMICA.AMICITIA.

The Enemy Friendship.

The anonymous author of the *Ancienne Guerre des Chevaliers* (Ancient War of the Knights) in a dialogue between the stone, the gold and the mercury has gold say that the stone is a worm filled with venom and accuses it of being the enemy of man and of metals. Nothing is more true; so much so that others reproach our subject to contain a frightful poison whose very odor, they insist, would suffice to cause death. Yet it is from this toxic mineral that the universal medicine is made, which no human illness can resist, no matter how incurable it is thought to be. But that which gives it all its value and makes it infinitely precious in the eyes of the sage is the admirable virtue it possesses, of revivifying metals which have been reduced and molten and of losing its poisonous properties by granting them its own activity. And so does it appear as the instrument of resurrection, and of redemption of the metallic bodies, dead by the violence of a reducing fire, the reason for which it bears in its coat of arms, the sign of the Redeemer, the cross.

By what we have just said the reader will have understood that the stone, that is to say our mineral subject, is represented on the present motif by the ivy, a perennial plant with a strong, nauseating odor, while the metal's representative is the inert and mutilated tree. For here we are not looking at a dry tree simply devoid of foliage and reduced to its skeleton: it would then express for the hermeticist, the sulphur in its igneous dryness; on the contrary, it is a trunk, willfully mutilated which the saw has amputated of its major branches. The Greek verb [\*392-1] (prio), meaning both to saw off, to cut with a saw, and to grasp, to squeeze, to strongly tie is the same word. Our tree being at the same time, sawed and grasped, we may think that the creator of these images wished to clearly indicate the metal and the dissolving action exercised upon it. The ivy, embracing the trunk as if to strangle it, very well construes the dissolution of the prepared subject as being full of vigor and vitality; but this dissolution instead of being ardent, effervescent, and quick seems slow, difficult, always imperfect. It is because the metal, although entirely attacked, is only partly solubilized; thus it is recommended to frequently reiterate the effusion of water on the body to extract from it the sulphur or seed "which constitutes all the energy of our stone". The metallic sulphur receives life from its very enemy as amends for its enmity and its hate. This operation, which the sages

have called reincrudation or return to the primitive state, has above all for object the acquisition of sulphur and its revivification by the initial mercury. This return to the original matter of the treated metal should therefore not be taken literally since the greater part of the body, made up of coarse heterogeneous, sterile, or mortified elements is no longer susceptible to regeneration. Be that as it may, it is enough for the artist to obtain this sulphur principle, separated from the open and revived metal, owing to the incisive power of our first mercury. With this new body, where friendship and harmony replace aversion ---for the respective virtues and properties of the two contrary natures are melted in, and merge within it ---he can hope to obtain first the philosophical mercury by the mediation of this essential agent, and then the Elixir, the object of his secret desires.

Panel 7 ---When Lois Audiat recognizes the face of God the Father, we simply see that of a centaur, which a streamer, bearing the symbol of the Senate and the people of Rome, has half hidden, The whole thing decorates a flag, the staff of which is solidly planted in the earth.

It is therefore a Roman ensign and we can conclude that the ground on which it floats is itself Roman. Further, the letters .S.P.Q.R., the abbreviation for Senatus Populusque Romanus (5) usually accompany the eagles and form with the cross the coat of arms of the Eternal City,

This ensign, placed on purpose to indicate a Roman earth, leads us to believe that Dampierre's philosopher was not ignorant of the symbolism specific to Basil Valentine, Senior Zadith, Mynsicht, etc. For these authors called Roman earth and Roman vitriol the earthly substance which provides our solvent, and without which it would be impossible to reduce metals into a mercurial water or, of you prefer, into a philosophical vitriol, According to Valmont de Bomare (6), "Roman vitriol, also called Vitriol of the Adepts, is not green copperas (ferrous sulfate), but a double vitriolic salt of iron and copper". Chambon agrees and gives as an equivalent the vitriol of Salzburg which is also a cupro-ferrous sulfate. The Greeks called it [\*393-1] (soru), and the Hellenic mineralogists describe it as being a salt, of a strong and unpleasant odor, which, when crushed, became black and took on a spongy and greasy appearance.

In his Testamentum (Last Will and Testament), Basil Valentine points out the excellent properties and the rare virtues of vitriol, but the truthfulness of his words can only be recognized if one knows beforehand of which body he means to speak. "The vitriol is a noteworthy and important mineral to which none other in nature could be compared and this because vitriol familiarizes itself with all metals more than any other thing; it very closely related to them since from all metals one can make a vitriol or crystal; for vitriol and crystal are not recognized except for one and the same thing. It is why I did not want to idly defer its merit as reason requires it, since vitriol is preferable to other minerals and since the first rank after metals must be given to it, For, although metals and minerals are gifted with great virtues, vitriol is, nevertheless, the only one sufficient to extract and make the blessed stone, which no other in the world could accomplish in its imitation". Later our Adept resumes the same topic by providing details on the double nature of Roman Vitriol: "I say here about this that you must imprint very clearly this argument in thy spirit and that you entirely bare your thoughts on the metallic vitriol, and that you remember that I have entrusted this knowledge to you that one can from Mars and Venus make a magnificent vitriol in which the three principles can be found which often serve to the birthing and production of our stone". Let us consider a rather important remark made by Henckel (7) and regarding vitriol. "Among all the names given to vitriol", says this author, "not one has any connection to iron; it is always called chalcantum, chalcitis, cuperosa, or cupri rosa, etc. And it is not only the Greeks and the Romans that deprived iron of the role it takes in the vitriol; the same has been done in Germany. And still today to all the vitriols in general and especially to that containing the most iron, the name of KupferWasser (copper water) is given or, which amounts to the same thing, that of copperas".

Panel 8 ---The subject of this bas-relief is rather singular; a young gladiator is seen here, almost a child, persisting in carving, with great thrusts of the sword, a beehive filled with honey combs and whose lid he has taken off. Two words make up the inscription:

.MELITVS.GIADIVS.

The honeyed sword.

This bizarre act of an impetuous youth carried away, giving battle to bees just as Don Quixote did to mills, is but the symbolic translation of our first work, an original variant of the well known and so often exploited hermetic theme of the striking of the rock. We know that after their departure from Egypt, the children of Israel had to encamp at Rephidim (Ex. 17:1, Num. 33:14), "and there was no water for the people to drink". Following the Lord's advice (Ex. 17:6), Moses smote the rock in Horeb three times with his rod and water came out of the dry stone. Mythology also offers us a few examples of the same prodigy. Callimachus (Hymn to Jupiter, 31) says of the Goddess Rhea, that as she struck the Arcadian Mountain with her scepter, it opened in two and water came out of it in abundance. Apollonius of Alexandria (The Argonautica, 1146)

recounts the miracle of Mount Dindymus and asserts that the rock had never before produced the smallest springs. Pausanias attributes a similar deed to Atalanta, who, in order to quench her thirst, caused a spring to well up by striking a rock in the neighborhood of Cyphanta, in Laconia, with her javelin.

In our bas-relief, the gladiator takes the place of the alchemist, represented elsewhere with the features of Hercules, ---hero of the 12 symbolic labors ---or yet with the appearance of a knight armed to the teeth, as can be seen on the portal of Notre-Dame de Paris. The youthfulness of the character expresses this simplicity which has to be abided by throughout the entire work process by imitating and following Nature's example very closely. On the other hand, we must believe that if the Adept of Dampierre gives his preference to gladiators, it is without doubt to indicate that the artist must work or fight alone against the matter. The Greek [\*395-1] (monomachos), which means gladiator, is composed of two words, [\*305-2] (monos), alone, and [\*395-3] (machomai), to fight. As for the beehive, it owes the privilege of representing the stone to the cabalistic artifice which makes the French word ruche (beehive) derive from the French word roche (rock) by permutation of the vowels. The philosophical subject, our first stone --in Greek [\*395-4] (petra) ---appears clearly under the image of the beehive or rock because [\*395-5] (petra), also means rock, a word used by the sages to signify the Hermetic subject.

In addition, our swordsman by soundly thrashing the emblematic beehive and by randomly cutting its honey combs makes an amorphous, heterogeneous mass out of it, of wax, propolis, and honey, an incoherent magma, a true meli-melo (muddle), to use the language of the gods, from which honey is flowing to the point of covering his sword, substituted for Moses' staff. This then, the second chaos, the result of the primal clash which we cabalistically call meli melo, because it contains honey ([\*395-6] ---meli), the viscous and glutinous water of metals, that is always ready to flow ([\*395-7] ---mello). The masters of the Art state that the entire work is a labor of Hercules and that, first, one must strike the stone, rock, or beehive, our first matter, with the magic sword of the secret fire so as to cause the flowing of this precious water which is enclosed within. For the subject of the sages is but a congealed water, henceforth it received the name of Pegasus (from [\*395-8] --pegas, rock, ice, congealed water, or hard and dry earth), and the fable teaches us that Pegasus, among other deeds, caused the fountain of Hippocrene to flow by kicking it. The word [\*395-9], Pegasus has for a root [\*395-10] (pege), source so that the winged steed of the poets is merged with the hermetic fountain of which it possesses the essential qualities: the mobility of spring waters and the volatility of spirits.

As an emblem of the first matter, the beehive can often be seen in decorations that borrow their elements from the science of Hermes. We have seen it on the ceiling of the Hotel Lallemand and among the panels of the alchemical stone of Winterthur. It also occupies one of the squares of the Game of the Goose (8), a popular representation of the labyrinth of the secret Art and collection of the main hieroglyphs of the Great Work.

Panel 9 ---The sun, piercing the clouds, darting its rays towards a meadow pipit's nest (9) that contains a small egg placed on a grass-covered knoll. The phylactery which gives this bas-relief its meaning bears the inscription:

.NEC.TE.NEC.SINE.TE.

Not thee, but nothing without thee.

It is an allusion to the Sun, the Father of the Stone, following in this belief Hermes, and the many hermetic philosophers. The symbolic heavenly body represented in its radiant splendor, holds the place of the metallic sun, or sulphur which many artists have believed to be natural gold. It is a serious mistake; all the less excusable because all other authors clearly establish the difference existing between the fold of the sages and the precious metal. It is indeed of the sulphur of metals that the masters speak when they describe the manner of extracting and of preparing this first agent, which furthermore offers no physico-chemical resemblance to common gold. And it is also this sulphur joined to mercury which contributes to the generation of our egg by giving it its vegetative faculty. This real father of the stone is therefore independent from it since the stone comes from it, hence the first part of the inscription: nec te (not you), and since it is impossible to obtain anything without the help of sulphur, the second proposition is also justified: nec sine te (nothing without you). And what we say of sulphur is true of mercury. So that the egg, the manifestation of the new metallic form emanated from the mercurial principle, while it owes its substance to mercury or the hermetic Moon, draws its vitality and its potential growth from sulphur, or the Sun of the sages.

To sum it up, it is philosophically accurate to assert that the metals are composed of sulphur and mercury as Bernard Trevisan teaches us: that the stone, though made of the same principles, does not give birth to a metal; that finally the sulphur and mercury, seen as separate entities, are the only parents of the stone, but cannot be mistaken for it. We will allow ourselves to draw the reader's attention to the fact that the philosophical coction of the Rebis yields a sulphur, and not an irreducible compound of its components, and that this sulphur, by completely assimilating the mercury, takes on special properties, which tend to estrange it from the metallic species. And this constancy of result is the basis for the technique of

multiplication and growth because the new sulphur remains always capable of absorbing a determined and proportional quantity of mercury.

(1) J.F. Henckel: *Traite de l'Appropriation* (Treatise on Appropriation) in *Pyritologie ou Histoire Naturelle de la Pyrite* (Pyritology or Natural History of Pyrites); Paris, J.-T. Herissant, 1760, p. 370, para. 416. (2) *Le Triomphe Hermetique. Lettre aux Vrais Disciples d'Hermes* (The Hermetical Triumph. A Letter to the True Disciples of Hermes), op. cit., p. 127. (3) "The sulphur is hidden within the greatest depths of metals, it is the venerable stone of bright color and elevated soul, and a vast sea". (4) Jacques Tesson: *Le Lyon Vert ou l'Oeuvre des Sages* (The Green Lion or the Work of the Sages). First Treatise, Ms. cit. (5) Roman Senate and People. (6) Valmont de Bomare: *Mineralogie ou Nouvelle Exposition du Regne Mineral* (Mineralogy or New Treatise on the Mineral Kingdom); Paris, Vincent, 1774. (7) J.F. Henckel: *Pyritologie* (Pyritology), ch. 7, p. 184, op. cit. (8) Translator's Note: The "jeu de l'oie" (Game of the Goose ---which also sounds like Game of the Law in French) could be compared to "snakes and ladders". There is a spiral drawn on a board (a spiral resembling the labyrinth on the floor of the Cathedral of Chartres) with 63 boxes. The idea is to go to the center of the spiral. (9) The meadow pipit (*Anthus Pratensis*) is a small bird related to the skylark. It nests in the grass. The Greeks call it Anthos, but this word has another meaning of a clearly esoteric nature. Anthos also designates the flower and the most perfect, the most distinguished parts of a thing; it is also the efflorescence, the froth or foam of solutions of which the lighter parts rise to the surface and crystallize. This is enough to provide a clear idea of the birth of the little bird whose sole egg must engender our Phoenix.

### THE CASTLE OF DAMPIERRE X

Seventh Series (Plate XXXII) Panel I ---The tables of the hermetic law on which a French sentence can be read, but so singularly presented that M. Louis Audiat could not discover its meaning:

.EN.RIEN.GIST.TOVT.

Within nothing, everything lies. A primordial motto which the ancient philosophers loved to repeat and by which they meant the absence of value, the commonness, the extreme abundance of the basic matter from which they drew everything they needed. "Then you will find the All-in-All, which is the styptic force of all metals and minerals derived from salt and sulphur, and twice born of Mercury", writes Basil Valentine in the book of the Twelve Keys.

Thus does true wisdom teach us to not judge things according to their price, the pleasure received from them, or the beauty of their appearance. It leads us to value in man personal merit rather than the outer or the social conditions, and in bodies the spiritual quality they keep hidden within them. To the eyes of the wise, iron, this pariah of human industry, is incomparably more noble than gold, and gold more despicable than lead; for this bright light, this ardent, active, and pure water that common metals, minerals, and stones have preserved, is lacking only in gold. This sovereign to which so many people pay homage, for which so many consciences demean themselves in the hope of obtaining its favors, has of wealth and preciousness only the clothes. A sumptuously dressed king, the gold is but an inert, albeit magnificent, body, a brilliant corpse compared to copper, iron, or lead. This usurper, that an ignorant and greedy crowd raises to the rank of god, cannot even claim to belong to the old and powerful family of metals; stripped of its coat, it then reveals the baseness of its origin and appears to us as a simple metallic resin, dense, fixed, and fusible, a triple quality which renders it obviously improper to the realization of our objective.

Thus we can see how vain it would be to work on gold, for whoever has nothing can evidently give nothing. It is therefore to the raw and vile stone that we must address ourselves without repugnance for its miserable appearance, its disgusting odor, its black coloration, its sordid rags. For these same rather unattractive characteristics allow us to recognize it and caused people to always look at it as the primitive substance, issued from the original chaos and that God, during the Creation and organization of the universe, would have reserved for his servants and his chosen ones. Drawn from the Void, it bears its imprint and its name: Nothing. But the philosophers have discovered that in its elementary and disorganized nature, consisting all of darkness and of light, of bad and of good, assembled in the worst of confusion, this Nothing contained All they could hope for.

Panel 2 ---The capital letter H surmounted by a crown ---that M. Louis Audiat presents as being the heraldic signature of the king of France, Henry II, offers today only a partly hammered out inscription, but which used to read:

.IN.TE.OMNIS.DOMINATA.RECVMBIT.

In you rests all might.

We had previously the opportunity of mentioning that the letter H, or at least the graphic character linked to it, had been chosen by the philosophers to designate the spirit, the universal soul of things, or the active and almighty principle which

is recognized to be, in nature, in perpetual motion and in active vibration. It is in the shape of the letter H that the builders of the Middle Ages built the facades of the cathedrals, the temples glorifying the divine spirit, the magnificent interpreters of the aspirations of the human soul in its rising towards the Creator. This character corresponds to eta (H), seventh letter of the Greek alphabet, the initial of the solar word, the dwelling of the spirit, the heavenly dispenser of light: [\*402-1] (Helios) the sun. It is also the head of the prophet Elijah ---in Greek [\*404-2] (Helias) solar ---who, claim the Scriptures, has ascended to the heavens as a pure spirit, in a chariot of light and fire. It is also the center and heart of one of the monograms of Christ: HIS, abbreviation of Iesus Hominum Salvator, Jesus, Savior of Men. It is also the sign used by the medieval Freemasons to designate the two columns of Solomon's temple at the feet of which the workmen received their salary: Jachin and Boaz, columns of which the towers of the metropolitan churches are but a free, albeit bold and powerful, translation. It is finally the sign of the first rung of the ladder of the sages, scala philosophorum, of the acquired knowledge of the hermetic agent, the mysterious promoter of the transformations of the mineral nature and that of the newly gained secret of the lost word. This agent was once upon a time called among Adepts by the name of magnet or the attractive. The body charged with this magnet was also called Magnesia, and it is it, this body, that served as an intermediary between the sky and the earth, feeding on astral influences or celestial dynamism which it transmitted to the passive substance, by attracting them in the manner of a true magnet. De Cyrano Bergerac

(1) in one of his allegorical tales this speaks of the magnesian spirit, about which he seems quite well informed as well as about its preparation and about its usage. "You have not forgot my name [I believe], writes our author, [it is Helias], seeing it is not long since I told it to you. You shall know then, that I lived in your world with Elyseus, a jew like me], on the agreeable Banks [of the Jordan]; where amongst my Books, I lead a Life pleasant enough, not to be lamented, though it slipt away fast enough. In the mean while, the more I encreased in [the light of Knowledge, the more [grew the knowledge of] my Ignorance. Our learned [Priests never reminded me] of the famous [Adam], but the thoughts of his perfect Philosophy [that he had possessed] made me to Sigh. I was despairing of being able to attain to it, when one day, [after having sacrificed myself for the penance of the weakness of my mortal being, I fell asleep and the Angel of the Lord appeared to me in a dream; as soon as I awoke, I did not fail but to work according to the directions he had given me]. I took a piece of Lode-Stone about two Foot square, which I put into a Furnace; and then after it was well purged, precipitated and dissolved, I drew the calcined Attractive [from it, I calcined the whole Elixir], and reduced it to the size if an ordinary [ball].

"After these preparation, I got a very light Medicine of Iron made, [and after a few months, all my equipment having been completed, I stepped in my laborious carriage. You may ask me what is the use of all this equipment. Know that the Angel told me in a dream that if I wanted to acquire the perfect science as I so desired, that I should ascend to the World of the moon where I would find Adam's Paradise, the Tree of Knowledge, because as soon as I should taste its fruit, my soul would be enlightened of all the truths as a creature could know. This is therefore the trip for which I had built my chariot. Finally I climbed in it,] and when I was well [and firmly] seated in my place, I threw this Magnetic [ball], as high as I could, up into the Air. Now the Iron Machine, which I had purposely made more massive in the middle than at the ends, was presently elevated, and in a just Pose; because the middle received the greatest force of Attraction. So then as I arrived at the place, whither my Lode-Stone had attracted me, and as soon as I had jumped up to there, I threw up my Bowl in the Air over me again...

"The truth is, it was a very surprising Spectacle to behold; for the Steel of that flying House, which I had very carefully Polished, reflected on all sides the light of the Sun, with so great life and luster, that I thought myself to be [carried away on a chariot of fire]. When I reflected since upon this Miracle, I imagined that I could not have vanquished by occult virtues of a simple natural body the vigilance of a Seraphim that God has ordained for the guard of the paradise. But because He is sometimes pleased to use secondary causes I believe that He had inspired me with this means to enter into it just as He was kind enough to use the rib of Adam to make a woman out of him; although he could have formed her out of earth just as well as He did with him".

As for the crown which completes the important sign we are studying, it is not that of the king of France, Henry II, but rather the royal crown of the chosen ones. That crown is seen to adorn the head of the Redeemer on the crucifix of the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries, in particular in Amiens (a Byzantine Christ called "Sainte-Sauve") and in Notre-Dame de Treves (on the top of the portal). The horseman of the Apocalypse (Rev. 6:1), seated on a white horse, an emblem of purity, receives as the distinctive attributes of his high virtues a bow and a crown, gifts of the Holy Ghost. Our crown ---the initiates know what we speak of ---is precisely the favorite dwelling place of the spirit. It is a worthless substance, as we mentioned, barely materialized, but which contains an abundance of the latter. And this is what the philosophers from Antiquity have fixed in their corona radiata (radiant crown), ornamented with protruding rays only attributed to God, or to deified heroes. So shall we explain that this matter, the vehicle of the mineral light, reveals itself, thanks to the radiant signature of the spirit, as the promised land reserved for the chosen ones of Sapience.



Panel 3 ---It is an ancient and often used symbol that we find in this place: a dolphin curled around the arm of a sea anchor. The Latin epigraph which serves as its ensign gives the reason for it:

.SIC.TRISTIS.AVRA.RESEDIT.

Thus does this terrible storm subside.

We had several times the opportunity to note the important role filled by the fish on the alchemical scene. Under the name of dolphin, echeuis, or remora, it characterizes the humid and cold principle of the Work which is our mercury, and which gradually coagulates in contact with and by the effect of the sulphur, an agent of desiccation and of fixity. The latter is represented here by the sea anchor, the stabilizing organ of vessels, for which it provides a point of resistance and support against the efforts of the waves. The long operation which permits completion, the progressive turning into a paste, and the final fixing of the mercury offers a great analogy with sea crossings, and the tempests which greet them. This rather rough and swelling sea represents, on a smaller scale, the constant and regular boilings of the hermetic compost. The bubbles burst on the surface and constantly succeed each other; heavy vapors fill the atmosphere of the vessel, and condense into droplets trickling down on the effervescent mass. Everything contributes to give the spectacle of a small scale storm. Raised up from all sides, thrown around by the winds, the ark nevertheless floats under torrential rains. Asteria prepares to form Delos, the hospitable country that saved Latona's children. The dolphin swims on the surface of the impetuous waters and this agitation lasts until the remora, the invisible host of the deep sea, finally puts to rest, as would a powerful anchor, the ship gone adrift. Calmness then reappears, the air is purified, the water recedes, vapors are reabsorbed. A film covers the entire surface and, thickening and firming day by day, marks the end of the flood, the time for the ark's landing, the birth of Diana and of Apollo, the triumph of earth over water, of the dry over the wet, and the era of the new Phoenix. In the midst of the general upheaval and the clash of the elements is this permanent peace acquired, this harmony resulting from the perfect equilibrium of the principles symbolized by the fish fixed on the anchor: sic tristis aura resedit. This phenomenon of absorption and coagulation of the mercury by a much smaller proportion of sulphur seems to be the first cause for the fable of the remora, the little fish to which popular imagination and hermetic tradition attributed the capability of stopping the largest of ships in their progress. Further, here is, in an allegorical and very instructive discourse, what the philosopher Rene Francois (2) says about it: "The Emperor Caligula thought one day to go mad with impatience, upon returning to Rome with a powerful naval force. All the well-armed, well-spurred, superb ships sailed at leisure, the wind from the rear filled all the sails, the waves and the sky seemed to be on Caligula's side, helping his plan, and, as everything seemed to be for the best, the commanding imperial galley stopped short. The other ships were flying on the waters. The emperor got angry, the pilot blew his whistle louder, four hundred strokes of galley and galiots who were on the oars, five on each bench, became sweaty by dint of pushing on the oars; the wind became stronger, the sea angry from this affront, everyone wondered about this miracle, when the emperor came to imagine that some sea monster was stopping him in this place. And so, many dove into the water, and swam under the surface, going all around this floating castle; they finally found a mean little fish about half a foot long, which had attached itself to the tiller, taking the time to stop the very ship that was taming the universe. It seemed as if it wanted to mock the emperor of the human race who fidgeted with so much impatience with his hordes of soldiers and his iron thunderbolts, which made him lord of the earth. Here, it is said in its fish language, is a new Hannibal at the gates of Rome, who is detained in a floating prison, Rome and its emperor; Rome the princess will lead on earth the captive king in triumph, and I will lead in marine triumph, by the provinces of the ocean, the Prince of the Universe. Caesar will be king of men, and I will be the Caesar of Caesars; all the power of Rome is now my slave and can spend itself to the last drop, for as long as I want, I will hold it in this royal jail. By playing and joining myself to this galleon, I will do more in one moment than they did in 800 years, slaying the human race and depopulating the world. Poor emperor! How wide you are of the mark with all of your 150 millions of income and 300,000,000 men in your pay; an uncouth little fish has made you its slave! Even if the sea gets upset, even if the wind becomes furious, even if everyone becomes a galley slave and all the trees become oars, they could not go forward by one foot without my sea pass and my leave. Here is the true Archimedes of the fish, for it alone stops the entire world; here is the animated magnet which imprisons all the iron and weapons of the foremost Monarchy of the world; I do not know who calls Rome the Golden Anchor of the human race, but this fish is the anchor of anchors --O marvel of God! This little fish shames not only the Roman greatness, but also Aristotle who loses credibility here and philosophy which goes bankrupt, for they find no reason for this strength, that a mouth without teeth could top a ship pushed by the four elements, and stops it in the midst of the strongest of storms. Pliny says that all of nature is hidden and stands sentry and dwells garrisoned in the smallest of creatures; I believe it, and I for one think that this little fish is flying the flag of Nature and of all its soldiers; it is Nature which nabs and stops these galleys; it is it which bridles, however without any other bridle than the snout of a little fish, that which cannot be bridled --Alas! Why do we not bring down the horns of our vain arrogance, with such a holy consideration; for if God making games can, with a little buccaneer of the sea and the pirate of nature, arrest and stop all of our plans, which are flying with full sails from one pile to the other, to what point will he reduce our affairs if he used all his might? If out of nothing he does

everything and out of a fish or out of a little nothing, swimming and acting like a fish, he can overwhelm our hopes, alas! Whenever he will use all of his might and all the hosts of his justice, well, where will we be then?". Panel 4 ---Near the tree with the golden fruit, a robust and stout dragon exercises his vigilance at the entrance of the Garden of the Hesperides. The phylactery specific to the topic bears this engraved inscription:

.AB.INSOMNI.NON.CVSTODITA.DRACONE.

Beside the dragon, which is watching, things are not guarded.

The myth of the dragon in charge of the surveillance of the famous orchard and of the legendary Golden Fleece is known well enough to prevent us the trouble of repeating it. It suffices to point out that the dragon is chosen as the hieroglyphic representative of the crude mineral matter with which we must begin the Work. That is to indicate its significance, the care that we must bring to the study of the outer signs and of the qualities likely to make its identification possible, to help us recognize and distinguish the hermetic subject among the many minerals which nature places at our disposal.

In charge of guarding the marvelous field, where philosophers go and get their treasures, the dragon is known to never sleep. His fiery eyes remain constantly open. He knows neither rest nor weariness and could not overcome the insomnia which characterizes it and grants it its true *raison d'être*. This is actually what the Greek name it bears expresses. [\*408-1] (Drakon) has for root [\*408-2] (derchomai) to look and see, and by extension to live, a word close to [\*408-3] (derchenes) who sleeps with open eyes. Primitive language reveals through the cloak of symbols, the idea of an intense activity, of a perpetual and latent vitality enclosed in the mineral body. Mythologists name our dragon Ladon, a word whose assonance comes close to Laton and which can be assimilated to the Greek [\*408-4] (Leto) to be hidden, unknown, ignored like the matter of the philosophers.

The dragon's general appearance, its well-known ugliness, its ferocity, and its unusual vital power correspond exactly to the external characteristics, properties and capabilities of this subject. The special crystallization of the latter finds itself clearly indicated by the scaly skin of the dragon. So are its colors, for the matter is black, spotted red or yellow as is the dragon, which is its likeness. As for the volatile quality of our mineral, we see it translated by the membranous wings with which the monster is equipped. And because it is said that it vomits fire and smoke when attacked and that its body ends in a snakelike tail, poets, for these reasons, had him be born of Typhon and Echidna. The Greek [\*408-5] (Tuphaon) a poetic term for [\*408-6] (Tuphon) or [\*408-7] (Tuphos) ---the Egyptian Typhon ---means to fill with smoke, to light, to set aflame. [\*408-8] (Echidna) is nothing else than the viper. Hence we can conclude that what the dragon takes after from Typhon is its hot, ardent, and sulphurous nature while it owes to its mother its cold and wet complexion with the characteristic form of the ophidians.

While the philosophers have always hidden the common name of their matter under an infinity of qualifiers, they were, on the other hand, often quite prolix as far as describing its form, its virtues, and sometimes even its preparation. By common consent, they assert that the artist must hope to discover nothing, nor produce anything outside of the subject because it is the only body in nature capable of providing him with the essential elements. To the exclusion of other minerals and other metals, it preserves the principles necessary to the elaboration of the Great Work. By its monstrous albeit expressive figuration, this primitive subject appears clearly as the guardian and the unique dispenser of the hermetic fruits. It is their depository, their vigilant preserver, and our Adept speaks wisely when he teaches us that apart from this solitary being, philosophical things are guarded by no one, since we might look in vain for them elsewhere. And about this first body, fragment of the original chaos and common mercury of the philosophers, Geber exclaimed: "Blessed be the Almighty, who created our mercury and who gave it a nature to which nothing resists; for, without it, the alchemists' painstaking efforts would be in vain, all their labor would become useless".

But, asks another Adept (3), "Where then is this auriferous mercury which, resolved into salt and sulphur, becomes the humid radical of metals, and their animated seed? It is imprisoned in a jail so strong that nature itself could not pull it out, if the industrious art did not facilitate the means for it".

Panel 5 ---A swan majestically poised on the calm water of a pond, has its neck pierced by an arrow. And it is its ultimate lament that the epigraph of this small, so agreeably executed, subject translates for us:

.PROPRIIS.PEREO.PENNIS.

I die by my own feathers

The bird indeed provided one of the matters of the weapon that will be used to kill it; the feathers of the arrow assuring its direction, makes it accurate and the feathers of the swan, fulfilling the same purpose thus contribute to its undoing. This

beautiful bird whose wings are symbolic of volatility, and whose snowy whiteness is the expression of purity, possesses the two essential qualities of the initial mercury or our dissolving water. We know that it must be vanquished by the sulphur --- issuing from its own substance which it has itself generated --so as to obtain after its death this partly fixed, partly volatile philosophical mercury, which the subsequent maturation will raise to the degree of perfection of the Great Elixir. All the authors teach that the living must be killed if the dead is to resurrected; this is why the good artist will not hesitate to sacrifice the bird of Hermes and to initiate the mutation of its mercurial properties into sulphurous qualities since any transformation remains subject to a preliminary decomposition and cannot be completed without it.

Basil Valentine states that "the twofold fiery man must be fed a snowy swan" and he adds "then the swan roasted will become food for the King". No philosopher, to our knowledge, has lifted the veil which covers this mystery and we wonder whether it is advisable to comment upon such serious words. However, recalling the long years during which we ourselves remained stuck before this door, we think that it would be charitable to help the worker, who has arrived at this point, to get over the threshold. Let us therefore, give him a helping hand and disclose, within the permitted boundaries, what the greatest masters have believed prudent to hide.

It is obvious that Basil Valentine, by using the expression of the twofold fiery man, means to speak of a secondary principle resulting from the combination of two agents of hot and ardent disposition, consequently being of the nature of metallic sulphurs. Hence we can conclude that under the simple name of sulphur, the Adepts, at a given time in the progress of the work conceive two conceived bodies, of similar properties, but of different specificity, conventionally taken to be a single one. This being proposed, what would the substances capable of yielding these two products be? Such a question has never received an answer. However, if we consider that the emblematic representatives of metals are figured by mythological deities, now masculine, now feminine; that they owe these particular attributions to the sulphurous qualities proven by experiment, the symbolism the fable will likely shed some light on these dark matters.

Everyone knows that iron and lead are placed under the rule of Aries and of Chronos, and that they receive their respective planetary influences from Mars and from Saturn; tin and gold, ruled by Zeus and Apollo, take up the vicissitudes of Jupiter and the Sun. But why do Aphrodite and Venus rule copper and silver, the subjects of Venus and of the Moon? Why does mercury owe its disposition to the messenger of Mount Olympus, the God Hermes, although it is deprived of sulphur and fulfills the functions reserved to the chemico-hermetic women? Must we accept these relationships as true and is there not, in the distribution of the metallic divinities and of their astral planetary correspondences a set, deliberate confusion? If we are able to be questioned on this point we would answer in the affirmative without hesitation. Experience categorically demonstrates that silver possesses a magnificent sulphur, as pure and bright as that of gold, yet without having its fixedness. Lead yields a mediocre product of a rather equal color, but less stable and quite impure. The sulphur of tin, flawless and bright, is white and would incite us to put this metal under a goddess' protection rather than a god's authority. Iron on the other hand, has a lot of fixed sulphur of a dark, dull, filthy and so imperfect red that in spite of its fire-proof quality, we would not really know what to do with it. And yet, with the exception of gold, we would vainly search in the other metals for a more luminous, more penetrating, and more manageable mercury. As for the sulphur of copper, Basil Valentine describes it rather accurately in the first book of his Twelve Keys (4): "Amatory Venus is clothed with abundant color, and her whole body is almost completely made of a tincture or color similar to the one of the Sun, which, because of its abundance, closely borders on red. But [since] her body is leprous and sick and affords no permanent substratum to the fixed tincture, [when the body perishes, the tincture perishes with it, unless it is joined to a fixed body, in which it could elect its seat and dwelling in a stable and permanent fashion]".

Having well understood what the famous Adept wanted to convey and having carefully examined the relationships existing between the metallic sulphurs and their respective symbols, one will have very little trouble in reestablishing the esoteric order in accordance with the Work. The enigma will be easy to decipher and the issue of the twofold sulphur will be easily solved.

Panel 6 ---Two horns of cornucopia intersect on mercury's caduceus. As epigraph, they bear this Latin maxim:

.VIRTVTI.FORTVNA.COES.

Wealth accompanies virtue.

Uncommon axiom of which the truth is questionable when applied to true merit ---where wealth quite seldom regards virtue ---that it would be appropriate to look elsewhere for its confirmation and its rule. Yet it is of the secret virtue of the philosophical mercury, represented here by the image of the caduceus, that the author of these symbols intends to speak. The horns of cornucopia translate the totality of material wealth that the possession of mercury insures to the good artists. By their intersecting as an X, they indicate the spiritual quality of this noble and rare substance whose energy shines like a

pure fire, at the center of the accurately sublimated body. The caduceus, attributed to the god Mercury, should not give rise to the least ambiguity, as much in terms of its secret meaning as from the vantage point of its symbolic value. Hermes, the father of the hermetic science, is considered both as creator and as creature, master of philosophy and matter of the philosophers. His winged scepter bears the explanation of the enigma he proposes, and the revelation of the mystery hiding the compound of the compound, the masterpiece of nature and of art, under the common name of mercury of the sages.

Originally the caduceus was a mere stick, the primitive scepter of some sacred or legendary characters belonging more to tradition than to history, Moses, Atalanta, Cybele, Hermes use this instrument, endowed with a sort of magic power, in similar conditions, and generating equivalent results. The Greek [\*412-1] (rabdos) is actually a stik, a wand or the staff of a javelin, a dart and Hermes' scepter. This word derives from [\*412-2] (passo), which means to strike, to split, to destroy. Moses smites with this stick the dry rock which Atalanta, following Cybele's example, pierces with her javelin. Mercury separates and kills the two snakes engaged in a furious duel, by throwing on them the wand of the [\*412-3] (pterophoroi) that is to say of the couriers and messengers, called wing bearers because they had, as distinctive mark of their duty, wings on their carp. Hermes' petasus therefore justified his function of messenger and mediator of the gods. The addition of snakes to the stick, completed by the hat ([\*412-4] ---petasos) and the talaria ([\*412-5] ---tarsoi), gave the caduceus its final form, with the hieroglyphic expression of the perfect mercury.

On the panel of Dampierre, the two snakes show dog-like heads, one of a dog, the other of a bitch, an image of the two contrary active and passive, fixed and volatile principles, put in contact with the mediator represented by the magic stick, our secret fire. Artepheus named these principles Fog of Khorassan and Bitch of Armenia, and they are the very same serpents that Hercules choked in his crib as a child, the only agents whose assembling, fight and death, accomplished with the help of the philosophical fire, give birth to the live and animate hermetic mercury. And since this twofold mercury possesses double volatility, the wings of the petasus, opposite those of the talaria on the caduceus, serve to express these two reunited qualities in the clearest and most revealing fashion.

Panel 7 ---In this bas-relief, Cupid, a bow in one hand and an arrow in the other, is riding the chimera on a cluster of starry clouds. The phylactery which underlines this subject indicates that Eros is here the eternal master:

.AETERNVS.HIC.DOMINVS.

Nothing could be more true, and other panels have taught us the same. Eros, the mythological personification of concord and love, is par excellence, the lord, the eternal master of the Work. He alone can realize the agreement of enemies whom an unrelenting hate ceaselessly prompts to devour one another. He fulfills the peaceful duty of the priest who is seen to unite upon an engraving in Basil Valentine's Twelve Keys ---the hermetic king and queen. It is still he who, in the same book, darts an arrow towards a woman holding an enormous matras filled with cloudy water.

Mythology teaches us that the Chimera bore three different heads on a lion body which ended as a snake tail: the head of a lion, another of a goat, and the third of a dragon. Of the constituting parts of the monster, two are predominant, the lion and the dragon, because they bring to the whole one the head and the body, the other, the head and the tail. By analyzing the symbol in the order of the successive acquisitions, the first place belongs to the dragon which is always confused with the serpent; we know that the Greek used [\*412-1] (drachon) for the dragon rather than for the snake. This is our initial matter, the very subject of the art, considered in its first being and in the state nature offers it to us. The lion comes next, and although it is the child of the subject of the sages, and of a decaying metal, it surpasses by far its own parents in vigor and quickly becomes sturdier than its father. Unworthy son of an old man and of a very young woman, it gives evidence since birth of an inconceivable aversion for its mother. Unsociable, ferocious, and aggressive, nothing could be expected from this violent and cruel heir if it were not, by means of a providential accident, brought back to more calm and balance. Encouraged by his mother Aphrodite, Eros, already unhappy with the particular character, let fly a bronze arrow and severely wounds it. Half paralyzed, it is then brought back to its mother who, to help this ungrateful son recover, nevertheless gives it of her own blood, even a part of her flesh, and dies after having saved it. "The mother", says the Turba Philosophorum, "always feels more pity for the child than the child for the mother". Out of this close and prolonged contact of the lion ---sulphur with the solvent ---dragon, a new being is formed in some way regenerated; with mixed qualities symbolically represented by the goat, or if you will, by the Chimera herself. The Greek word [\*413-1] (Chimera) for Chimera, also means young goat, (cabalistically, [\*413-2] ---Chi-meter). Now this young goat, which owes its excellence and its outstanding qualities to the timely intervention of Eros, is none other than the philosophical mercury, born from the union of the sulphur and mercury principles, which possesses all the required abilities to become the famous ram with the golden fleece, our Elixir and our Stone. And it is the entire order of the hermetic labor which is revealed by the ancient Chimera, and as Philalethes put it, this is also our entire philosophy.

The reader will hopefully excuse us from having used the allegory so as to clearly pinpoint the important points of the

practice, but we have no other means and we follow in that way an old literary tradition. And if, in this tale, we silence the essential part, which by right falls to the little Cupid ---master of the Work and lord in this house ---it is only by obedience to the discipline of the Order and not to perjure ourselves. Besides, the perspicacious reader will find, deliberately disseminated in the pages of this book, complementary indications about the role of the mediator, of which we must not speak further here.

Panel 8 ---We find here a motif we already encountered elsewhere, particularly in Brittany. It is an ermine represented in a small enclosure, bordered by a circular hurdle, personal symbol of Queen Anne, wife of Charles III and of Louis XII. It is represented next to the emblematic porcupine of Louis XII, on the mantle of the great fireplace of the Lallemand mansion in Bourges. Its epigraph contains the same meaning and uses almost the same words as the famous motto of the Order of the Ermine: *Malo moro quam fedari*, I prefer death to blemish. This Order of Chivalry, founded first in 1381 by John V, Duke of Brittany, was to disappear in the 15th century. Later reinstated by the King of Naples, Ferdinand I, in the year 1483, the Order of the Ermine, having lost all hermetic characteristic, was only forming a more or less coherent association of aristocratic chivalry.

The inscription engraved on the banner of our panel bears:

.MORI.POTIVS.QVAM.FEDARI.

Death rather than blemish. Beautiful and noble maxim of Anne of Brittany; a maxim of purity, applied to the little flesh-eating animal, whose white fur is, it is said, the object of the assiduous care of the elegant and supple animal that wears it. But in the esoteric symbolism of the sacred Art, the ermine, image of the philosophical mercury, indicates the absolute clarity of a sublimated products, that the addition of sulphur, or metallic fire, contributes to brighten even more.

In Greek, ermine is [\*414-1] (*pontichos*), a word derived from [\*414-2] (*pontos*), pit, abyss, sea, ocean; it is the pontic water of the philosophers, our mercury, the sea purged again with its own sulphur, sometimes simply the water of our sea, which must be read as the water of our mother (5), i.e., the primitive and chaotic matter called subject of the sages. The masters teach us that their second mercury, this pontic water of which we speak, is a permanent water which, contrary to liquid bodies "does not wet the hands", and is their source which flows into the hermetic sea. To obtain it, they say, it is advisable to strike the rock three times, so as to extract from it the pure water mixed with the coarse and solidified water, usually represented by rocky masses emerging from the ocean. The word [\*414-1] (*pontios*) specifically expresses all that which inhabits the sea; it calls to mind the hidden fish which the mercury has caught and kept in the mesh of its net, the one that the ancient custom of the celebration of the Twelfth Night offers us in its own form (sole, dolphin) or sometimes in the shape of the "bather" (6) or the bean hidden in the layers of the flaky Twelfth Night cake (7). The pure and white ermine thus appears as the expressive emblem of the common mercury united to the sulphurous-fish in the substance of the philosophical mercury.

As for the hurdle, it reveals which are the external signs that, according to the Adepts, constitute the best criterion of the secret product and bear witness to a canonical separation conforming to natural laws. The woven hurdle, serving as an enclosure for the ermine and actually as an envelope for the animated mercury, should suffice to explain the drawing of the stigma/stigmata (8) in question. However as our aim is to define them unequivocally, we will say that the Greek word [\*415-2] (*characoma*), fence, derived from [\*415-3] (*charasso*), to trace, to engrave, to mark with an imprint, possesses in fact an origin similar to that of the word [\*415-4] (*character*) which means carved lineament, distinctive form, characteristic. And the specific characteristic of mercury is precisely to create on its surface a network of intercrossing lines, woven in the manner of wicker baskets ([\*415-5] ---*kalatos*) frails, crates, two-handled baskets, and open baskets. These geometric figures all the more apparent and all the more engraved because the matter is purer, are the effect of the all-powerful will of the Spirit or of the Light. And this will imprints on the substance an external cross-like disposition ([\*415-6] ---*Chiasma*), and gives mercury its effective philosophical signature. This is the reason why this envelope is compared to the mesh of the net used to catch the symbolic fish; to the characteristic basket that the [\*415-7] (*Ictus*) of the Roman Catacombs bears on his back; to Jesus' manger, the crib of the Holy Ghost incarnated as men's Savior; to Bacchus' cist, said to contain some mysterious object; to Hercules' crib as the child choked the two snakes sent by Juno, and to that of Moses, saved from the waters; to the Twelfth Night cake, bearer of the same characteristics; to the cake of Little Red Riding Hood, perhaps the most charming creation of these hermetic fables called the Tales of Mother Goose, etc.

But the most significant imprint of the animated mercury, the superficial mark on the work on the metallic spirit, can only be obtained after a series of operations, or long, difficult, forbidding purifications. So, if you want to be assured of success, no pain, no effort should be spared, and time and strain should not be feared. Whatever you may do or attempt to do, never will the spirit remain stable in a filthy or insufficiently purified body. The quite spiritual motto which accompanied our ermine proclaims it: Death rather than blemish. May the artist remember one of the greatest labors of Hercules, the cleaning of the

Augean stables: "All the waters of the flood", say the sages, "must pass through our earth". These are expressive images of the labor demanded by the perfect purification, a simple, easy work but so tedious that it discouraged many alchemists who were more greedy than industrious, more enthusiastic than persevering.

Panel 9 ---Four horns out of which flames escape, with the motto:

.FRVSTRA.

In vain.

It is the succinct translation, engraved in stone, of the four fires of our coction. The authors who spoke of it, describe them as so many different and proportionate degrees of the elementary fire acting in the midst of the Athanor, on the philosophical rebis. At least, such is the meaning suggested to beginners, and that they hurry to put into practice without much further thought.

And yet the philosophers themselves attest that they never speak more obscurely than when they seem to express themselves with precision; their apparent clarity deludes those who let themselves be seduced by the literal meaning, and who do not attempt to make sure whether it agrees or not with observation, reason and the possibility of nature. This is why we must warn the artists, who will try to accomplish the work according to this process that is to say, by submitting the philosophical amalgam to the increasing temperatures of the four regimens of fire, that they will certainly be the victims of their ignorance and frustrated from the desired results. They should first strive to discover what the Ancients meant by the metaphoric expression of fire and that of the four successive degrees of its intensity. For indeed we are not speaking of a cooking fire here, of a fireplace fire, or of a blast furnace fire. "In our work", asserts Philalethes, "common fire only serves to keep away the cold and the accidents it could cause". In another section of the treatise, the same author positively affirms that our coction is linear, i.e., equal, constant, regular, and uniform from the beginning to the end of the work. Almost all philosophers have used as an example this fire of coction or maturation, the incubation of a hen's egg, not in terms of the temperature to be used but in terms of uniformity and permanence. And so we very strongly advise people to consider before anything else the relationship that the sages have established between the fire and the sulphur, so as to obtain this essential notion that the four degrees of the first must infallibly correspond to the four degrees of the second, which is to say much in a few words. Finally in his so minute description of the coction, Philalethes does not forget to point out how much the real operation is removed from its metaphoric analysis because instead of being directed as one generally believes it to be, it has seven stages or regimens, simple reiterations of one and the same technique. In our opinion, these represent the most sincere words that have been said about the secret practice of the four degrees of fire. And, although the order and the development of these works are guarded by the philosophers and always shrouded in silence, the special characteristic which the coction, understood in that way, takes on will nevertheless allow the wise artist to rediscover this simple and natural means, which ought to favor its operation.

Monsieur Louis Audiat, whose rather amusing fantasies have been pointed out during this study, had not asked the ancient science for a plausible explanation of these curious panels. He writes: "There is such a mischievousness in a single word: Frustra, Flaming horns! (9) It is in vain that one tries to keep his wife!".

We do not believe that the author, moved by compassion before what he took to be the "testimony" of this unfortunate Adept, meant to show the least irreverence for the memories of the latter's wife. But ignorance is blind and misfortune is bad counselor. M. Louis Audiat should have known better and abstained from generalizing.

(1) Cyrano Bergerac: *The Comical History of the States and Empires of the World of the Moon*. Translated by A. Lovell. H. Rhodes, London, 1687, pp. 28-34. (The part in brackets is where the translation was modified). (2) Rene Francois: *Essay des Merveilles de nature et des plus nobles artifices* (Essay on the Marvels of Nature and on the Most Noble Artifices); Lyon, J.Huguetan, 1642, ch. 15, p. 125. (3) *La Lumiere sortant par soy-mesme des Tenebres* (Light Coming by Itself out of Darkness), Ch. 2, Song V, p. 16, Op. cit. (4) Basil Valentine: *The Twelve Keys of Philosophy* (5) Translator's Note: In French, "mer" (sea) and "mere" (mother) sound alike. (6) Translator's Note: Literally, a "swimmer", a small china doll included in the Twelfth Night cake. Whoever finds it becomes the king or queen. (7) Fulcanelli: *Le Mystere des Cathedrales*, Paris, J. Schmidt, 1926, p. 126. (8) Translator's Note: The French "stigmates" translates both as stigma and stigmata. (9) Translator's Note: In France, a cuckold is said to bear the horns: these flaming horns must have inflamed M. Audiat's imagination.

## THE CASTLE OF DAMPIERRE XI

The eight and last series contains only one panel devoted to the science of Hermes. It represents abrupt rocks of which the wild silhouette rises in the middle of the sea. This stone image bears as ensign:

.DONEC.ERVNT.IGNES.

As long as fire will last.

An allusion to the power of action that man owes to the igneous principle, the spirit, essence, or light of things, the unique factor of all material mutations. Of the four elements of the philosophy of Antiquity, only three are represented here: earth pictured by the rocks, water by the sea waves, air by the sky of the sculpted landscape. As for fire, the animating and modifying agent of the three other elements, it seems to be excluded from the subject only to underline its preponderance, its power, its necessity, as well as the impossibility of any action whatsoever on the substance without the help of this spiritual force capable of penetrating it, of moving it, of changing into the actual that which it bore as a potential.

As long as fire will last, life will radiate in the universe; bodies subjected to the laws of evolution, of which it is the essential agent, will accomplish the different cycles of their metamorphoses up to their final transformation into spirit, light, or fire. As long as fire will last, matter will not cease to pursue its difficult ascent toward integral purity by passing from the compact and solid form (earth) to the liquid form (water), and from the gaseous state (air) to the radiant state (fire). As long as fire will last, man will be able to exercise his industrious activity on the things that surround him and thanks to the marvelous igneous instrument, to submit them to his own will, to bend them, to subject them to uses of his own. As long as fire will last, science will benefit from vast possibilities in all domains of the physical plane; and will see the fields of its knowledge and accomplishments broaden. As long as fire will last, men will be in direct contact with God and the creature will know his Creator better.

No subject of meditation seems to be more profitable to the philosopher; nothing solicits more the exercise of his thought. Fire surrounds us and bathes us from everywhere; it comes to us through air, water, and even the earth, which are its preserving agents and different vehicles; we encounter it in everything to which we come near; we feel its action within us for the entire duration of our earthly existence. Our birth is the result of its incarnation; our life, the effect of its dynamism; our death the consequence of its disappearance. Prometheus steals fire from heaven to animate the man who he had, like God, formed from the mud of the earth.

Vulcan creates Pandora the first woman to whom Mineva gives movement by insufflating into her the vital fire. A simple mortal, the sculptor Pygmalion, desiring to marry his own work, implores Venus to animate, by means of the celestial fire, his statue of Galatea. But to try to discover the nature and essence of fire is to try to discover God, whose real presence is always revealed in a fiery manifestation. The burning bush (Ex. 3:2), and Mount Sinai "altogether on a smoke" during the speaking of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 19:18) are two manifestations whereby God appeared to Moses. And it is in the shape of a being of jasper, of a flaming color, seated on an incandescent and flashing throne that St John describes the Master of the Universe (Rev. 4: 3, 5). "Our God is a consuming fire", writes St Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews 12:29. It is, then, not without reason that all religions have considered fire as the clearest image and the most expressive emblem of divinity. "One of the most ancient symbols" said Pluche (1), "as it became universal, is the fire that was perpetually maintained in the place where the different peoples used to assemble. Nothing was more appropriate to give them a tangible idea of the power, beauty, purity, and eternity of the being that they had come to adore. This magnificent symbol had been in use in all of the Orient. Persians saw it as the most perfect image of divinity. Zoroaster did not introduce its use under Darius Histarpes, but, by new perspectives, he improved the practice which had been established long before him. The Pryantheum of the Greeks were perpetual fires. The Vesta of the Etruscans, of the Sabines, and of the Romans was nothing more. The same custom was found in Peru and in other parts of America. Moses kept the practice of a perpetual fire in the holy place as part of the ceremonies he chose and described in detail to the Israelites. And the same symbol, so expressive, so noble and so unlikely to prompt man into illusion still exists today in all our temples". To claim that fire results from combustion is to notice a fact commonly observed, yet without providing its explanation. The gaps in modern science for the most part result from this indifference, voluntary or involuntary, toward such an important and widespread agent. What would we think of this strange obstinacy that certain scientists maintain, in failing to recognize the point of contact it constitutes, the connecting link it creates, between Science and Religion? If heat is born from movement, as it is claimed, who then, shall we ask, generates and maintains the movement productive of fire, if not fire itself? A vicious circle out of which materialists and skeptics will never be able to escape. As for us, fire could not be the result or effect of combustion, but rather its true cause. It is by disengagement from the heavy matter which held it imprisoned that fire manifests and that the phenomenon appears that is known under the name of combustion. And whether this disengagement is spontaneous or provoked, a common sense forces us to admit and to sustain that combustion is the result of the igneous disengagement and not the primary cause of fire.

Imponderable, elusive, always in motion, fire possesses all the qualities we acknowledge in Spirits; fire is nevertheless material as we see its light when it shines and, even when it is dark, our sensitivity can detect the presence of its radiating

heat. Is not the spiritual quality of fire revealed to us by the flame? Why does the flame always tend to rise as a true spirit, in spite of our efforts to force it to go down to the ground? Is this not a formal manifestation of this will which, by liberating it from material hold, moves it away from the earth and brings it nearer to its celestial native land? And what is the flame if not the fire's true visible form, signature, and effigy?

Above all, we must remember, as a priority in the science which interests us, the high purifying virtue that fire possesses. In the highest sense of the word, a pure physical manifestation of purity itself, it signifies in this manner its spiritual origin and uncovers its divine affiliation. As a rather singular observation, the Greek word [\*421-1] (pur) which designates fire has exactly the same pronunciation as the French word pure; and the hermetic philosophers, by joining the nominative to the genitive case, created the term [\*421-2] (purpuros), the fire of fire, or phonetically, le pur du pur (the pure of the pure) and regarded the Latin purpura and the French pourpre (purple) as the seal of the perfection of the philosophers' stone's own color.

(1) Noel Pluche: *Histoire du Ciel* (History of the Heavens); Paris, the Widow Estienne, 1739, vol. 1, p. 24.

## THE CASTLE OF DAMPIERRE XII

Our study of the panels of Dampierre is now complete. We only have to point out a few decorative motifs which, by the way, have no relationship with the preceding ones; they show symmetrical ornaments ---foliage, interlaced designs, Arabian designs, embellished or not with figures --the workmanship of which denotes a production more recent than that of the symbolic subjects. They are all deprived of phylacteries or inscriptions. Finally, the background slab of a small number of panels are still in wait of the sculptor's hand. The presumption is that the author of this book of marvels, of which we endeavored to decipher the leaves and signs had, as a consequence of unknown circumstances, to interrupt a work that his successors could neither pursue nor finish for want of understanding it. Be that as it may, the number, the variety, the esoteric significance of the subjects of this wonderful compilation made of the high gallery of the castle of Dampierre an admirable collection, and a genuine museum of alchemical emblems, and put our Adept among the unknown masters who were the most learned in the mysteries of the sacred Art.

But before we leave this masterful ensemble, we will allow ourselves to connect its teaching to that of a curious stone picture that can be seen in Jacques Couer's palace in Bourges and which apparently can serve as a conclusion to, and summary of, our collection. This sculpted panel forms the tympanum of a door opening on the main courtyard, and represents three exotic trees ---a palm tree, a fig tree, and a date tree ---growing in the midst of herbaceous plants; a frame of flowers, leaves, and twigs surround the bas-relief (Plate XXXIII).

The palm and date trees, of the same family, were known to the Greeks under the name of [\*425-1] (phoenix, and Phoenix in Latin) which is our hermetic phoenix; they represent the two magisteries and their results, the two white and red stones, which partake of one and the same nature included in the cabalistic denomination of Phoenix. As for the fig tree occupying the center of the composition, it indicates the mineral substance out of which the philosophers draw the elements of the miraculous rebirth of the Phoenix, and it is this work of rebirth as a whole which constitutes what is commonly referred to as the Great Work.

According to the apocryphal Gospels it was a fig or sycamore fig tree (a.k.a. the fig tree of the Pharaoh) which had the honor of sheltering the Holy Family during their flight to Egypt, of nourishing them with its fruit and of quenching their thirst, thanks to the clear and fresh water that the child Jesus had drawn out from between its roots (1). Fig tree in Greek is [\*426-1] (suke), from [\*426-2] (sukon), fig, a word frequently used for [\*426-3] (kusthos), with the root [\*426-4] (kuo), to carry in the womb, to contain: it is the Virgin Mother who bears the child, and the alchemical emblem of the passive, chaotic, aquatic, and cold substance, the matrix and vehicle of the spirit incarnate. Sozomene, a 4th century author, asserts that the tree of Hermopolis which bowed before the infant Jesus was called Persea (Hist. Eccl. Lib. V, ch. 21). It is the name of the balanus (Balanites Aegyptiaca), a shrub from Egypt and Arabia, a kind of oak, called by the Greeks [\*426-5] (balanos), acorn, a word by which they also called the myrobalan, fruit of the myrobalan tree. These diverse elements are perfectly related to the subject of the sages and the technique of the ars brevis that Jacques Coeur seems to have practiced.

Indeed, when the artist, a witness to the fight waged by the Remora and the Salamander, steals from the vanquished igneous monster its two eyes, he must then strive to reunite them into one. This mysterious operation, easy nevertheless for whoever knows how to use the salamander's dead body, yields a little lump, quite similar to the acorn of an oak tree, sometimes to a chestnut, depending upon how much of it is covered with the rough matrix from which it can never totally free itself. This provides us with the explanation of the acorn and of the oak tree, which we almost always encounter in hermetic iconography; of the chestnuts, specific to Jacques Lallemand's style; of the heart, the fig, of Jacques Coeur's fig tree; of the little bell, accessory of the jester's rattle; of the pomegranates, pears, and apples frequent in the symbolic works of



Dampierre, and Coulonges, etc. On the other hand, if we take into account the magical, quasi-supernatural characteristic of this production, we can understand why certain authors have indicated the hermetic fruit by the name of myrobalan, and also why this term has remained in the French common language a synonym for marvelous, surprising or extremely rare things (2). The priests of Egypt, the principals of the initiatory schools, used to ask the layman soliciting access to the sublime knowledge, this apparently preposterous question: "In your country is the seed of Halalidge and the Myrobalan ever sown?". A question that did not fail to embarrass the ignorant neophyte, but which the skilled investigator could answer. The seed of Halalidge and the Myrobalan are identical with the fig, the fruit of the date tree, with the egg of the Phoenix which is our philosophical egg. It is the one reproducing the legendary eagle of Hermes, whose feathers were dyed with all the colors of the Work, but among which red dominates, as its Greek name [\*427-1 (phoinis) purple red indicates. De Cyrano Bergerac does not omit to speak about it, in the course of an allegorical tale where is interspersed some of this language of the birds which the great philosopher admirably commanded (3). "I began to fall asleep in the Shade, I perceived in the Air a strange Bird, that hovered over my Head; it supported itself by so slight and imperceptible a motion, that I was many times un doubt, whether it might not be also a little Universe, balanced by its own Creator. However by little and little it descended, and at length came so near, that it filled my Eyes with a delightful Prospect. The Tail of it seemed to be green, its Breast Azure-enameled, its Wings Incarnate, and its Head Purple, which tossed a glittering Crown of Gold, the Rays whereof sparkled from its Eyes. It kept a long time upon the Wing, and I was so attentive to observe what became on it, that my Soul being contracted, and in a manner wrapt up in the sole action of Seeing, it hardly reached my Ear, to let me hear that the Bird spoke as it sung. However, being little by little unbent from my Extasie, I distinctly remarked the Syllables, Words and Discourse which it uttered. To the best of my Memory, then it spun out its Songs into these terms,

"You are a Stranger, whistled the Bird, and have had your birth in a World, of which originally I am. Now that secret propensity to mutual Love, that those of the same Country have one for another, is the instinct, which Inclines me to inform you of my Life...

"I well perceive, you are big with the expectation to learn what I am, it is I who amongst you am called the Phoenix; in every world there is but one at a time which lives there for the space of an Hundred years; for at the end of an Age, when upon some Mountain of Arabia, it has laid a great Egg amidst the Coals of its Funeral Pile, which it has made of the Branches of Aloes, Cinnamon, and Frankincense, it takes its flight, and diverts its course towards the Sun, as the Country to which its heart has long aspired. It has indeed made many attempts before, for accomplishing that Voyage; but the weight of its Egg, which has so thick a shell, that it requires an Age to be hatched in, still retarded the Enterprise.

"I am sensible, that you can hardly comprehend that miraculous Production; and therefore I'll explain it you. The Phoenix is an Hermaphrodite; but amongst Hermaphrodites it is likewise another Phoenix altogether extraordinary, for... (4)

"It continued half an hour without speaking, and then added: I perceive you suspect what I have told you to be false, but if what I say be not true, the first time I come into your Globe, may an Eagle devour me".

Another author (5) dwells further on the mythical-hermetical bird and points out a few of its particularities which it would be difficult to find elsewhere. "The Caesar of Birds", he says, "is the miracle of nature (6), who wanted to show through it the extent of her power, showing herself as a Phoenix by forming the Phoenix. She has done wonders in improving it, by giving it a head embellished with royal feathers and imperial aigrettes, a tuft of feathers, and a crest so bright that it seems to bear either a silver crescent or a golden star on its head. The robe and the down are of a shimmering double-gilt which shows all the colors of the world; the big feathers are rosy red, azure, gold, silver, and of flame color; the neck is a choker made of the stones, and not a rainbow, but a Phoenix bow. The tail is of celestial color with a gold luster, which represents the stars. Its tail feathers and its whole robe are like a first spring, rich of all colors; it has two eyes in its head, shining and flaming, which seem to be two stars; gold legs and scarlet nails; its whole chest and its bearing show that it has some feeling of glory, that it knows how to hold its rank and bring out its imperial majesty. Even its flesh has something royal about it because it only eats drops of incense and chrism of balm. When it was in its crib, says Lactantius, the heaven distilled nectar and ambrosia for it. It alone is witness to all the ages of the world, and it has seen the golden souls of the golden age turn into silver, from silver into brass, and from brass into iron. It alone has never given the sky and the world the slip; it alone scoffs at death, making it its nurse and mother, making it give birth to life. It alone has the privilege of time, of life and of death together. For when it feels laden with years, weighted down by old age and cast down by such a long sequence of years, that it saw to follow on after the other, it lets itself be carried by its desire and proper longing to renew itself by a miraculous death. Then it makes a pile which alone in the world bears no name, for it is not a nest, or a crib, or the place of its birth since it dies there; but it is not a tomb, a coffin, or a funereal urn because in it, it recovers its life; so that I do not know what another inanimate Phoenix is, being nest and tomb, matrix and sepulcher, at once a house for life and for death, which for the sake of the phoenix, work together for this occasion. And, whatever it may be, it is there in the trembling arm a palm tree

(7), that it makes a collection of small sprigs of cinnamon and incense, and on the incense, cassia, and on cassia spikenard; then with a pitiful look, commending its soul to the Sun, its murderer and its father, it alights or lies down on this balmy stake to get rid of its trying years. The Sun, favoring the just desires of this Bird, lights the pyre and reducing everything to ashes with a musky blast, makes it breath its last. Then poor Nature finds herself in a trance and with horrible spasms, fearing to lose the honor of this great world, then orders everything in the world to be quiet; the clouds would not dare pour the slightest drop of water on the ashes nor on the earth; the winds no matter how enraged would not dare run through the countryside; alone the Zephyr is the master, and springtime has the upper hand while the ash is inanimate, and nature holds everything so that the return of her Phoenix is favored. O great miracle of divine providence! Almost at the same time, this cold ash, not wanting to leave poor nature mourning for long or to frighten her, warmed up, I know not how, by the fecundity of the golden rays of the Sun, then turns itself into a little worm, then an egg, then into a Bird, ten times more beautiful than the other. You could say that all of nature was resurrected, for indeed, according to what Pliny writes. The sky again starts its revolutions and its sweet music; and you could properly say that the four elements, without saying anything, sing the motet for four with their flourishing gaiety, as a chant of glory to nature and to mark the return of the miracle of the Birds and of the World. (Plate XXXIV).

Like those at Dampierre, the panel with the three trees sculpted in the palace at Bourges bears a motto. On the border of the frame decorated with flower-bearing branches, the attentive observer indeed discovers isolated letters, very cleverly concealed. Their connection composes one of the favorite maxims of the great artist that Jacques Coeur was:

.DE.MA.JOIE.DIRE.FAIRE.TAIRE.

About my Joy, Say it, Do it, Be Silent. Now the Adept's joy resides in his occupation. The work which renders this marvel of nature more tangible and more familiar to him --which so many ignorant people call chimera --constitute his best distraction and its most noble enjoyment. In Greek the word [\*430-1] (chara), joy, derived from [\*430-2] (chairō), to rejoice, to delight in, to enjoy, also means to love. The famous philosopher, then clearly alludes to the labor of the Work, his dearest task, of which moreover so many symbols have come to enhance the glamour of his sumptuous house. But what to say, what to admit of this unique joy, of this pure and complete satisfaction, the intimate cheerfulness of success? The least possible, if we do not want to break the oath, to attract envy from some, greed from the others, jealousy from all, and the risk of becoming the prey of the powerful. What to do then with the result about which the artist, according to the rules of our discipline, promises to use in a modest fashion? To always use it for the good, to consecrate its fruit to the exercise of charity, in conformity to the precepts of philosophy and to Christian ethics. Finally what should we keep silent about? Absolutely everything which concerns the alchemical secret and its practical use; for the revelation, remaining God's exclusive privilege, the disclosure of its process remains forbidden, non-communicable in clear language, only permitted when veiled by parables, allegories, images or metaphors.

Jacques Coeur's motto, in spite of its conciseness and implications, turns out to be in perfect accord with the traditional teachings of the eternal wisdom. No philosopher, truly worthy of the name, would refuse to subscribe to the rules of conduct which it expresses and which can be translated in this way:

About the Great Work, say little, do much, and always be silent.

(1) Cf. *Evangile de l'Enfance* (The Gospel of the Childhood of Jesus), ch. 23, 25, in the *Apocryphal Writings of Migne*, vol. 1, p. 995 (2) The French word is now spelled "mirobolant" but its etymology and pronunciation have not changed. (3) *De Cyrano Bergerac: History of the Birds in The Comical History, Of the States and Empires of the World of the Sun*; Transl. By A. Louvell; H. Rhodes, London, 1687, pp. 97-100. (4) The author abruptly interrupts his revelation. (5) *Rene Francois: Essay des Merveilles de Nature et des plus Nobles Artifices* (Essay about the Marvels of Nature and the Most Noble Artifices); Lyon, J. Huguetam, 1642, ch. 5, p. 69. (6) A hermetic expression only used for the philosophers' stone. (7) We encounter once more the symbolical palm tree of Delos, against which Latona leaned when she gave birth to Apollo, according to what is reported by Callamachus in his Hymn to Delos: "To celebrate, O Delos, these fortunate moments, A pure gold glistened down to your foundation Gold covered your palm tree with a bright leaf Gold colored your lake with shiny waves And, for an entire day, from your deepest abyss Inopus vomited pure gold in large bubbles".

## **THE BODYGUARDS OF FRANCIS II DUKE OF BRITTANY I**

When around the year 1502, Anne, Duchess of Brittany and twice Queen of France, drew up the plan of reuniting in a mausoleum worthy of the veneration that she held them in, the bodies of her deceased parents, she entrusted the execution of this task to a highly talented artist from Brittany, about whom we possess very little information, Michel Colombe. She was then 25 years of age. Her father, Duke Francis II, had died at Coueron, 14 years earlier, Sept. 9, 1488, surviving the death of his second wife, Marguerite de Foix, Mother of Queen Anne by only 16 months. She had died May 15, 1487.

This mausoleum, begun in 1502, was completed only in 1507. The plan was the work of Jean Perreal. As for the sculptures that makes it one of the purest masterpieces of the Renaissance, they were made by Michel Colombe, who was helped in this work by two of his students: Guillaume Regnauld, his nephew and Jehan Chartres, "his disciple and servant", although the latter's collaboration is not totally certain. A letter written Jan. 4, 1511 by Jean Perreal to the secretary of Marguerite of Burgundy, on the occasion of the works that this princess had made in the Chapel of Brou, tells us that "Michel Colombe worked by the month and was getting 20 ecus (1) per month for a period of five years". He was paid 1,200 ecus for the sculpture work and the total cost of the tomb was 560 pounds (2) .

According to Marguerite of Brittany and Francis II's desire to be buried in the church of Carmes in Nantes, Anne had the mausoleum erected there and it took on the name of Tomb of the Carmes, under which it is generally known and referred to. It remained in place until the Revolution, and when the Church of the Carmes was sold as a national property, it was removed and secretly kept by an art enthusiast who wanted to withhold this masterpiece from revolutionary vandalism. Once the upheaval had receded, it was rebuilt in 1819 in the Cathedral of St Peter of Nantes, where it can be admired today. The vaulted sepulcher, built under the show mausoleum, contained, when it was opened by order of the King, by Mellier, mayor of Nantes, Oct. 16-17, 1727, the three coffins of Francis II, of Marguerite of Foix, second wife of the duke and Queen Anne's mother. A little box was also found there; it contained a "pure and clean gold" reliquary in the shape of an egg, surmounted by the royal crown, covered with inscriptions of finely enameled letters and containing the heart of Anne of Brittany, whose body rests in the Basilica of St Denis (3) .

Among the descriptive accounts which several authors have left us about the Tomb of Carmes, some of which are very detailed, we will preferably choose, to give an overview of the work, the one of Brother Mathias of St John, Carme of Nantes, who published it in the 17th century (4) .

"But that which seems to be quite rare and most worthy of admiration", says this author, "is the Tomb raised in the heart of the Church of the Carmes Monks, which, everyone agrees, is one of the most beautiful and magnificent which can be seen, and which forces me to give a specific description to satisfy the curious mind.

"The devotion that the ancient Dukes of Brittany held since a long time for the Holy Virgin, Mother of God, patroness of the Order and for this church of the Holy Fathers of the Carmes and the affection they had for the Religious of this House, led them to chose this ground for their burial places. And Queen Anne, as a unique testimony of her compassion and affection for this place wanted to have this beautiful monument raised there in memory of her father, Francis II, and her mother, Marguerite of Foye.

"It is built in a square fashion, eight feet wide and 14 feet long: all made using fine Italian black and white marble, porphyry and alabaster. The main part of the Word is raised by 6 feet from the ground with 6 niches, each 2 feet high, with their back parts made of finely carved porphyry, ornamented all around with pillars of white marble, in the proper proportions and rules of architecture, enriched with very delicately worked moresques (arabesques): and all the 12 niches are filled with the white marble figure of the 12 apostles, each having a different posture and the instruments of his martyrdom. Both ends of the main building are ornamented with a similar architecture, and each is divided into 2 niches similar to the others. At the end, towards the master altar of the church, are placed in these niches the figures of St Francis of Assisi and of St Marguerite, patron saints of the last Duke and Duchess which are buried there; and at the other end in two similar niches are seen, in the same way, the two figures of St Charlemagne and St Louis, King of France. Below the said 16 niches which surround the main part of the tomb are as many cavities made in a round fashion, of 14 inches in diameter, the back part of which is made of carved white marble in the shape of a shell, and all filled with figures of mourners in their funeral clothes, in various postures, whose workmanship is taken into consideration by very few people, but admired by all who know it for what it truly is.

"This part is covered by a large table of black marble, made all of one piece, which exceeds the solid body (mass of the tomb) by approximately 8 inches all around, creating a sort of cornice to serve as an entablature and an ornament of the main part of the tomb. On this stone two great figures of white marble are lying, each 8 feet long, one representing the Duke and the other the Duchess with their ducal clothes and coronets. Three white marble Angels, each 3 feet tall, holding squares (pillows) under the heads of these figures, which seem to soften under the weight and the angels cry. At the feet of the figure of the Duke there is a figure of a lion, lying down, as in nature, bearing on its mane the coat of arms of Brittany; and at the feet of the figure of the Duchess, there is the figure of a Greyhound also bearing round its neck the coat of arms of the House of Foie, which the art animates marvelously well. "But what is most marvelous in this piece are the 4 figures of the Cardinal Virtues, made of white marble, and 6 feet high, placed at the four corners of the sepulture: they are so well carved, so well placed, and are so life like that the natives of the city and foreigners all admit that nothing can be seen which is better, neither in the Antiquities of Rome, nor in the modern statues of Italy, France, or Germany. The figure of

Justice is placed on the right side as one enters, holding a raised sword in the right hand and a book and scales in the left one, a crown on her head dressed with fur and skins which are the marks of the science, equity, severity, and majesty which accompany this virtue.

"Opposite, on the left side, is the figure of Prudence which has two faces opposite one another on the same head: that of an old man with a long beard, the other of a young lad (5): in the right (on the left) hand she holds a convex mirror at which she stares, in the other hand a compass: at her feet appears a serpent, and these things are symbols of the consideration and the wisdom with which this virtue proceeds in her actions.

"At the right angle, on the upper side, is the figure of Strength dressed in a coat of mail (armor) and a helmet on her head; in her left hand she carries a tower, out of whose crevices a serpent (dragon) emerges, which she strangles with her right hand; this marks the vigor which this virtue uses in misfortunes to prevent violence or to bear its burden.

"On the opposite corner is the figure of Temperance, clad in a long robe girding on a ribbon a belt: in her right hand she bears the working s of a clock and in the other the bit of a bridle, hieroglyphs for the regulation and moderation that this virtue puts on human passions".

The eulogies that Brother Mathias of St John writes of these bodyguards of Francis II, represented by the cardinal virtues of Michel Colombe (6) seems to us perfectly deserved. "These four statues", says de Caumont (7), "are admirable for their grace and simplicity. The garments are sculpted with a rare perfection and in each figure a very marked individuality can be observed although the four are equally noble and beautiful".

These are statues, impresses with the purest symbolism, guardians of tradition and of ancient science, that we will study in detail.

(1) Translator's note: Ecu was the currency used at the time. (2) Cf. Abbott G. Durville: *Etudes sur le vieux Nantes* (Studies about the old city of Nantes), Vol. II, Vannes, Lafolye Freres, 1915. (3) The Canon of Durville, from whose book we borrow these details, was kind enough to send us a picture about this curious piece, which is unfortunately empty of its contents, and now a part of the collections at the Dobree Museum of Nantes, of which he is the curator. "I am sending you", he writes, "a small photograph of this precious reliquary. I have placed it for one moment at the very location where Queen Anne's heart was, thinking that this circumstance would capture even more your interest for this little souvenir". We are thankful to M. the Canon Durville for his solicitude and delicate attention. (4) *Le Commerce Honorable...*, composed by an inhabitant of Nantes; Nantes, G. Le Monnier, 1646, p. 308-312. (5) Translator's note: Brother Mathias saw a young lad, although the drawings of the statue seem to represent a young woman. (6) Michel Colombe, born in 1460 at Saint-Pol-de-Leon was about 45 when he sculpted them. (7) De Caumont: *Cours d'Antiquities Monumentales*; 1841, 6th part, p. 445.

## **BODYGUARDS II**

With the exception of Justice, the cardinal virtues no longer are represented with the singular attributes which gave the ancient figures their enigmatic and mysterious characteristics. Under the pressure of more realistic designs, the symbolism was transformed. The artists, abandoning all idealization of thought, preferably abide by naturalism. They closely follow the expression of the attributes and facilitate the identification of the allegorical characters. However, while perfecting their technique and coming closer to modern formulas, they have, unconsciously, struck a mortal blow to traditional truth. For the ancient sciences, transmitted under the veil of various emblems, are answerable to the science of Diplomats and are presented with a double meaning, one apparent and understandable by everyone (exoteric), the other, hidden, accessible only to initiates (esoteric). By specifying the symbol, limited to its positive, ordinary, and defined function, by individualizing it to the point of excluding from it all connected or relative ideas, it is stripped of this double meaning, of this secondary expression which gave it its very didactic value and its essential significance. The ancients represented Justice, Fortune and Love with blindfolded eyes. Did they only mean to express the sightlessness of one, and the blindness of the others? Could we not discover in the attribute of the blindfold, a special reason for this artificial and probably necessary darkness? It would suffice to know that these figures, commonly subjected to human vicissitudes, also belonged to the scientific tradition, to easily recognize the reason. And we would then become aware that the occult meaning proves to be clearer than that obtained by a direct analysis, or by a superficial perusal. When the poets relate that Saturn, the father of the gods, devoured his children, we believe along with the Encyclopedia that "such a metaphor serves to characterize a period, an institution, etc., whose circumstances or results become fatal to the very people who should only benefit from it". But if we substitute, for this general interpretation, the positive and scientific reason which constitutes the background of legends and of myths, truth becomes immediately clear, luminous, and patent. Hermeticism teaches that Saturn, the symbolic representative of the first earthly metal, and generator of the others, is also their unique and natural solvent; and since every dissolved metal is assimilated into the solvent and loses its characteristics, it is accurate and

logical to state that the solvent "eats" the metal, as the legendary old man devours his progeny.

We could give numerous examples of this duality of meaning expressed by traditional symbolism. This one suffices to prove that, along with the moral Christian interpretation of the cardinal virtues, there is a second, secret, profane, ordinarily unknown teaching which belongs to the material domain of ancestral acquisitions and knowledge. So, sealed in the shape of the same emblem, we find once again the harmonious union of Science and Religion, so fertile in marvelous results, but that modern skepticism refuses to recognize and always conspires to thrust aside. "The topic of Venus", very justly remarks M. Paul Vitry (1), "was formed in the 13th century in Gothic art. But, added the author, while the series always remained variable with us as to its number, order, and attributes; it became set rather early in Italy and was limited to the three theological virtues: Faith, Hope and Charity or, even more often yet to the four cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Strength, and Temperance. In addition, it was applied early to the ornamentation of funereal monuments.

"As to the fashion in which these Virtues were more or less characterized, it seems to have been set with Orcagna and his gold tabernacle of San Michele around the middle of the 14th century. Justice carries the sword and the scales and this will never change. The main attribute of Prudence is the snake; sometimes one or more books were added to it, later a mirror. Almost from the very beginning, according to an idea similar to Dante's who gave three eyes to his Prudence, the image makers gave two faces to this virtue. Temperance sometimes sheathed her sword, but more often than not, holds two vases and seems to be mixing water and wine: it is the elementary symbol of sobriety. Finally, Strength bears Sampson's attributes; she is armed with the shield and club; sometimes she has a lion's skin on her head and a disk representing the world in her hands; other times, and this will become her definitive attribute, at least in Italy, she holds an entire or a broken column...

"Contrary to the rest of the large monuments, the manuscripts, books, and engravings were in charge of spreading the Italian style of the Virtues and could even make it known to those, who like Colombe, had probably not made the trip to Italy. A series of Italian engravings at the end of the 15th century, known as the Italian Card Deck, shows us in the midst of representations of different social conditions, the Muses, the gods of antiquity, the liberal arts, etc., a series of figures of the Virtues; they are given the very same attributes we just described...

We have here a very curious specimen of these documents which could have been brought back by people like Perreal, who had followed expeditions; documents which were allowed to circulate in artists' studios and inspired topics until they could impose a new style.

"Besides, this symbolic language was easily understood in our country; it was totally in accordance with the allegorical spirit of the 15th century. In order to become aware of it, it suffices to think of the Roman de la Rose and of all the literature which was thereafter produced. The miniaturists had abundantly illustrated these books, and even apart from the allegories of nature, from these diversions and make-believe, French art certainly did not fail to know the series of Virtues, although it was not a theme used as frequently as in Italy".

Yet, without absolutely denying some Italian influence in the splendid figures of the Tomb of the Carnes, Paul Vitry notes the novel, essentially French characteristic that Michel Colombe was to give the Italian ultramontane elements brought back by Jean Perreal. "If we were to admit", continues the author, "that they borrowed the initial idea from the Italian tombs, Perreal and Colombe would not have accepted without modification the theme of the cardinal Virtues". Indeed, "Temperance will carry in her hands a clock and a bit with its bridle instead of the two vases that the Italians used to give her. As for Strength, armed and helmeted, instead of her column, she will hold a tower, a sort of crenellated donjon, out of which she tears away a struggling dragon. Neither in Rome, Florence, Milan, nor Como (south door of the cathedral) do we recognize anything similar to this". But while we can easily discern in the cenotaph of Nantes the respective part which belongs to the masters Perreal and Colombe, it is more difficult to discover the extent of the personal influence and will of the founder. For we cannot believe that during five years she took no part in a work that was very dear to her heart. Could Queen Anne, that gracious sovereign whom her people, in their naive affection, lovingly called "the good duchess with the wooden shoes", have known the esoteric meaning of the guardians of the mausoleum raised in memory of her parents? We would very willingly resolve this question in the affirmative. Her biographers state that she was well educated, gifted with a keen intelligence and a remarkable clairvoyance. Her library seems already big for the time. "According to the only document", says Le Roux de Lincy (2), "which I was able to discover relative to the entire library formed by Anne of Brittany (Index des Comptes de Depenses de 1498 ---Index of the Accounts Payable of the Year 1498) there were handwritten and printed books in Latin, French, Italian, Greek, and Hebrew, 1,140 books, taken in Naples by Charles VIII and that were given to the queen... We could perhaps be surprised to see Greek and Hebrew books represented in the collection of the Queen Duchess; but we should remember that she had studied these two learned languages and that the nature of her mind was, above all, serious". She is depicted as eager to talk with diplomats, whom she pleased to answer in their own

tongue, which would justify the very careful multilingual education and probably also mastery of the hermetic cabala, the gay-savoir or the double science. Did she keep company with reputed scientists of her time and among them, perhaps, with contemporary alchemists? We lack information about the subject although it seems difficult to explain why the great fireplace of the drawing room of the Lallemand mansion bears Anne of Brittany's ermine and Louis XII's porcupine, if one cannot see there a testimony of their presence in the philosopher's dwelling of Bourges. Be that as it may, her personal wealth was considerable. Crafted goldware, gold ingots, and precious gems formed the body of an almost inexhaustible treasure. The abundance of such wealth rendered easy the exercise of a generosity quickly become popular. Chroniclers tell us that she gladly paid, with the gift of a diamond, a poor minstrel who had entertained her for a few minutes. As for the liveries, they presented the hermetic colors chosen by her: black, yellow and red before Charles VIII's death, and only the two extremes of the Work, black and red, after that time. Finally, she was the first queen of France who, resolutely breaking with the previous established custom, wore black mourning clothes for the death of her first husband, when protocol dictated sovereigns to always wear white.

(1) Paul Vitry: Michel Colombe et la sculpture de son temps; Paris, E. Levy, 1901, p. 395. (2) Le Roux de Lincy: Vie de la Reine Anne de Bretagne, femme des Rois de France Charles VIII and Louis XII; Paris, L. Curmer, 1860, vol. 2, p. 34.

### **BODYGUARDS III**

The first of the four statues we are to study is the one which offers the various attributes in charge of specifying the allegorical expression of Justice: the lion, the scales, and the sword. But apart from the esoteric meaning clearly different from the moral sense given to these attributes, Michel Colombe's figure reveals other signs of her occult personality. No detail, however tiny, should be neglected in an analysis of this kind, without first having undergone a serious examination. Now the ermine surcoat worn by Justice is fringed with roses and pearls. The forehead of our Virtue bears a ducal coronet which has led some to believe that it reproduces the features of Anne of Brittany; the pommel of the sword she holds in her right hand is ornamented with a radiating sun; finally, and this is her chief feature, she appears here unveiled. The peplum, covering her entirely has slipped on her body; retained by the protrusion of the arms, it comes to cover the lower part of the coat; the glaive has left its brocaded sheath, which can now be seen suspended on the tip of the sword (Plate XXXV).

As Justice's essence and *raison d'être* demand that she hide nothing, and as the search for, and manifestation of, truth obliges her to show herself to all in the full light of equality, the veil, half drawn back, must necessarily reveal the secret individuality of a second figure, artfully concealed under the form and attributes of the first. This second figure is none other than Philosophy.

In Roman antiquity, the peplum, (Greek [\*447-1] ---peplos or [\*447-2] ---pepla) was a veil ornamented with embroidery used to dress the statue of Minerva, daughter of Jupiter, and the only goddess whose birth was a miracle. Indeed, mythology says that she sprung forth fully armed from the brain of her father, whose head, by the order of the Master of Olympus, Vulcan had split. Hence her Hellenic name of Athena --[\*447-3] (Athena), formed from the privative prefix peplos, and [\*448-2] (tithene, wet nurse, mother, meaning born without a mother. A personification of the Wisdom or Knowledge of things, Minerva, must be regarded as the divine and creative thought, materialized in all nature, latent in ourselves as it is in everything that surrounds us. But we are speaking here of feminine clothing, a woman's veil ([\*448-3] -- -chalumma) and this word gives us another explanation for the symbolic peplum. Chalumma comes from [\*448-4] (calupto) to cover, envelope, hide, which formed [\*448-5] (calus), rose bud, and also [\*448-6] (calupso), Greek name for the nymph Calypso, queen of the mythical island of Ogygiae which the Greeks called [\*448-7] (Ogugios), a term akin to the word [\*448-8] (Ogugia), which has the meaning of ancient and great. Here again is the mystical rose, the flower of the Great Work, better known as the Philosophers' Stone. So that it becomes easy to understand the relationship between the expression of the veil and that of the roses and pearls ornamenting the fur surcoat since this stone is also called precious pearl (Margarita pretiosa). "Alciat", says Brother Noel, "represents Justice with the features of a virgin whose crown is golden and whose tunic is white, covered with an ample purple drape. Her eyes are soft and her bearing modest. She bears on her bosom a rich jewel, symbol of her inestimable value, and she has her left foot in a square stone". The dual nature of the Magistry could not be better described, its colors, the high value of this cubic stone which carries Philosophy as a whole, masked for common people under the features of Justice.

Philosophy confers on those who espouse it a great power of investigation. She enables penetration of the intimate construction of things which she cuts short as with a sword discovering in it the presence of the spiritus mundi, of which the classical masters speak, and which has its center in the sun and draws its virtue and motion from the radiation of the heavenly body. She also gives knowledge of the general laws, rules, rhythms, and measures observed by nature in the elaboration, evolution, and perfection of created things (the scales). She finally establishes the possibility of acquiring sciences based on observation, meditation, faith, and written teachings (the book). By the same attributes, this image of

Philosophy also teaches us the essential points of the labor of the Adepts and proclaims the necessity for manual labor imposed on seekers desiring to acquire the positive notion, and the indisputable proof of its reality. Without technical research, without frequent attempts, nor reiterated experiments we can only go astray in a science whose best treatises carefully hide the physical principles, their application, the materials, and the time required. Then whoever dares to claim to be a philosopher and does not want to labor for fear of cold, fatigue or the expense, must be regarded as the most vain of ignoramuses, or the most shameless of imposters. "I can give evidence", said Augustine Thierry, "which, coming from me won't be questioned: there is in the world something better than material pleasures, better than wealth, better than health itself; it is devotion to science". The activity of the sage is not measured by the results of speculative propaganda; it is mastered at the furnace in the solitude and silence of the laboratory, and not anywhere else. It manifests itself with neither claims nor verbiage, through the careful study, the accurate and persevering examination of reaction and of phenomena. Whoever acts differently, will sooner or later verify Solomon's maxim (Prov. 21:25): "The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labor". The genuine scientist does not shrink from effort; he does fear suffering because he knows it is the penalty for science and that it alone will give him the means to understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings... (Prov. 1:6).

As to what concerns the practical value of the attributes given to Justice, regarding the hermetic labor, the student will find through experience that the energy of the universal spirit has its signature in the glaive and that the glaive has a correspondence in the sun, as the animator and perpetual modifier of all physical substances. It is the unique agent of the successive metamorphoses of the original matter, the subject and foundation of the Magistry. Through its agency, mercury is changed into sulphur, sulphur into an Elixir, and the Elixir into a Medicine, which then receives the name of the Crown of the Sage, because this threefold mutation confirms the truth of the secret teaching and consecrates the glory of its fortunate artisan. Possessing the ardent and multiplied sulphur, masked under the term of the Philosophers' Stone, it is to the Adept what the triple crown is to the pope and the crown to the monarch: the major emblem of sovereignty and wisdom.

We have often had the opportunity to explain the meaning of the open book characterized by the radical solution of the metallic body, which, having left its impurities behind and yielded its sulphur, is then said to be open. But we have to make another remark. Under the Latin name *liber* and under the image of book, adopted to qualify the matter, withholder of the solvent, the sages meant to designate the closed book, the general symbol for all crude mineral or metallic bodies, such as given to us by nature or such as human industry delivers to the market. And so, minerals extracted from an ore-bearing bed, and metals out of casting are hermetically expressed by a closed or sealed book. Similarly, these bodies, when submitted to alchemical work, modified by the application of occult processes, are translated into iconography with the help of the open book. It is therefore necessary in practice to extract the mercury from the closed book of our primitive subject, so as to obtain it living and open, if we want it to be in turn able to open the metal and revivify the inert sulphur it contains. The opening of the first book prepares that of the second. For, hidden under the same emblem, are two closed books (the crude subject and the metal) and two open books (the mercury and the sulphur) although these hieroglyphic books really add up to being one and the same, since the metal comes from the initial matter and sulphur originates in mercury.

As for the scales applied against the book it would suffice to point out that they translate the necessity of weights and ratios, in order to feel exempt from having to speak of it further. Now this faithful image of the utensil used for the weighing and to which chemists assign an honorable place in their laboratories also conceals an Arcanum of the highest importance. This is the reason why it forces us to account for it and to briefly indicate that which the scales hide under the angles and symmetry of their form.

When the philosophers consider the weight ratios among matters, they mean to speak of one or the other part of a double esoteric knowledge: the weight of nature and the weights of art (1). Unfortunately, said Solomon, the sages hide the science; bound to remain within the narrow limits of their vow and respectful of an accepted discipline, they take care never to clearly establish how the two secrets differ one from another. We shall see to it to tread farther than they did and shall say in all sincerity that the weights of the art are exclusively applicable to separate bodies, that can be weighed, while the weight of nature refers to the relative ratios of the components of a given body. So that, describing the reciprocal quantities of different matters, in view of effecting their regular and appropriate blending, the authors truly speak of the weights of the art; on the contrary, if they are speaking of quantitative values within a synthetic and radical combination, such as that of sulphur and mercury principles united in the philosophers' mercury, it is the weight of nature which is then considered. And we shall add in order to remove all confusion from the reader's mind that, while the weights of art is known to the artist and rigorously determined by him, on the other hand the weight of nature is always unknown even to the greatest masters. This mystery is answerable to God alone, and its intelligence remains inaccessible to man.

The Work begins and ends with the weights of the art; so the alchemists preparing the way prompts nature to begin and to perfect this great labor. But, in between these extremities, the artist does not need the scales, the weight of nature

intervening alone, so that the making of common mercury, that of the philosophical mercury, and the operations known as imbibitions, etc., are done without anyone being able to know, even if approximately, the quantities retained or decomposed, the assimilation rate of the basis as well as the proportion of the spirits. This is what the Cosmopolite insinuates when he says that the mercury does not take any more sulphur than what it can absorb and retain. In other words, the proportion of assimilable matter, as it depends directly upon the appropriate metallic energy, remains variable and cannot be evaluated. All the work is therefore subject to natural and acquired qualities, as much of the agent as of the subject. Supposing that the agent is obtained with the maximum of virtue ---which is rarely achieved ---the basic matter, such as nature offers to us, is quite removed from being constant and similar to itself. We will say about this, for having often controlled its effects, that the assertion of some authors founded upon certain external particularities ---yellow spots, efflorescences, red plaques or spots ---do not merit to be taken into consideration. The mining region could give better indications on the quality sought for, although a few samples taken from the block of the ore-bearing layer sometimes reveal among themselves considerable differences.

So, without resorting to abstract influences nor to mystical interventions, can we explain why the philosophers' stone, in spite of an exactly performed work, in accordance with natural necessities, never leaves in the hands of the worker a body of equal power, and of a transmutative energy in direct and constant relationship with the quantity of materials used.

(1) Not until the time where the lover, having for the third time renewed the weights, Atalanta gave the reward to her victor (M. Maier: Atalanta Fugiens).

#### **BODYGUARDS IV**

Here is, in our opinion, Michel Colombe's masterpiece and the main piece of the tomb of the Carmes. "By itself", writes Leon Palustre (1), "this statue of Strength would suffice to bring glory to a man, and we cannot help feeling an acute and deep emotion. The majesty of the posture, the nobility of the expression, the grace of the gesture ---which perhaps we would prefer more vigorous ---are, as many revealing characteristics of a more consummate mastery, of an incomparable skill in workmanship".

With her head covered by a flat morion with a lion's snout in the front, and her bust draped with a finely chiseled corselet, Strength holds a tower in her left hand and drawn forth in the right, not a serpent, as most descriptions portend, but a winged dragon, which she strangles by squeezing its neck. An ample drape with long fringes, whose folds are held by her forearms, forms a loop through which one of her extremities passes. This cloth, which, in the sculptor's mind, should have covered the emblematic Virtue, confirms what we have said previously. Just like Justice, Strength appears unveiled (Plate XXXVI).

Daughter of Jupiter and Themis, sister of Justice and Temperance, the ancients honored her as a divinity without endowing her images with the particular attributes we see her offer today. In Greek antiquity, the statues of Hercules, with the hero's club and the Nemean lion skin, personified both physical and moral strength. As for the Egyptians, they represented her as a woman with a strong constitution, having two bull horns on her head and an elephant at her side. Modern artists express her in very different ways. Botticelli sees her as a robust woman, simply seated upon a throne; Rubens gives her a shield with the figure of a lion or has her being followed by a lion. Gravelot shows her crushing vipers, a lion skin thrown on her shoulders, with a laurel branch around her head and holding a sheaf of arrows, while at her feet lie crowns and scepters. Anguier, in a bas-relief on the tomb of Henri Longueville (in the Louvre), makes use, to define Strength, of a lion devouring a boar. Coysevox (on the balustrade of the marble courtyard at Versailles) dresses her in a lion skin and has her carry an oak branch in one hand, and the base of a column in the other. Finally, among the bas-reliefs decorating the peristyle of the St Sulpice Church, Strength is represented armed with a flaming sword and the shield of Faith.

In all of these figures and in many others the enumeration of which would be tedious, we cannot find any analogy, with regard to attributes, with that of Michel Colombe and of the sculptors of his time. Because of this, the beautiful statue of the tomb of the Carmes takes on a special value and becomes for us the best translation of esoteric symbolism.

We cannot reasonably deny that the tower, so important in medieval fortification, holds a clearly defined meaning, although we have not been able to discover an interpretation for it anywhere. As for the dragon, its double expression is better known, from a moral and religious point of view, it is a translation of evil, the spirit of a demon, a devil, or Satan; for the philosopher and alchemist, it was always used to represent their volatile and dissolving first matter, otherwise called common mercury. Hermetically, we can see the tower as the envelope, the refuge, the protective sanctuary ---mineralogists would coin the term ganque or ore-bearing earth ---of the mercurial dragon. It is moreover the meaning of the Greek word [\*456-1] (purgos), tower, asylum, refuge. The intervention could be even more complete if we identify with the artist the woman who pulls the monster out of its lair and the deadly gesture with the goal which he proposed to endeavor in this difficult and dangerous operation. At least, in this way, we could find a satisfactory and almost true explanation of the



allegorical subject used to reveal the esoteric aspect of Strength. But we would have to assume that the secret science to which these attributes refer is known. Our statue itself can teach us both about its symbolic meaning and about the topics related to all that which is Wisdom, represented by the four cardinal virtues. If the great initiate, Francois Rabelais was, had been asked for his opinion, he would certainly have answered through the voice of Epistemon (2), that the tower of fortification or fortified castle, amounts to saying a feat of strength or a tower of strength (3); and that a feat of strength requires "courage, wisdom, and power: courage because there is danger, wisdom because due knowledge is necessarily required; power, for whoever cannot do it, should not undertake it". On the other hand, the phonetic cabala which makes the French word tour (tower) equivalent to the Attic word [\*457-1] (tuross), completes the Pantagruelic meaning if the tower, or feat, of strength (4). As a matter of fact, tuross is substituted and used for [\*457-2] (to oris); [\*457-3] that, that which, [\*457-4] (oros) ---goal, term, objective meant to be achieved), thus marking the thing to be attained, the goal set forth. Nothing, it can be seen, could better fit the figurative expression of the stone of the philosophers, a dragon enclosed in its fortress, the extraction of which has always been considered a true feat of strength. On the other hand, the image is revealing; for, while we experience some difficulties understanding how a robust and bulky dragon could have resisted the compression exerted by the walls of its narrow prison, we can no more grasp by what miracle it goes entirely through a mere crack in the masonry. Here again we can recognize a translation of the prodigious, the supernatural and the miraculous.

Let us finally point out that Strength bears other marks of the esotericism she reflects. The braids of her hair, hieroglyphs for the solar radiation, indicate that the Work, subjected to the influence of the heavenly body, cannot be performed without the dynamic collaboration of the sun. The braid, in Greek [\*457-5] (seira), is adopted to represent the vibrational energy, because, among the ancient Hellenic people, the sun was called [\*457-6] (seir). The regulated scales on the gorget of the corselet are those of a serpent, another emblem of the mercurial subject and replica of the dragon which is also scaly. Fish scales, set in a semicircle, decorate her abdomen and evoke the joining of the human body of a mermaid's tail. The mermaid, fabulous monster and hermetic symbol, is used to characterize the union of the nascent sulphur, which is our fish, with the common mercury, called virgin, in the philosophical mercury or salt of wisdom. The same meaning is provided by the Twelfth Night cake, to which the Greeks gave the same name as to the Moon, Selena: [\*458-1] (selene); this word formed from the Greek roots [\*458-2] (selas), brightness, and [\*458-3] (ele), solar light, had been chosen by the initiates to show that the philosophical mercury drew its brightness from sulphur just as the moon receives its light from the sun. An analogous reason caused the name [\*458-4] (serein), siren to be attributed to the mythical monster resulting from the combination of a woman and a fish; serein, a contraction of [\*458-5] (seir), sun and [\*458-6] (mene), moon, also indicates the mercurial lunar matter combined with the sulphurous solar substance. Therefore it is a translation identical to that of the Twelfth Night cake, adorned with the sign of light and spirituality: the cross, evidence of the real incarnation of the solar ray, emanating from the universal father, into heavy matter, matrix of all things, and the terra inanis et vacua (worthless and empty earth) of the Scriptures. (1) Leon Palustre: Les Sculpteurs Francais de la Renaissance: Michel Colombe (French Sculptors of the Renaissance: Michel Colombe) in Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 2nd issue, vol. 29, May-June 1884. (2) The Greek word Epistemon means learned, one who is instructed, skilled at; the root epistemai, to know, to examine, to think. (3) Translator's Note: A "tour de force" in French means at once a tower of strength and a feat of strength. (4) Rabelais' main book, entitled Pantagruel, is entirely devoted to the burlesque and cabalistic exposition of alchemical secrets, of which the pantagruelism embraces the totality and constitutes the scientific doctrine. Pantagruel is assembled from three Greek words: panta, used for pante, completely, in an absolute manner; gue, path, way; ele, solar light. Rabelais' gigantic hero therefore expresses the perfect knowledge of the solar path, that is to say the universal way.

## **BODYGUARDS V**

"Wearing a matron headdress with a throat collar" ---so says Dubuisson-Aubenay in his Itinerary in Brittany, in 1636 --- Michel Colombe's Temperance is endowed with attributes similar to those given her by Cohin. According to the latter, she is dressed in simple clothes, a bridle with bit in one hand and in the other, the pendulum of a clock or the balance wheel of a watch". Other statues represent her holding a bridle or cup. "She quite often seems", says Noel, "to be leaning on an inverted vase, with a bridle in her hand or mixing wine with water". The elephant, considered the most sober of animals, is her symbol. Ripa gives two of her emblems: one of a woman with a turtle on her head, holding a bridle and silver money; the other of a woman in the act of steeping, with tongs, some red hot iron into a water-filled vase.

In Her left hand our statue holds a case decorated with a weight-driven clock, a customary model of the 16th century. It is shown that the dials of these instruments had only one hand, as is seen in this very beautiful figure of the period. The clock, used to measure time, is taken for the hieroglyph of time itself and looked upon, like the hourglass, as the principal emblem of the old Saturn (Plate XXXVII).

Some rather superficial observers thought to recognize a lantern in the clock of Temperance, even though it is quite easy to identify. The mistake would barely modify the deep signification of the symbol, because the meaning of the lantern

completes that of the clock. Indeed while the lantern illuminates because it bears light, the clock appears to be the dispenser of this light, which is not received in one sitting, but little by little, progressively, in the course of years and with the help of time. Experience, light, and truth are philosophical synonyms; and nothing, if not age, can allow us to acquire experience, light and truth.

Therefore, such is Time represented, sole master of wisdom, under the appearance of an old man, and philosophers in the old and weary posture of men having worked a long time to obtain it. It is this necessity for time or experience that Francois Rabelais emphasizes in his Appendix to the last chapter of the fifth book of Pantagruel when he writes: "Therefore, when you philosophers, God guiding, accompanying them by some clear lantern, will devote themselves to careful research and investigation as is natural to humans (and because of this quality Herodotus and Homer have been called Alphestes (1), i.e., seekers and inventors) they will find the answer made by the sage Thales of Amasis, king of the Egyptians, to be true, when he was asked which thing contained the most prudence: Time, he said, for through Time have all latent things been invented and through Time they will be; and this is the reason why the ancients called Saturn Time, the father of Truth, and Truth the daughter of Time. They will also without fail recognize all the science, they and their predecessors have acquired, to be but the smallest part of that which is, and which they know not".

But the esoteric scope of Temperance lies entirely in the bridle which she holds in her right hand. It is with the bridle that the horse is driven; by means of this bit, the cavalier directs his mount as he pleases. So the bridle can be considered as the essential instrument, the mediator placed between the will of the cavalier and the progress of the horse, toward the proposed objective. This means, of which the image has been chosen among the constituent parts of the harness, is designated in hermeticism by the name of cabala. So that the special expression of the bridle, that of restraint and of direction, allow one to identify and recognize, under a single symbolic form, Temperance and the Cabalistic Science.

About this science, a remark is called for which, we believe, is all the more founded because the uninformed student tends to confuse the hermetic cabala to the system of allegorical interpretation which the Jews claim to have received through tradition and which they call Kabbala. In fact, the two terms have nothing in common, save their pronunciation. The Hebrew Kabbala is only concerned with the Bible; it is therefore strictly limited to sacred exegesis and hermeneutics. Hermetic cabala concerns books, texts and documents of the esoteric sciences of Antiquity, of the Middle Ages and of modern times. While the Hebraic kabbala is but a process based on the decomposition and explanation of each word or letter, the hermetic cabala on the contrary is a genuine language. And as the great majority of didactic treatises of ancient sciences are written in cabala or as they use this language in their essential passages; as the Great Art itself, on Arsephius' own confession, is completely cabalistic, the reader cannot understand any of it if he does not possess at least the first elements of the secret idiom. In the Hebrew kabbala, three meanings can be discovered in each sacred word, hence there are three different interpretations of kabbalas. The first, called Gematria involves the analysis of the numeric or arithmetic value of the letters composing the word; the second, called Notarikon, establishes the meaning of each letter considered separately; the third, Temura (variation, permutation) uses certain transpositions of letters. This last system, which seems to have been the oldest, dates from the time when the Alexandrian school flourished, and was created by some Jewish philosophers anxious to accommodate the Greek and Oriental philosophical speculations with the text of sacred books. We would not be particularly surprised if the fatherhood of this method was due to the Jew Philo, whose reputation was great at the beginning of our era because he is the first philosopher mentioned as having attempted to identify a true religion with philosophy. It is known that he tried to reconcile the writings of Plato with the Hebrew texts by interpreting the latter allegorically, which agrees perfectly with the objective pursued by the Hebrew kabbala. Be that as it may, according to the works of very serious authors, we cannot assign to the Jewish system a date much earlier than the Christian era even by moving back the point of departure of this interpretation to the Greek Septuagint (238 BC). The hermetic cabala however was used long before that period by the Pythagoreans and the disciples of Thales of Miletis (640-560 BC), founder of the Ionian school: Anaximander, Pherecyde of Syros, Anaximene of Miletis, Heraclitus of Ephesus, Anaxagoras of Clazomene, etc., in a word, by all the philosophers and Greek savants, as the Papyrus of Leyden testifies.

What is also generally unknown is that the cabala contained and preserved the essential part of the mother tongue of the Pelasgians, a deformed, albeit not destroyed, language, within primitive Greek; it is the root language of Western idioms and particularly of French, whose Pelasgian origin is undeniably verified; an admirable language, of which it suffices to know a few smatterings to easily rediscover, in the different European dialects, the real meaning, altered by time and by the migrations of peoples, from the original language.

Conversely, to Jewish kabbala, created out of nothing so as to veil, doubtlessly, that which the sacred text showed too clearly, hermetic cabala is a precious key allowing whoever possesses it to open the doors of the sanctuaries, of these closed books which are the works of traditional science, to extract their spirit, to see their secret meaning. Known to Jesus and his apostles (it unfortunately caused St Peter's first denial), the cabal was used in the Middle Ages by philosophers, scientists,

men of letters, and diplomats. Knights belonging to Orders and knights-errant, troubadours, trouveres, and minstrels, traveling students of the famous school of magic at Salamanc, who we call Venusbergs because they were said to come from the mountain of Venus, discussed among themselves in the language of the gods, also called the gay science or gay knowledge, our hermetic cabala (2). Furthermore, it bears the name and the spirit of Chivalry, the true name of which was revealed to us by Dante's mystical book. The Latin word Caballus and the Greek word [\*464-1] (kaballes), both mean pack-horse; our cabala truly carries a considerable weight, the "pack" and sum total of ancient knowledge and of medieval chivalry or cabalery or cabala (3), the heavy baggage of esoteric truth transmitted by its intermediary throughout the ages. It was the secret language of "cabaliers", horsemen, and cavaliers. The initiates and intellectuals of Antiquity knew it. The ones and the others, so as to reach fullness of knowledge, metaphorically rode the "cavale" (the mare), the horse, spiritual vehicle whose typical image is that of Pegasus, the winged horse of the Greek poets. It alone gave the chosen one access to unknown regions, and offered them the possibility to see all and know all throughout space and time, ether and life. Pegasus, in Greek [\*464-2] (pegasos), takes its name from the word [\*464-3] (pege), source, or spring, because it is said that it caused the fountain of Hippocrene to spring out with one kick; but the truth is of another nature. It is because the cabala provides the cause, gives the principle, reveals the source of sciences that its hieroglyphic animal received the special and characteristic name it now bears. To know the cabala is to speak the language of Pegasus, the language of the horse, of which Twist expressively indicates, in one of his allegorical Travels, the effective value and the esoteric power.

Mysterious language of the philosophers and disciples of Hermes, the cabala dominates the entire didactics of the Great Art, just as symbolism embraces all its iconography. Art and literature thus offer to the hidden science the added support of their own resources and their expressive faculties. Actually, and in spite of their specific characteristics and their separate techniques, the cabala and symbolism use different paths to reach the same goal and to merge into the same teaching. They are the two master pillars erected on the corner stones of the philosophical foundation, which support the alchemical fronton of the temple of wisdom.

All idioms can give refuge to the traditional meaning of the cabalistic words, because the cabala, deprived of texture and syntax, easily adapts itself to any language, without altering its special genius. It brings to the different natural languages the substances of its thought with the original meaning of the names and of the qualities. So that any language always remains likely to carry it, to incorporate it, and consequently to become cabalistic by the double meanings which it takes on as a result.

Apart from its pure alchemical role, the cabala was used in the elaboration of several literary masterpieces, which many dilettantes can appreciate, without however guessing what treasures they hide under the attractiveness, the charm, the nobleness of style. This is because the authors ---whether they are named Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Plato, Dante, or Goethe --- were all great initiates. They wrote their immortal works not so much to leave to posterity imperishable monuments of the human genius, but rather to instruct it in the sublime knowledge of which they were the depositories and which they had to transmit in their entirety. We should judge in that way, apart from the already quoted masters, the marvelous artisans of chivalrous poems, jests, etc. belonging to the cycle of the Round Table and of the Grail; the works of Francois Rabelais and the ones by De Cyrano Bergerac; Don Quixote by Miquel Cervantes; Gulliver's Travels by Swift; the Dream of Polyphilus by Francisco Colonna; the Tales of Mother Goose by Perrault; the Songs of the King of Navarre by Thibault de Champagne; The Devil as a Preicator, a curious Spanish book of which we do not know the author, and many other books which, albeit less famous, are not lesser in interest nor in knowledge.

We will limit at this point our account of the solar cabala, as we received no permission to give a complete treatise of it, nor to teach its rule. It was enough to point out the important position it occupies in the study of the "secrets of nature", and the necessity for the beginner to find its key. But, in order for it to be useful to him as much as possible, we will give, as an example, the version in a clear language of an original cabalistic text of Naxagoras (4). Let us hope that the son of science discovers there the manner to interpret the sealed books, and knows how to take advantage of such a little veiled teaching. In his allegory, the Adept strove to describe the ancient and simple path, the only one which once upon a time the old alchemical masters used to follow.

( [A] ---English Translation of the French Translation done in the 18th century from the original German text of Naxagoras)

Very Detailed Description of the Golden Sand found near Zwickau, in Misnia near Niederhohendorff, and other neighboring places by J.N.V.E.J.E. ac 5 Pct. ALC. 1715.

( [B] ---English Translation of the French Version, in clear language, of Naxagoras' cabalistic text)

Very Detailed Description of the manner of extracting, and releasing, the Spirit from Gold, enclosed in the vile mineral matter, so as to build the sacred temple of Light (5) and to discover other analogous secrets by J.N.V.E.J.E. containing 5

points of Alchemy, 1715.

[A] ---Almost two years ago, a man from these mines obtained from a third person a small extract of a manuscript in quarto, about an inch thick, which came furthermore from two Italian travelers who are also named therein. [B] ---It is almost two years since a worker skilled in the metallic art obtained through a third agent (6), an extract of the four elements, manually obtained by assembling two mercuries of the same origin which their excellence caused to be called Roman, and which were always named that way. [A] ---This extract was thoroughly examined by M.N.N. already a long time ago, because the latter intended to do a lot of work using a divining rod. He finally succeeded in touching that which he was looking for. Here is the extract from this manuscript: [B] By means of this extract known from Antiquity and well studied by the Modems, great things can be achieved, provided one has received illumination from the Holy Ghost. It is then that one succeeds in touching with one's hands what one is looking for. Here is the manual technique for this extract: [A] ---I. A borough called Hartsmanngrun, near Zwickau. Under the burough, many good grains. The mine there is in lodes. [B] ---I. A scoria surfaces above the combination, formed in fire, of the pure parts of the vile mineral matter, Under the scoria, a friable, granulous water can be found. It is the lode of the metallic ore. [A] ---II. Kohl-Stein, near Zwickau,. There is a good lode of lead grits and marcasite. Further away, in Gabel, there is a smith called Morgen-Stern who knows where there is a good mine and underground tunnel into which crevices were dug. In it are yellow settings where the metal is malleable. [B] ---Such is the Stone Kohl (7), concretion of the pure parts of the manure or the vile mineral Matter. It is a friable and granulous lode which is born from iron, tin, and lead. It alone bears the imprint of the solar Ray. It is the expert artisan in the art of steel-work. The sages call it the Morning Star. It knows what the artist is looking for, It is the underground path which leads to the yellow, malleable and pure gold. A difficult path cut with crevices and filled with obstacles. [A] ---III. When going from Schneeberg to the castle called Wissembourg, some water comes out of it towards the mountain; it falls into the Mulde. By walking in the Mulde, facing this water, there is a fish pond close to the river, and beyond this fish pond, there is a little bit of water where some marcasite can be found which will be worth all the trouble that we took going there. [B] ---Having this stone, called the Mount of the Plyers (8), climb towards the White Fortress. It is the living water which falls from the disaggregated body into an impalpable powder under the effect of a natural trituration, comparable to that of a Grinding stone, This living and white water agglomerated in the center into a crystalline stone, of a color similar to whitened iron, and it is greatly worth the effort spent on the operation. [A] ---IV. At Kauner-Zehl, on the Gott Mountain, two leagues from Schoneck, there is an excellent sand of copper. [B] ---IV. This luminous and crystalline salt, first being of the Divine Body, in a second stage, will form a s a coppery glass. It is our copper or brass, and the green lion. [A] ---V. At Grals, near Vooigtland, below Schloss-berg, is a garden where there is a rich gold mine as I have remarked a little while ago. Take good note of this. [B] This calcined sand will give the golden bough its tinct. The young sprouting of the sun will be born in the Land of fire. It is the burnt substance of the stone, the closed rock of the garden (9) where our golden fruit ripens, as I found out recently. Take good note of this. [A] ---VI. Between Werda and Laugenberndorff, there is a fish pond which is called Mansteich. Below this fish pond, an old fountain can be seen, on the lower part of the meadow. In this fountain, very good gold grains can be found. [B] ---VI. Between this product and the second one which is stronger and better, it is useful to go back to the Pond of Dead Light (10), though the extract that has been put back into its original matter, You will then find the living water dilated and without consistency. That which will come out of it is the Ancient Fountain (11), generating vigor, and capable of changing vile metals into gold grains. [A] ---VII. In the woods of Werds, there is a ditch, which is called the Langgrab. By going above this ditch you can find in the ditch itself, a pit. Going inside this pit, for the length of an alder, towards the mountain, you will find a gold lode of the length of a span. [B] ---VII. In the Green Forest, is hidden the strong, the robust and the best of all (12). There is also the pond of the Crayfish (13). Follow it: the substance will separate by itself. Leave the trench: its source is at the bottom of a cave where the stone is growing inside the ore-bearing layer. [A] ---VIII. At Hundes-Hubel, there is a pit in which there are massive amounts of gold grains. This pit is in the village near a fountain where the people go to ge water to drink. [B] ---VIII. During the augmenting stage, by reiterating, you will see the source filled with brilliant, pure gold granulations. It is in the scoria, or in the matrix, enclosing the Fountain of dry water, creator of gold, which the metallic people avidly drink. [A] ---IX. After having made several trips to Zwickau, to the small town of Schlott, to Saume, to Crouzoll, we stopped at Brethmullen, where this place used to be located. On the path, which once upon a time led to Weinberg, and is called Barenstein, facing or towards the mountain, in the direction of Barendstein, arriving from the back, and facing the setting sun, to the fibula, which was there once upon a time, there is an old well through which a lode is passing. It is strong and quite rich in good gold from Hungary and sometimes even in gold from Arabia. The mark of the lode is on four of the separators of metals "Auff-seigers vier", and it is written near "Auff-seigers eins". It is a true mother lode. [B] ---After several experiments on the vile mineral matter, until the yellow color, or the fixation of the body, and from there to the crowned Sun, we had to wait until the matte had entirely cooked in water, according to the old method. This long coction, observed in bygone days, leads to the luminous Castle or the brilliant Fortress, which is this heavy stone, the occident reached, albeit not gone beyond, by our appropriate manner (14). For the truth comes out of the old well of this powerful tincture, rich in gold seeds as pure as the gold of Hungary and sometimes as Arabian gold. The sign, formed of four rays, indicates and seals the mineral reducer. It is the greatest of all

tinctures. In order to close, on a less austere note, this study of the secret language designated under the name of hermetic or solar cabala, we will show how far historic credulity can go, when a blind ignorance prompts us to attribute to certain individuals that which only belonged to allegory and legend. The historic facts which we offer to the meditation of the reader are those of a monarch in Roman antiquity. We will not have to remark on their bizarre characteristics, not to underline the cabalistic relations, as they are so evident and expressive.

The famous Roman emperor Vavius Avitus Bassianus, greeted by soldiers, ---no one really knew why ---with the names of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (15), was nicknamed ---no one really knows why either ---Elagabalus or Heliogabalus (16). "Born in 204", says the Encyclopedia, "and died in Rome in 222; he came from a Syrian family (17) dedicated to the cult of the Sun at Emesa (18). He himself, when very young, was a high priest of this god, who was adored in the shape of a black stone (19) and under the name of Elagabalus. He was supposed to be son of Caracalla. His mother, Saemias (20) was part of the court and was below calumny. Be that as it may, the beauty of the young high priest was seduced to the legion of Emeses who proclaimed him August emperor at the age of fourteen. The emperor Macrinus marched against him, but was beaten and killed.

"Heliogabalus' reign was nothing save the triumph of Eastern superstitions and debaucheries. There are no infamies or cruelties which were not invented by this singular emperor with rouged cheeks, and a trailing robe. He brought his black stone to Rome, and forced the Senate and all the people to adore it publicly. Having removed from Carthage the statue of Coelestis, which represents the Moon, he celebrated with great ceremony, its marriage to his black stone which represented the Sun. He created a senate of women, married successively four women, among whom a vestal virgin, and assembled one day in his palace all the prostitutes of Rome to whom he addressed a discourse on the duties of their estate. Praetorians slaughtered Heliogabalus and threw his body into the Tiber River. He was 18 years old and had been emperor for four years".

While this may not be History, it is nevertheless a beautiful story, full of Pantagruelism, Without failing its esoteric mission, it certainly would have, under Rabelais' brisk pen and warm and colorful style, gained in flavor, vividness and truculence.

(1) In Greek, [\*462-1] (alphester) or [\*463-2] (alpestes) means inventor, industrious, from [\*462-3] (alphe) discovery, which has given the verb [\*462-4] (alphano), to invent, to find through seeking. (2) These traveling students wore about the neck, as a sign of recognition and affiliation, a yellow thread of knitted wool or silk, to which the Liber Vagaborum (Book of Wanderings) published around 1510, and attributed to Th. Murner or Sebastian Brant, and the Schimpf und Ernst (Ignominy and Seriousness), dated 1519, bear witness. (3) Translator's Note: There is a cabalistic pun here. The French chevalier (knight), and cavalier (rider, horsemen) are very close. The author invents the term cabalier which has also a pronunciation very close to the other two, to indicate one practicing hermetic cabala. The three words sound very similar in French. (4) This opusculum is inserted at the end of Naxagoras' treatise, called Alchymia Denudate (Alchemy Unveiled). We translated it according to a French manuscript, translated from a German original. (5) The sacred Temple of Light is the name given to the philosophers' stone ---our microcosm, in relationship to the temple of Jerusalem, the image of the universe or of the macrocosm (6) The secret fire. (7) Kohl-Stein (Coal Stone in German was translated as Stone Kohl in French). Also called Al-khol, Alcohol, eau-de-vie of the Sages; it is the Fire Stone of Basil Valentine. (8) Because of its signature; plyers in Greek is said [\*467-1] (labis) from [\*467-2] (lanbano), meaning to obtain, to collect, and also to conceive and to become pregnant. (9) The Garden of Hesperides. (10) The Fountain of Youth, first the Universal medicine, then the Projection Powder. (11) ditto. (12) See The Cosmopolite. The King of the Art is hidden "in the green forest of the nymph Venus". (13) Constellation of the Zodiac of the Philosophers, sign of the increase of fire. (14) Graphic symbol of the philosophical vitriol, The points of suspension are part of the original text. (15) Cabalistically, the combination of the first matter, of the Olympian or divine gold, and of the mercury. The latter, in the allegorical accounts, always bears the name of Antony, Antonin, Antolin, etc, with the epithet of pilgrim, messenger, or traveler. (16) It means the Horse of the Sun, the one which carries the science, the solar cabala. (17) [\*469-1] (suria) or [\*469-2] (sisura), means a coarse skin covered with hair, the future golden fleece. (18) [\*469-3] (Emesis) means vomiting; it is the scoria of the previous text. (19) The Stone of the Philosophers, the first matter, subject of the art drawn from the original chaos, of black color, but primum ens, formed by nature, of the philosophers' stone. (20) A few historians called her Seriamira ---half miraculous. At once vile and precious, abject and sought after, she is the prostitute of the Work. Wisdom caused her to say about herself: Nigra sum sed formosa (I am black but I am beautiful).

## BODYGUARDS VI

Before begin raised to the dignity of a cardinal virtue, Prudence was for a long time an allegorical divinity to which the Ancients gave a two-faced head ---a formula exactly reproduced by our statue and in the most successful fashion. Her front face offers the features of a young woman with very pure lines, and the back face is that of an old man, whose features full of nobility and gravity, continue into the silky waves of a river-like beard. Replica of Janus, the son of Apollo and of the

nymph Creusa, this admirable figure is in no way inferior to the three others in majesty or interest.

Standing up, she is represented with her shoulders covered with the ample mantle of the philosopher, which opens widely on a blouse with a marked herring-bone pattern. A simple shawl protects the nape of her neck; arranged as a headpiece around the old face, it is tied in the front, thus showing the neck ornamented with a pearl necklace. The wide-pleated skirt is maintained by a heavy tasseled girdle but of a rather monastic character. Her left hand surrounds the handle of a convex mirror in which she seems to enjoy seeing herself, while her right hand maintains the two branches of a dry compass spread apart. A snake, whose body seems to be coiled upon itself, is lying at her feet (Plate XXXVIII).

This noble figure is for us a moving and suggestive personification of the simple, fertile, multiple and diversified Nature under the harmonious outer appearance, the elegance and the perfection of the forms with which it ornaments its most humble productions. Her mirror, which is that of Truth was always considered by the classical authors as the hieroglyph for the universal matter, and in particular was recognized among them as a sign of the very substance of the Great Work. Subject of the Sages, Mirror of the Art are hermetic synonyms which veil from common men the true name of the secret mineral. It is in this mirror, say the masters, that man can see nature unveiled. Thanks to this mirror, he can know the ancient truth in its traditional realism. For nature never shows herself to the seeker, but only through the intermediary of this mirror which holds its reflected image. And to explicitly show that it is indeed our microcosm and the little world of sapience, the sculptor fashioned the mirror as a plano-convex lens, which has the property of reducing forms while maintaining their respective proportions. The indication of the hermetic subject, containing in its volume all that which the vast universe encloses, consequently seems deliberately premeditated, imposed by an imperious esoteric necessity, the interpretation of which is not questionable. So that by patiently studying this unique and primitive substance, chaotic fragment, and reflection of the great world, the artist can acquire the elementary notions of an unknown science, penetrate an unexplored sphere, prolific in discoveries, abundant in revelations, lavish in marvels, and finally receive the invaluable gift that God reserves for elite souls: the light of wisdom.

And so, under the outer veil of Prudence, appears the mysterious image of old alchemy, and so are we initiated, by the attributes of the former, into the secrets of the latter. Further, the practical symbolism of our science is concentrated in the presentation of a formula containing two terms, two essentially philosophical virtues: prudence and simplicity. Prudentia and Simplicitas, such was the favorite motto of the masters Basil Valentine and Senior Zadith. As a matter of fact, one of the woodcuts of the treatise on Azoth represents, at the feet of Atlas and supporting the cosmic sphere, a bust of Janus --- Prudentia ---and a young child spelling the alphabet ---Simplicitas. But, while simplicity above all belongs to nature, as the first and foremost of her prerogatives, man, on the other hand, seems gifted with the qualities grouped under the general denomination of prudence: foresight, circumspection, intelligence, sagacity, experience, etc. And although all demand, in order to reach their perfection, the help and the support of time, the ones being innate and the others acquired, it would be possible to provide, in this sense, a likely reason for the double mask of Prudence. The truth, less abstract, seems more closely bound to the alchemical positivism of the attributes of our cardinal Virtue. It is generally recommended to "unite a healthy and vigorous old man with a young and beautiful virgin". If this chemical wedding, a metallic child must be born and receive the qualifier of androgynous, because it partakes both of the nature of sulphur, its father, and of that of mercury, its mother. But there is in this place a secret that we have not discovered among the best and the most sincere authors. The operation, thus presented, seems simple and quite natural. Yet, we find ourselves blocked for several years, in the impossibility of getting anything out of it. It is because the philosophers skillfully welded two successive works into one, with all the more ease because they are similar operations leading to parallel results. When the sages speak of their androgynous one, they mean to indicate by this word the compound artificially formed from sulphur and mercury, put into close contact, or according to the hallowed chemical expression, simply combined. This therefore indicates preliminary possession of a sulphur already isolated or extracted, and not of a body directly generated by nature, after the conjunction of the old man and the young virgin. That is why we are taking all the opportunities afforded us to speak of the beginning, preferably at the end of the Work. In this, we are following Basil Valentine's authorized advice when he says that: "whoever possesses the matter will always find the pot to cook it in, and whoever possesses flour should have no concern about being able to make bread". Now, elementary logic leads us to research the parents of sulphur and mercury if we want to obtain, by their union, the philosophical androgynous one, also called Rebis, Compositum de composites, animated Mercury, etc., the very matter of the Elixir. Of these chemical parents of the sulphur and mercury principles, one always remains the same, and that is the virgin mother; as for the old man he must, once his role is complete, give his place the one who is younger than he. And so these two conjunctions will each engender a child of different sex: the sulfur, of dry and igneous complexion, and the mercury of a "lymphatic and melancholic temperament". This is what Philalethes and d'Espagnet want to teach when they say that "our virgin can be married twice without losing anything of her virginity". Others express themselves in a very obscure manner and are content to assert that "the sun and the moon of the sky are not the heavenly bodies of the philosophers". Whereby it must be understood that the artist will never find the partners of the stone, directly prepared in

nature, and that he will have to form first the hermetic sun and moon, if he does not want to be deprived of the precious fruit resulting from their union. We believe we said enough on the topic. Few words suffice for the wise, and those who have worked for a long time will know to take advantage of our opinions. We write for all, but all cannot be called to understand us, because it is forbidden for us to speak more openly.

Coiled upon itself, its head tilted backwards in the spasms of agony, the snake, which we see represented at the foot of our statue, is said to be one of the attributes of Prudence; it is also said to be of a rather circumspect nature. We do not dispute this; but it can be agreed that this reptile, represented dying, must be so for the sake of symbolism, for its inertia does not allow it to exercise such a faculty. It is therefore reasonable to believe that the emblem has another meaning, quite different from the one usually afforded to it. In hermeticism, its meaning is analogous to that of the dragon, which the sages adopted as one of the representatives of mercury. Let us recall Flamel's crucified snake, the one in Notre-Dame de Paris, those on the caduceus, the one on the meditation crucifix (which emerges out of a human skull serving as a base for the divine cross), the Aesculapian snake, the Greek Ouroboros ---the serpent devouring its tail, *serpens qui caudam devoravit* ---in charge of translating the closed circuit

o the little universe which is the Work, etc. Now, all these reptiles are dead or moribund, starting with the ouroboros devouring itself, to those of the caduceus, killed with the blow of a stick, not forgetting Eve's Tempter, whose head shall be bruised by her seed (Gen. 3:15). They all express the same idea, all contain the same doctrine, obey the same tradition. And the snake, the hieroglyph for the primordial alchemical principle, can justify the assertion of the sages, who affirm that all they are looking for is contained in the mercury. It is truly the mercury which is the motor, the animator of the great work, because it starts it, maintains it, perfects it, and completes it. It is it, the mystical circle of which the sulphur, the embryo of mercury, marks the central point, around which it accomplishes its rotation, thus drawing the graphic sign of the sun, the father of light, of the spirit, and of gold, the dispenser of all the earthly goods.

But while the dragon represents the scaly and volatile mercury, the product of the superficial purification of the subject, the snake, deprived of wings, remains the hieroglyph for the common, pure and cleansed mercury, extracted from the body of Magnesia, or first matter. This is the reason why certain allegorical statues of Prudence have as an attribute the snake fixed on a mirror. And this mirror, signature of the dross mineral provided by nature, becomes luminous while reflecting the light, that is while manifesting its vitality in the snake, or in mercury, which it held hidden under its coarse envelope. Thus, thanks to this primitive living and vivifying agent, it becomes possible to give back its life to the sulfur of dead metals. By performing the operation, the mercury, dissolving the metal, takes hold of the sulfur, animates it, dies and yields to its own vitality. This is what the masters mean to teach when they command to kill the living in order to resurrect the dead, to corporify the spirits and to reanimate the corporifications. When in possession of this living and active sulfur, said to be philosophical so as to mark its regeneration, it will suffice to unite it, in the proper ratio, to the same living mercury, in order to obtain by the interpenetration of these living principles, the philosophical or animated mercury, the matter of the philosophers' stone. If that which we have tried to translate above has been well understood, and if that which is said here is compared to it, the first two doors of the Work will be easily opened.

As a summary, whoever possesses an extended knowledge of the practice will notice that the main secret of the Work resides in the artifice of the dissolution. And as it is necessary to perform several of these operations ---different as to their goals, similar as to their technique -- there are many secondary secrets which, properly speaking, truly only constitute one. All the art is then reduced to dissolution, everything depends on it and the manner in which it is performed. This is the *secretum secretorum* (secret of secrets), the key of the Magistry, hidden under the enigmatic axiom *solve et coagula*: dissolve the body) and coagulate (the spirit). This can be done in one operation including two dissolutions, one violent, dangerous, and unknown, the other easy, comfortable, and often performed in a laboratory.

Having described the first of these dissolutions elsewhere and having given, in an allegorical, albeit slightly veiled style, the essential details, we shall not dwell on the subject any longer (1). But so as to specify its characteristics, we will draw the worker's attention to that which distinguishes it from chemical operations falling into the same denomination. This indication should be quite useful.

We have said, and we repeat, that the purpose of the philosophical dissolution is to obtain the sulphur which, in the Magistry, plays the role of a forming agent by coagulating mercury which is in turn added to it, a property which it owes to its ardent, igneous, and dessicating nature. "Every dry thing avidly drinks its own humidity", says an old alchemical axiom. But this sulfur, during its first extraction, is never stripped of the metallic mercury with which it constitutes the central core of the metal, called essence or seed. Hence the sulphur, preserving the specific qualities of the dissolved body, is in reality by the purest and most subtle part of this very body. Consequently, we are entitled to consider, with the greatest number of masters, that the philosophical dissolution achieves the absolute purification of imperfect metals. There are no examples,

whether spagyric or chemical, of an operation likely to give such a result. All the purifications of metals treated by modern methods are only used to rid the metals of the superficial, less tenacious impurities. And these, brought from the mine or coming along during the contrary, the alchemical process, dissociating and destroying the mass of heterogeneous matters fixed on the core, composed of very pure sulfur and mercury, ruins the greatest part of the body and makes it resist any ulterior reduction. Thus, for instance, a kilogram of excellent iron of Sweden, or electrolytic iron, provides a proportion of radical metal, of a perfect homogeneity and purity, that varies between 7.24 and 7.32 grams. This very bright body is endowed with a magnificent purple coloration ---which is the color of pure iron ---analogous to the iodine vapors in terms of its brightness and intensity. It should be noticed that the sulfur of iron, once isolated, being incarnate red, and is mercury being of a light blue color, the purple resulting from their combination, reveals the totality of the metal. Subjected to the philosophical dissolution, silver abandons few impurities, in relation to its volume, and yields a yellow colored body almost as beautiful as that of gold, though it does not possess its strong density. Already, and we have taught it at the beginning of this book, the simple chemical dissolution of silver in nitric acid detaches from the metal a minimal fraction of pure silver, of a golden color, which is enough to prove the possibility of a more energetic action and the certainty of the result which can be expected.

No one could contest the significance and the preponderance of the dissolution, in chemistry as well as in alchemy. It is in the first rank of laboratory operations, and it can be said that most chemical works depend on it. In alchemy, the entire work only consists in a succession of diverse solutions. Consequently we cannot be surprised by the answer provided by the Spirit of Mercury to Brother Albert in a dialogue by Basil Valentine given in his book *The Twelve Keys*: "How could I have this body?", asks Albert, and the Spirit answers: "Through dissolution". Whatever the path used, wet or dry, the dissolution is absolutely necessary. What is fusion, if not a solution of the metal in its own water? Similarly in quartation, as well as the production of metallic alloys, are true chemical solutions of metals, ones into others. Mercury, liquid at room temperature, is nothing but a molten or dissolved metal. All the distillations, extractions, purifications, require a previous solution, and are only performed after the completion of the first. What about reduction? Is it not also the result of two successive solutions, that of the body and that of a reducing agent? If you dip a sliver of zinc in a first solution of gold trichloride, a second solution begins right away: that of zinc, and the gold, reduced, is precipitated as an amorphous powder. The cupellation also demonstrates the necessity of the first solution ---that of the precious metal as an alloy of, or impure form with, lead, while a second solution, the fusion of superficial oxides which have been formed, eliminates them and completes the operation. As for the clearly alchemical, special operations ---imbibition, digestion, maturation, circulation, putrefaction, etc. ---they depend upon a former solution and represent as many different aspects of one and the same cause.

But what distinguishes the philosophical solution from all other ones, and provides it, to say the least, with a true originality, is that the solvent does not assimilate itself to the basic metal which is presented to it; it only separates its molecules, by breaking their cohesion, takes hold of the fragments of pure sulfur which they can retain and leave the residue, formed by the greater part of the inert, disaggregated, sterile and completely irreducible body. We could not then obtain a metallic salt from it, as it is done with the help of chemical aids. Furthermore, the philosophical solvent, known since antiquity, has only been used in alchemy by operators expert in a special twist of hand required for its use. It is the latter that the sages talk about when they say that the Work is accomplished by only one thing. Contrary to the chemists and spagyricists, who have a collection of various acids at their disposal, the alchemists only possess a single agent which received many names, of which the latest is Alkahest. To note the compositions of simple or complex liquors called Alkahest, would take us too far, for each chemist of the 17th and 18th centuries had his own formula. Among the best artists who have seriously studied the mysterious solvent of Jean-Baptiste Van Helmont and of Paracelsus, we will only mention: Thomson (*Epilogismi Chimici*, Leyden, 1673); Welling (*Opera Cabalistica*, Hamburg, 1735); Tackenius (*Hippocrates Chemicus*, Venice, 1666); Digby (*Secreta Medica*, Frankfurt, 1676); Starkey (*Pyrotechnia*, Rouen, 1706); Viganì (*Medulla Chemiae*, Danzig, 1682); Christian Langius (*Opera Omnia*, Frankfurt, 1688); Langelot (*Salamander*, vid. Tilleman, Hamburg, 1673); Helbigius (*Introitus ad Physicum Inauditam*, Hamburg, 1680); Frederic Hoffman (*De Acido et Viscido*, Frankfurt, 1689); Baron Schroeder (*Pharmacopoea*, Lyons, 1649); Blanckard (*Theatrum Chemicum*, Leipzig, 1700); Quercetanus (*Hermes Medicinalis*, Paris, 1604); Beguin (*Elements de Chymie*, Paris, 1615); J.F. Henckel (*Flora Saturnisans*, Paris, 1760).

Pott, one of Stahl's students, also mentions a solvent, which, judging by its properties, would lead us to believe in its alchemical reality, if we did not know its true nature better. The way our chemist describes it; the care with which he keeps its composition secret; the intended generalization of qualities which he usually strives to specify, would tend to prove it. "What is left now", he says, "is to speak of an oily and anonymous solvent, of which no chemists I know made a clear mention (2). It is the limpid, volatile, oily, inflammable liquor, like the spirit of wine, acid like a good vinegar, and which goes over during distillation in the form of cloudy flakes. This liquor, after it has been digested and cohobated on the



metals, and above all after they themselves have been calcined, dissolves most of them; it extracts a very red tincture out of gold, and when it is taken off the surface of the gold, a resinous matter remains, that it entirely soluble in the spirit of wine, which by that acquires a beautiful red color. The residue is totally irreducible, and I am convinced that salt of gold could be prepared from it. This solvent combines itself equally with aqueous or fatty liquors. It converts corals into a sea-green liquor, which seems to be their first state. It is a liquor saturated with sal ammoniac and yet greasy at the same time, and to say what I really think about it, it is the genuine menstruum of Weidenfeld, or the wine spirit of the philosophers, since the white and red wines of Raymond Lully can be extracted from this same matter. This is what causes Henry Khunrath to give his Lunar components the name of fire-water, and water-fire, in the Ampitheatrum, because it was certain that Junchken was seriously mistaken when he attempted to convince us that it is in the spirit of wine that one must look for the anonymous solvent, of which we speak. This solvent yields a curious spirit of urine, which seems in some instances to be entirely different from regular urine spirits. It also yields a kind of butter which has the consistency and whiteness of antimony butter. It is extremely bitter and of an average volatility. Both these products are very appropriate, the one like the other, to extract metals. The preparation of our solvent, although obscure and hidden is, nevertheless, very easy to make. But since I have known it and worked on it a very short time, I will be excused from not saying more about this matter; I still have a great number of experiments to perform before I can ascertain all of its properties. Besides, without speaking of Weidenfeld's *De Secretis Adeptorum*, Dickenson seems to have discovered this menstruum in his treatise entitled *Chrysopoeia*".

Without contesting Pott's probity or the veracity of his description, and even less the description Weidenfeld gives under cabalistic terms, it is unquestionable that the solvent of which Pott speaks is not that of the Sages. Indeed, the chemical character of its reactions and the liquid state in which it is presented over-abundantly testifies to this fact. Those who are learned in the qualities of the subject know that the universal solvent is a true mineral of dry and fibrous appearance, of solid and hard consistency and of crystalline texture. Therefore it is a salt and not a liquid or a flowing mercury, but a stone or a stony salt, hence its hermetic qualifiers of Saltpeter (sal petri, salt of stone), of salt of wisdom, or salt alembroth ---which certain chemists believe to be the product of the simultaneous sublimation of mercury deuterio-bichloride and ammonium chloride. And this is enough to discount Pott's solvent as being too removed from the metallic nature to be used to the best advantage in the work of the Magistry. Furthermore, if our author had kept the fundamental principle of the art in mind, he would have refrained from assimilating his particular liquor with the universal solvent. This principle indeed affirms that: Within the metals, through the metals, with the metals, can the metals be perfected. Whosoever strays from this primary truth, will never discover anything useful for the transmutation. Consequently, while the metal, according to the philosophical teaching and to the traditional doctrine, must first be dissolved, this must only be done with a metallic solvent, which will be appropriate for it and by nature very close to it. Only similars can act upon similars. Now, the best agent, extracted from our magnesia or subject, takes on the appearance of a metallic body, charged with metallic spirits, to better withdraw it from the greedy one's avidity, to give it all the possible names of metals, minerals, petrifications, and salts. Among these denominations, the most familiar is certainly that of Saturn, considered to be the metallic Adam. So we cannot better complete our instruction but by letting the philosophers speak who have very specially treated this matter. Here then is a translation of a rather suggestive chapter by Daniel Mylius (3), devoted to the study of Saturn, which reproduces the teachings of two famous adepts: Isaac Hollandus, and Theophrastus Paracelsus:

"Isaac Hollandus says in his *Vegetable Work*: Know, my son, that the stone of the philosophers must be made by means of Saturn, and that once it is obtained in its perfect state, it performs the projection both in the human body, internally as well as externally, and in the metals. Know also that in all vegetable works, there is no greater secret than in Saturn, for we find the putrefaction of gold only in Saturn where it is hidden. Saturn contains within it the honest gold, on which all philosophers agree, provided all its superfluities, i.e., its feces are removed from it, only then has it been purged. The outer is brought inside, the inner manifests outer, and that is its redness and then that is the honest Gold.

"Besides, Saturn easily enters into solution and coagulates similarly. It lends itself readily to the extraction of its mercury. It can be easily sublimated, so such an extent that it becomes the mercury of the sun. For Saturn contains within itself the gold which the Mercury needs, and its mercury is as pure as that of gold. For these reasons, I say that Saturn is, for our Work, by far preferable to gold; for if you want to extract mercury from gold, you will need more than a year to extract this body out of the sun, while you can extract mercury from Saturn in 27 days. Both metals are good, but you can assert with more certainty yet, that Saturn is the stone that the philosophers do not want to name and whose name until today has been hidden. For were its name known, many would have found it, who are eagerly looking for it, and this art would have become common and without much expense. Thus to avoid these drawbacks, the philosophers have hidden its name with great care. Some have enveloped it in marvelous parables, saying that Saturn is the vase to which nothing foreign must be added, except that which comes from it; in such a way that there is no man, however poor, who cannot be occupied with this Work, since it does not require great expense and little work and a few days are needed to obtain the Moon from it, and a

little bit later the Sun. We therefore find in Saturn everything necessary for the Work. In it is the perfect mercury, in it are all the colors of the world which can be manifested, in it is the true blackness, the whiteness, the redness and in it also is the weight.

"I therefore confide in you that it is easy after that to understand that Saturn is our philosophical stone, and that Bronze from which mercury and our stone can be extracted, in little time and without a lot of disbursements, using our brief art. And the stone we obtain from it is our Bronze, and the acute water, which is within it, is our stone. Here are the Stone and the Water about which philosophers have written mountains of books".

Theophrastus Paracelsus in the 5th Canon of Saturn says:

"Saturn speaks thus of its nature: the six (metals) were joined to me and infused their spirit into my decaying body; but they added to it that which they did not want and attributed it to me. But my brothers are spiritual and penetrate my body, which is fire, in such a way that I am consumed by fire, so that they (the metals), except for the two, the Sun and Moon, are purged by my water. My spirit is the water which softens all the congealed and sleeping bodies of my brothers. But my body conspires with the earth, to such an extent that, that which attaches itself to this earth, is rendered similar to it and brought back into its body. And I know nothing else in the world which can produce this as I can. Chemists must therefore abandon all other processes and stick to the resources that can be drawn from me.

"The Stone, which in me is cold, is my Water by means of which one can coagulate the spirit of the seven metals and the essence of the seventh, of the Sun or of the Moon, and with the grace of God, profits so much after three weeks that the menstruum of Saturn can be prepared, which will immediately dissolve the pearls. If the spirits of Saturn are melted in a solution, they immediately coagulate into a mass and pull out of the gold the animated oil; then by this means all metals and gems can be dissolved in one moment, which the philosopher will keep to himself as much as he will deem appropriate. But I want to remain as obscure on this point as I have been clear up to here".

To complete our study of Prudence and of the symbolic attributes of our science, we still must speak to the compass which Michel Colombe's beautiful statue holds in her right hand. We shall be brief about it. The mirror has already informed us on the subject of the art; the double face, on the necessary union of the subject with the chosen metal; the serpent, on the fatal death and the glorious resurrection of the body, resulting from this union. In turn, the compass will give us additional, indispensable indications which are that of its proportions. Without knowing them, it would be impossible to conduct and perfect the Work in a normal, regular, and precise fashion. This is what the compass expresses, whose branches not only are used for the proportional measures of distances among themselves as well as to their comparisons, but also for the perfect geometric drawing of the circumference, image of the completed hermetic cycle and Work. We have exposed, elsewhere in this book, what is meant under the terms of proportions or weights ---secret veiled under the form of the compass ---and we have shown that they contain a double notion ---that the weight of nature and that of the weights of art. We will not dwell on it, but simply say that the harmony resulting from the natural proportions which are forever mysterious, can be translated by this proverb of Linthaut: The virtue of sulphur only expands up to the certain proportion of a term. On the contrary, the relationship among the weights of the art, as they remain subject to the will of the artist, are expressed by The Cosmopolite's aphorism: The weight of the body is singular and that of water is plural. But, as philosophers teach that sulphur is likely to absorb up to 10 and 12 times its weight in mercury, we can immediately see the necessity for additional operations, about which the authors are barely concerned; the imbibitions and reiterations. We will act in the same way and submit these details of the practice to the beginner's own sagacity, because they are easy to perform and secondary in terms of the research per se.

(1) In order to illustrate these precious indications of the master, we are adding, to the second book of *The Dwellings of the Philosophers*, the beautiful and very revealing composition, *God's Precious Gift*, "written by George Aurach and hand-painted by him, in the year of the Saved and Redeemed Humanity, 1415" (Plate XXXIX) (2) J. H. Pott: *Dissertation sur le Soufre des Metaux* (*Dissertation on the Sulfur of the Metals*), thesis defended in Halle, 1716, published by TH. Herissant, Paris, 1759, vol. 1, p. 61.

## **BODYGUARDS VII**

In the cathedral at Nantes, the evening twilight gradually declines. The shadows invade the ogival vaults, fill the nave, and bathe the petrified humanity of the majestic edifice. On our sides, the powerful and solemn columns climb toward the intricate arches, the transepts and pendentives which the increasing darkness now steals from our eyes. A bell is ringing. An invisible priest in a subdued voice recited the evening prayers, and the knell from above answers the prayer from below. Only the peaceful flames of the tapers spot with golden brightness the darkness of the sanctuary. Then once the mass is done, a sepulchral silence hands over all these inert and cold things, witnesses to a distant past, pregnant with mystery and

with the unknown...

In their fixed attitude, the four stone guardians seem to emerge imprecise and blurred from the midst of this semi-darkness. Mute sentinels of an ancient Tradition, these symbolic women at the corners of the empty mausoleum, guarding the rigid images of marble, of dispersed bodies, buried no one knows where, move us and make us ponder. Oh, vanity of earthly things! Fragility of human wealth! What is left now of those, whose glory you were supposed to commemorate and whose grandeur you were supposed to recall? A cenotaph. Even less: a pretext for art, a support of science, a masterpiece without any usefulness or destination, a simple historical memory, but whose philosophical scope and ethical teaching go well beyond the sumptuous banality of its first assignment,

And, before these noble figures of the cardinal Virtues, veiling the fourfold knowledge of the eternal Sapience, the words of Solomon (Prov. 3: 13-19) naturally come to mind:

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are note to be compared upon her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her. The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth; by understanding that he established the heavens".

### **THE SUNDIAL OF THE HOLYROOD PALACE IN EDINBURGH**

It is an extremely unusual little building. And we would only search our memories in vain: we cannot find an image analogous to this original, very strongly featured work. It is more like an erected crystal, a gem raised on a support, than a genuine monument. And this gigantic sample of mining productions, would perhaps be more in its place in a mineralogy museum, rather than in the middle of a park which the public is not allowed to enter.

Built at the order of Charles I in 1633, by John Milne, his master builder, with John Bartoun's collaboration, it essentially consists in a geometric block, carved in the shape of a regular icosahedron, its faces hollowed with hemispheres and with rectilinear cavities, which is supported by a pedestal standing on a pentagonal base formed of three plane steps. Only the base, which suffered from bad weather, had to be restored. Such is the Sundial of the Holyrood Palace (Plate XL).

Antiquity, to which we can always fruitfully refer, has left a certain number of sundials of various shapes, discovered in the ruins of Castel-Nuevo, of Pompeii, Tusculum, etc. Others are known to us from the descriptions of scientific writers, particularly of Vitruvius and Pliny. This dial called Hemicyclium, attributed to Berosus (around 280 BC) was composed of a semi-circular surface "on which a stylus marked the hours, the days, and even the months". The one called Scaphe was composed of a hollow block, having in its center a needle whose shadow was projected on its side. It was supposed to have been built by Aristarchus of Samos (3rd century BC) just like the Discus dial, made of a horizontal round table, with slightly raised edges. Among the unknown shapes of which, for the most part, only the names come down to us, the following sundials were quoted: Arache, on which it was said, the hours were engraved at the extremity of tiny threads, which gave it the appearance of a spider (the invention is said to be the invention of Eudoxus of Cnide around 330 BC); Plinthium, a horizontal disk drawn on the square base of a column, of which Scopus of Syracuse is alleged to be the author; Pelecinon another horizontal dial by Patroclus; Conum, a conical system by Dionysidorus of Amisus, etc.

None of these shapes nor of these related building correspond to that of the unusual edifice in Edinburgh; none can serve as its prototype. And yet its denomination, the one justifying its reason to be, is doubly accurate. It is at once a multiple sundial and a genuine hermetic clock. This strange icosahedron represents for us a twofold gnomonic work. The Greek word [\*4921] (gnomon), which was integrally transmitted to the Latin and French languages (gnomon), possesses a meaning other than that of the needle indicating, by projecting a shadow upon a plane, the movement of the sun. [\*492-2] (Gnomon) also designates the one who becomes aware, who learns; it defines the prudent, the sensible, the enlightened. The root of this word [\*492-3] (gignosco), also written [\*492-4] (ginosko), double an orthographic form whose meaning is to know, to understand, to think, to resolve. Thence comes [\*492-5] (gnosis), knowledge, erudition, doctrine, from which derives our French word Gnose (and English Gnosis), doctrine of the Gnostics, and philosophy of the Magi. We know that Gnosis was the body of the sacred knowledge, which the Magi carefully kept secret and which, for the initiates, was the object of esoteric teaching. But the Greek root, where gnomon and gnosis derive from, also formed another Greek word [\*492-6] (gnome), corresponding to our word gnome, meaning mind, spirit, intelligence. Now the gnomes, subterranean genii, appointed to guarding the mineral treasures, constantly watching the gold, silver and precious stone mines, appear as the symbolic representation, the humanized figures of the vital metallic spirit and of material activity. Tradition depicts them as quite ugly and very short; on the other hand, they are of a gentle and benevolent disposition and very pleasant to get on with. We can therefore easily understand the hidden reason for the legendary tales where the friendship of a gnome opens

wide the doors of earthly riches.

The gnomonic icosahedron of Edinburgh is therefore, apart from its standard purpose, a hidden translation of the Gnostic Work, of the Great Work of the Philosophers. For us, the purpose of this little monument is not only to indicate the daily hours, but also the progress of the sun of the Sages in the Philosophers' Work. And this progress is regulated by the icosahedron, which is this unknown crystal, the salt of Sapience, spirit or fire incarnate, the familiar obliging gnome, friend of the good artists, who allows men to access the supreme knowledge of the ancient Gnosis.

Was the Knighthood totally unrelated to the building of this curious Sundial, or at least to its particular decoration? We do not think so, and believe we can find proof of it in the fact that, on several sides of the solid, the emblem of the thistle is repeated with a significant emphasis. Indeed, we count six flower heads and two stems in bloom of the species *serratula arvensis*. Could we not recognize in the obvious preponderance of the symbol the ensign specific to the Knights of the Order of the Thistle (1), the affirmation of a secret meaning imposed on the work and countersigned by them?

What is more, did Edinburgh actually possess, apart from this royal Order whose hieroglyphic esotericism leaves no doubt, a center of hermetic initiation placed under its dependence? We could not ascertain it. Yet, approximately 30 years before the building of the sundial, 14 years after the official cancellation of the Order, which became a secret Fraternity, we see the appearance, in the immediate surroundings of Edinburgh, of one of the most learned Adepts and one of the most fervent propagators of alchemical truth, Seton, famous under the pseudonym of The Cosmopolite. "During the summer of 1601", writes Louis Figuier, "a Dutch pilot, called Jacques Haussen, was caught by a storm in the North Sea and thrown on the coast of Scotland, not far from Edinburgh, at a short distance from the village of Seton or Seatoun. The shipwrecked sailors were helped by a local inhabitant who possessed a house and some land on this shore; he succeeded in saving several of these unfortunate fellows, welcomed with much humanity the pilot in his house, and gave him the means to return to Holland" (2). This man was called Sethon or Sethonius Scotus (3). The Englishman Campden, in his *Britannia*, indeed indicates, very close to the place of the seashore where the pilot Haussen was shipwrecked, a dwelling which he calls the Sethon House and which he tells us is the residence of the Earl of Winton. It is thus probable that our Adept belonged to this noble family of Scotland, which would provide an argument of a certain worth to the hypothesis of a possible relationship between Sethon and the knights of the Order of the Thistle. Perhaps the man had taught himself in the very place where we see him practice this work of mercy and of high morals, which characterize the elevated souls and the true philosophers. Be that as it may, this fact marks the beginning of a new existence devoted to the hermetic apostolate, a wandering, eventful, brilliant life, sometimes filled with vicissitudes, lived entirely abroad and that martyrdom was to tragically crown two years later (December 31, 1603 or January 1, 1604). It therefore seems that the Cosmopolite, solely concerned with his mission, never came back to his native country, which he left in 1601 only after having acquired a perfect mastery of the Art. These reasons, or rather these conjectures, lead us to connect the Knights of the Thistle with the famous alchemist by invoking the hermetic testimony of the Edinburgh Sundial.

In our opinion, the Scottish sundial is a modern replica, at once more concise and more learned, of the ancient *Tabula Smaragdina*. This Table was composed of two columns of green marble, according to some, or of an artificial emerald sheet according to others, on which the solar Work was carved in cabalistic terms. The tradition attributes it to the Father of the Philosophers, Hermes Trismegistus, who claims to be its author, although his quite obscure personality does not betray in any way whether the man belonged to legend or to history. Others claim that this testimony of the sacred science, initially written in Greek, was discovered after the Biblical flood in a rocky cave of the Hebron valley. This detail, lacking authenticity, helps us better understand the secret meaning of this famous Table, which could very well never have existed anywhere but in the subtle and mischievous imagination of the old masters. It is said that it is green --as is the dew of spring called for this reason the Emerald of the Philosophers --first analogy with the saline matter of the Sages; that it was written by Hermes, second analogy, since this matter bears the name of Mercury, Roman divinity corresponding to the Hermes of the Greeks. Finally, this analogy, this green mercury used for the three Works, is said to be triple, hence the epithet Trismegistus ( [\*495-1] --- Trismegistos ---three times great or sublime) added to the name of Hermes. The Emerald Table thus takes on the characteristics of a speech given by the mercury of the Sages on the manner in which the Philosophical Work is elaborated. It is not Hermes, the Egyptian Thoth, who speaks, but rather the Emerald of the Philosophers or the *Isaiaic Table* itself (4).

The initial idea behind the Edinburgh sundial reflects a similar preoccupation. However, apart from the fact that it restricts teaching to the sole alchemical practice, it is no longer matter, in its qualities and its nature, that it expresses, but its form or physical structure. It is a crystalline edifice the chemical composition of which remains unknown. Its geometric configuration allows us to recognize only the mineralogical characteristics of saline bodies in general. It teaches us that the mercury is a salt ---which we already knew ---and that this salt originates in the mineral realm. Furthermore, it is what Claveus, The Cosmopolite, Limojon de St Didier, Basil Valentine, Huginus a Barma, Batsdorff, etc., emulate, assert and

repeat when they teach us that the salt of metals is the Stone of the Philosophers (5) .

We can therefore reasonably see in this sundial a monument erected to the Philosophical Vitriol, the initial subject and *primum ens* of the philosophers' stone. Yet, all the metals are nothing but salts, which their textures prove and which the ease by which they form crystallized compounds demonstrates; in the end, these salts melt into the water of their crystallization and take on the appearance of oil or mercury. Our Vitriol obeys the same law, and, since it leads the artist fortunate enough to discover it and prepare it, toward success, it has received from our predecessors the name of Oil of Victory. Others, considering its color, and deliberately playing on the assonance, have called it *Huile de Verre* (6) (Oil of Glass --*vitri oleum*), which marks its glassy appearance, its oily fluidity in the fire and its green coloration (*viridis*). It is this pure color which allowed it to be given all the names which hide its true nature from the layman. It has been given, says Arnold de Villanova, the names of trees, of leaves, herbs, anything with a green coloration, "so as to mislead the fools". The metallic compounds, yielding green salts, contributed to a large extent to the inflation of this nomenclature. In addition, the philosophers, reversing the order, chose to design green things by hermetic names probably to emphasize the significance assigned this color in alchemy. The "*mercureau*", for example, or little mercury [or: mercury water] became our *macquereau* (mackerel), still used on April Fool's Day (7) to disguise the sender's personality. It is a mystical fish, and the object of mystifications. It owes its name and reputation to its brilliant green coloration, with black stripes similar to that of the mercury of the Sages. *Bescherelle* indicates that in the year 1430, the mackerel was the only sea fish available in Paris, where, according to a rather ancient custom, it was served with *groseilles vertes* (gooseberries) (8). Do we know why the cuttlefish received their name? Simply because they lay green eggs, forming clusters like grapes. Our green mercury, the agent of putrefaction and of regeneration, is responsible for the cuttlefish having its name of [\*496-1] (*sepia*), in the primitive language; the root of this word is [\*496-2] (*sepo*), which means to putrefy, to reduce into rot. Thanks to its green eggs, the cuttlefish bears a cabalistic name, just like the *Saturnia* of the pear tree (*Saturnya pyri*), a large butterfly with emerald green eggs.

In their formulas, the Greek alchemists followed the custom of translating the hermetic solvent by indicating its color. To create their symbol, they assembled two consonants of the Greek word [\* 497-1] (*chloros*), green, and X and P being juxtaposed. Now this typical number exactly reproduces the Greek monogram of Christ, extracted from his name [\*497-2] (*Christos*). Should we see, in this similarity, the consequence of a simple coincidence or that of a rational intention? The philosophical mercury is born from a pure substance, Jesus is born from an undefiled mother; the Son of Man and the child of Hermes both lead the life of pilgrims, both die prematurely as martyrs, one on the cross, the other in the crucible; they both resurrect, one and the other, on the third day. Well, these are indeed curious concurrences, but we could not ascertain that the Greek hermeticists knew them or intended to use them.

On the other hand, would it be pushing courage all the way to rashness if we connected the esotericism of our science to such a practice of the Christian church which took place on May 1st ? On that day, in many cities, the clergy walk in procession --the Green procession --to cut the shrubs and the branches with which churches were decorated, and particularly the ones whose names include Our Lady. These processions no longer take place today. Only the tradition of May Trees (9) which, coming down from them, have been kept and still continue in our villages. Symbolists will easily discover the reason for these obscure rites if they remember that *Maia* was the mother of *Hermes*. We also know that the dew of May or Emerald of the philosophers is green and that the Adept *Cyliani* metaphorically declares this vehicle to be essential for the work. Thus, we do not claim to insinuate that it is necessary to collect, as certain spagyricists and characters of the *Mutus Liber*, the nocturnal dew of the month of Mary, by attributing to it qualities which we know it does not have. The dew of the sages is a salt, not a water, but it is the special coloration of this water which is used to designate our subject.

Among the ancient Hindus the philosophical matter was represented by the goddess *Moudevi* ([\*497-3] ---*mudesis* --- humidity, rot; from the root [\*497-4] ---*mudao* ---to rot). Born from the Sea of Milk, it is said that she was represented, painted green, mounted on a donkey, and bearing in her hand a banner in the middle of which a crow could be seen.

Probably also hermetic is the origin of the Day of the Green Wolf, folk festivities of which the custom was long maintained at *Jumieges*, and which the custom was long maintained at *Jumieges*, and which was celebrated on June 24, day of the solar exaltation in honor of *St Austreberthe*. A legend tells us that the female saint was washing the linen of the famous abbey where she brought it on a donkey. One day, the wolf strangled the donkey. *St Austreberthe* condemned the guilty animal to take on the task of its victim, and the wolf fulfilled it perfectly until its death. It is the memory of this legend that this celebration perpetuated. However the reason why the color green was attributed to the wolf is not explained. But we can assuredly say that it is by strangling and devouring the donkey, that the wolf became green and this would suffice. The fierce wolf, "savage with hunger", is the agent indicated by *Basil Valentine* in the first of his *Twelve Keys*. This wolf ([\*498-1] (*Lukon*) is first gray and does not let us guess the ardent fire, the bright light which it holds hidden in its coarse body. Its

meeting with the donkey manifests this light: [\*498-2] (lucos) becomes [\*498-3] (luce), the first morning glimmer, dawn. The gray wolf is dyed as a green wolf and then it becomes our secret fire, the nascent Apollo, [\*498-4] (luchegenes), the father of light.

As we assemble here everything that can help the investigator discover the mysterious agent of the Great Work, we will till give him the Legend of the Green Tapers. This legend has to do with the famous Black Virgin of Marseilles, Our Lady of Confession, whom the crypts of the old St Victor Abbey shelter. This legend contains, behind the veil of allegory, the description of the work which the alchemist must perform in order to extract from the coarse mineral, the living and luminous spirit, the secret fire it encloses as a translucent, green crystal, fusible like wax, and which the sages named their Vitriol.

Here is this naive and precious hermetic tradition (10):

A young woman from ancient Massilia (11), called Martha, a simple little working girl, and an orphan for a long time, had devoted to the black Virgin of the Crypts a very unusual cult. She offered her all the flowers that she went to pick on the hillsides ---thyme, sage, lavender, rosemary ---and she never missed, rain or shine, the daily mass.

The day before Christmas, the feast of Purification, Martha was awakened in the idle of the night by a secret voice which invited her to go to the cloister to hear the morning mass. Fearing that she had slept longer than usual, she dressed quickly, went out and since now had spread its mantel on the ground reflecting a certain light, she believed that dawn was near. She quickly reached the threshold of the monastery, whose door was open. There, meeting a cleric, she asked him to say a mass in her name but as she was without money, she slipped from her finger a humble gold ring, her only wealth, and she placed it as an offering under an altar candlestick.

As soon as the mass began, the young girl was extremely surprised to see the white tapers turn green, of a celestial, unknown green, diaphanous and brighter than the most beautiful of emeralds or the rarest of malachites. She could not believe her eyes nor take them from it.

When the *Ite missa est* finally came and pulled her out of her ecstasy for this prodigy and she regained outside the sense of the familiar reality, she noticed that night had not yet ended; the first hour of the day was just ringing at the belfry of St Victor church.

Not knowing what to think of the adventure, she went back to her dwelling but came back early in the morning to the abbey. There was already in the holy place a great gathering of people; anxious and troubled, she made inquiries; she was told no mass had been said since the day before. Martha, at the risk of passing for a visionary, then told in details the miracle she had just witnessed, a few hours earlier, and the faithful crowded with her to the cave. The orphan girl had told the truth, and the tapers still shone at the altar, with full, incomparable brilliance. In his *Notice sur l'Antique Abbaye de Saint-Victor de Marseille* (Notes on the Ancient St Victor Abbey in Marseilles), Abbott Laurin speaks of the custom, still followed by the people, to carry green tapers during the processions of the Black Virgin. These tapers are blessed on February 2, day of Purification, commonly known as the Candlemas. The author adds that "the Candlemas tapers must be green, although the reason why is not well known. Various documents indicate that green colored tapers were used in other locations, in the monastery of the nuns of St Sauveur, in Marseilles, in 1479, and in the city of St Sauveur, near Aix-en-Provence, until 1620. Elsewhere, this custom was lost, while it was preserved in St Victor".

Such are the essential points of the symbolism, specific to the Sundial of Edinburgh, that we intended to bring under consideration.

In the special decoration of the emblematic icosahedron, the visitor powerful enough to be able to approach it ---for, without relevant motives, he will ever obtain the authorization to do so -- will note, besides the hieroglyphic thistles of the order, the respective monograms of Charles I, beheaded in 1649, and of his wife, Marie-Henriette of France. The letters C R (Carolus Rex) apply to the former; M R (Maria Regina) designate the latter. Their son Charles II, born in 1630 ---he was then 3 years old when the monument was erected ---is featured on the sides of the crystal by the initials C P (Carolus Princeps), each surmounted by a crown, as were his father's initials. The visitor will also see, next to the coat of arms of England, of Scotland, and of the Irish harp, five roses and as many fleurs-de-lys, separate and distinct, emblems of wisdom and knighthood, the latter emphasized by the plumed helmet with three ostrich feathers, which one upon a time ornamented the helmets of knights. Finally, other symbols, which we have analyzed in the course of our present study, will complete the description of the hermetic character of this curious edifice: the crowned lion holding a sword in one paw and a scepter in the other; the angel, represented with spread wings; St George trampling the dragon and St Andrew offering the instrument of his martyrdom ---the X- shaped cross; the two rosebushes of Nicolas Flamel, close to the scallop, and the three hearts of

the famous alchemist of Bourges, the Chancellor of the Exchequer to King Charles VII.

We shall end here our visits to the old philosophers' dwellings.

It would indeed be easy for us to add to these studies, as the decorative examples of hermetic symbolism, applied to lay buildings as opposed to religious ones, are still very numerous today; we preferred to limit our teaching to the most typical and the most characteristic emblems.

But before taking leave of our reader, by thanking him for his benevolent attention, we shall cast a last glance over the secret science as a whole. And, like the old man, who likes to evoke memories, who dwells on the highlights of the past, in the same fashion we hope to discover, in this retrospective examination, the principal fact or object of the essential preoccupations of the true sons of Hermes.

This important point, where the elements and the principles of the highest knowledge are concentrated, could not be search nor encountered in life, as life is within it, as it radiates around us, as it is familiar to us and as it suffices to know how to observe it in order to grasp its different manifestations. It is in death that we can recognize it, in this invisible domain of pure spirituality, where the soul, liberated from its bonds, takes refuge at the end of its earthy stay; it is in nothingness, this mysterious nothing which contains everything, the absence where all presence reigns, that it is proper to search for the causes, the multiple effects which life is showing us.

Thus, it is at the moment when the inertia of the body declares itself, at the very hour when nature ends its labor, that the sage begins his. Let us therefore peer into the abyss, let us scan its depth, let us search the darkness that fills it, and nothingness will teach us. Birth teaches but few things, death however, from which life is born, can reveal everything. It alone holds the key to Nature's laboratory; it alone liberates the spirit, imprisoned at the core of the material body. A shadow, a dispenser of light, a sanctuary of truth, an untouched asylum of wisdom, death hides and jealously conceals its treasures from fearful mortals, from the indecisive ones, from the skeptical ones, and from all those who disregard it or do not dare confront it.

For the philosopher, death is simply the peg which joins the material plane to the diving plane. It is the terrestrial door opening onto the sky, the link between nature and divinity; it is the chain connecting those who still are to those who no longer are. And, while human evolution, in its physical activity, can at its liking dispose of the past and of the present, on the other hand, the future belongs only to death. Consequently, far from inspiring a feeling of horror, or repulsion from the sage, death, the tool of salvation, appears desirable to him because it is useful and necessary. And while we are not allowed to shorten, by ourselves, the time fixed by our own destiny, at least we have received from the Lord license to provoke it in the heavy matter, which, according to God's order, is submitted to man's will.

Thus, we understand why the philosophers emphasized so much the absolute necessity of material death. Through death, does the imperishable and always active spirit stir, sieve, separate, clean, and purify the body. It owes to it the possibility of assembling its cleansed parts, of building with them its new dwelling, of finally transmitting to the regenerated form an energy it did not possess.

Considered from the point of view of its chemical action on the substance of the three kingdoms, death is clearly characterized by the intimate, profound, and radical dissolution of the bodies. This is why dissolution, called death by the old authors, asserts itself as the first and foremost of the Work operation, the one which the artist must strive to accomplish before any other. Whoever will discover the artifice of the true dissolution and will see its subsequent putrefaction take place, will have in his power the greatest secret of the world. He will also possess a sure means to access the most sublime truth. Such is the important point, the pivot of the art, according to Philalethes' own expression, which we wanted to point out to men of good faith, to benevolent and candid seekers.

Now by the fact that they are destined to the final dissolution, all beings must necessarily derive a similar benefit from it. Our planet itself cannot escape this inexorable law. It has its preordained time just as we have ours. The duration of its evolution is ordered, regulated in advance and strictly limited. Reason demonstrates it, and common sense intuits it, analogy teaches it and the Scriptures certify it: In the noise of an awful storm, the sky and the earth will pass...

During a time, time, and half a time (12). Death will spread its domination over the ruins of the world, over the remnants of destroyed civilizations. And our earth, after the convulsions of along agony, will resume the confused state of the original chaos. But the Spirit of God will float on the waters. And all things will be covered with darkness and steeped in the profound silence of tombs.

(1) The Order of the Thistle, created by James V, King of Scotland, in 1540, was originally composed of twelve knights, as

all the fraternities derived from the Round Table. It was also named the Order of St Andrew, because one chapel of the Cathedral, dedicated to the Apostle, was especially assigned to them, because the decoration bore their effigy and finally because the Order Day was celebrated November 30, on St Andrew's Day. Abolished in 1587, it continued to exist secretly and was reestablished in 1687. (2) See Louis Figuier, *L'Alchimie et les Alchimistes* (Alchemy and the Alchemists); Paris, Hachette et Cie, 1856. (3) The name is found spelled differently depending on the authors. Seton or Sethon is also called Sitonius, Sidonius, Suentonius, and Seethonius. All of these denominations are accompanied by the epithet Scotus, which designates a Scotsman by birth. As for the palace of Sethon, in the ancient parish of Haddingtonshire, annexed to Tranent in 1580, it was destroyed first by the English in 1544. Rebuilt, Mary Stuart and Damley stopped here, on March 11, 1566, the day after Rizzio's assassination; the Queen came back again, accompanied by Bothwell, in 1567, after Damley's murder. James VI of Scotland stayed there in April 1603, when he came to take possession of the crown of England. During the funeral of the first Count of Winton, he attended the procession, seated on a park bench. In 1617, the same monarch spent his second night in Seton, after having crossed the Twed. Charles I and his court were received there twice on 1633. Nowadays, no vestige remains of this palace which was completely destroyed in 1790. Let us add that the Seton family had received the deed of ownership for the Seton and Winton lands in the 12th century. (4) The text of the Emerald Table, very well known to the disciples of Hermes, may not be known by some readers. Here is the most accurate version of these famous words: "It is true, without lie, certain and most veritable;

"That which is below is like that which is above, and that which is above is like that which is below; by these things, are made the miracles of one thing. And as all things are and come from One, through the mediation of One, thus all things are born from this unique thing by adaptation.

"The Sun is its father, the Moon, its mother. The wind bore it in its belly. The Earth is its nurse and its receptacle. The Father of all, the Thelona of the universal world is here. Its force and power remain whole if it is converted into earth from fire, the subtle from the coarse slowly with great diligence. It ascends from the earth and descends from the heaven, and receives the strength of superior things and inferior things. You will have by this means the glory of the world, and all obscurity will flee from you.

"It is strength, strong with all strength, for it will conquer all subtle things and penetrate all solid things. Thus, the world was created. From there will come out admirable adaptations, of which the means is here given. "This is why I was called Hermes Trismegistus, having the three parts of the universal philosophy.

"What I have said of the Solar Work is complete".

One can find the Emerald Table, reproduced on a rock, in Latin, in one of the beautiful plates illustrating the *Ampitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae*, of Khunrath (1610). Johannes Grassius, under the pseudonym of Hortulanus, gave on it, in the 15th century, a Commentary, translated by J. Girard de Tournay in the *Miroir d'Alchimie* (The Mirror of Alchemy), Paris, Seveste, 1613.

(5) Extract the salt of metals", said the Cosmopolite, "without any corrosion nor violence, and this salt will produce the white and the red stone. The whole secret lies in the salt, from which our perfect Elixir is made". (6) Translator's note: "Huile de verre" (oil of glass), or "Huile de vert" (oil of green or green oil). (7) Translator's note: On April Fool's Day, children in France play at putting a little paper fish on the back of people without them noticing. The French for maquerel sounds very similar to the French "mercureau" or little mercury. (8) Cabalistically: "groseolles vertes" (gooseberries) sounds like "gros sel vert" (coarse green salt). (9) Translator's note: A May in France, is a green tree that one plants on the first day of the month of May, in front of the door of someone one wishes to honor. (10) See the short play in verse called *La Legende des Cierge Verts* (The Legend of the Green Tapers) by Hippolyte Matabon, Marseilles, J. Cayer, 1889. (11) Translator's note: Massilia is the Latin name of Marseilles. (12) Daniel 7:25 and 12:7; Revelation 12:14.

## **THE PARADOX OF THE UNLIMITED PROGRESS OF SCIENCE**

To all philosophers, to educated people, whoever they may be, to specialized scientists, as well as to simple observers, we pose the question:

"Have you ever thought about the inevitable consequences which are to result from unlimited progress?"

Already, because of the multiplicity of scientific acquisitions, man cannot live without tremendous energy and endurance, in an atmosphere of hectic, feverish, and unhealthy activity. He created the machine that increased his means and his power of action a hundred fold, but he has become its slave and its victim: slave in peace, victim in war. Distance no longer is an obstacle to him; he travels speedily from one point of the earth to the other by air, by sea and by land. We do not see however that this ease of traveling has made him better or happier; for, while the adage says that travel broadens the mind, it



does not seem however to contribute much to strengthening the bonds of concord and brotherhood which should unite peoples. Borders have never been better guarded than today. Man possesses the marvelous ability to express his thought and to make himself heard in the remotest countries, yet these very means force new needs upon him. He can transmit and record light and sound vibrations, without gaining much else from it save the vain satisfaction of his curiosity, save a subjection rather unfavorable to his intellectual growth. Opaque bodies have become permeable to his glance, and, while he can now fathom the heavy matter, on the other hand, what does he know of himself, that is, of his origin, his essence, and his destiny?

Satisfied desires are followed by new, unfulfilled desires. We emphasize it: man always wants to go fast, ever faster, and this agitation is such that the possibilities at his disposal become insufficient. Carried away by his passion, his desires and his phobias, the horizon of his hopes recedes indefinitely. It is the frantic race towards the abyss, a constant wearing, an impatient and frenzied activity implemented without respite or rest. "In our century", said Jules Simon, quite rightly, "one must walk or run; whoever stops is lost". At this pace, at this rate, physical health collapses. In spite of the diffusion and the observance of rules of hygiene, and of prophylactic measures and despite the piling up of chemical drugs, illness continues its ravages with an untiring perseverance. To such extent that the organized fight against unknown plagues seems to have no other result but to cause new ones to appear, more acute, and more stubborn.

Nature herself gives us unequivocal signs of weariness: she is becoming lazy. It is only by dint of chemical fertilizers that the farmer now obtains average value crops. Ask a peasant, he will tell you that "the earth is dying", that seasons are disturbed, the climate modified. Every growing thing lacks sap and resistance, Plants wither --this fact is officially recognized --and prove unable to react against the invasion of parasitic insects or the attack of diseases involving mycelium.

Finally, we will reveal nothing by saying that the greatest part of discoveries, first oriented towards the increase of human well-being, were rapidly diverted from their goal and specifically applied to destruction. Instruments of peace are turned into machines of war and we already know too well the dominating role science played in modern cataclysms. Such is, unfortunately, the final goal, the outcome of scientific investigation; and such is also the reason why man who pursued it with criminal intent, calls divine justice upon him and finds himself bound to be condemned by it.

So as to avoid the blame, that no doubt would have been addressed to them, of perverting peoples, the Philosophers always refused to openly teach the truths they had acquired or received from Antiquity. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre proves he knew this rule of wisdom when he states at the end of his Indian Cottage: "Truth should be searched with a simple heart; it will be found in nature; it must be told only to decent people". By ignorance of or by contempt for this first condition, exotericism spread unrest into mankind.

## **THE REIGN OF MAN**

The Reign of Man, prelude to the last Judgment and the advent of a new Cycle, is symbolically expressed in a curious sculpted woodcut, kept in the Church of Saint-Sauveur, also known as the Church of the Chapter in Figeac (Lot). Under the religious design barely veiling its obvious esoteric quality, it shows the infant Christ asleep on the cross and surrounded by the instruments of the Passion (Plate XLI). Among these attributes of the divine martyrdom, six have been deliberately reunited to form an X, just like the cross, where the infant Christ is resting, and which was tilted so that it could reproduce that same form seen from an angle. So, recalling the four ages, we have the four Greek X (khi) whose numerical value of 600 yields by multiplication the 2,400 years of the world. We see then the spear of Longinus (John 19:34), the reed (Matthew 27:48, Mark 15:36) or the hyssop rod holding the sponge filled with vinegar (John 18:34), then the bundle of scourges and intertwined whip (John 19:1; Matthew 27:26; Mark 25:15); finally, the hammer which was used to pound the nails of crucifixion and the pliers used to pull them out after the death of the Savior.

Triple image of the ultimate radiance, graphic formula of a declining spiritualism, these X's leave their marks on the second cyclic period, at the end of which mankind struggles in darkness and confusion, until the day of the great Earth revolution and the liberating death. If we gather these three crosses and place the point of intersection of their branches on a common axis, we obtain a twelve-rayed geometric figure symbolizing the twelve centuries which constitute the Reign of the Son of Man and which come after the twelve preceding ones of the Reign of God.

## **THE FLOOD**

When people speak of the end of the world, they generally evoke and translate the idea of a universal cataclysm, bringing about both the total ruin of the planet, and the extermination of its inhabitants. According to this opinion, the earth, wiped off the face of the galaxy, would cease to exist. Its debris, projected into sidereal space, would fall in a rain of neoliths on worlds near ours.

Some more logical thinkers understand the expression in a less extended sense. According to them, the perturbation would affect mankind alone. It seems impossible for them to admit that our planet could disappear, although everything which lives, moves and gravitates on its surface is condemned to die; a Platonic thesis, which could be acceptable if it did not contain the irrational introduction of a miraculous factor: a renewed man born directly from the earth, like a simple vegetable and without preliminary seed.

It is not the way to understand the end of the world such as it is announced by the Scriptures and such as primitive traditions recount it, whatever race they belong to. When, to punish mankind for its crimes, God resolved to have it swallowed up by the waters of the flood, not only was the earth affected solely on its surface, but also a certain number of just, and chosen men, having obtained His grace survived the flood. Although presented under symbolic appearances, this teaching is founded on a positive basis. We recognize the physical necessity of an animal and terrestrial regeneration which therefore cannot result in the complete obliteration of creatures, or suppress any of the conditions essential to the survival of this rescued core. Consequently, in spite of its apparent universality, in spite of the terrifying and long intermixing of the raging elements, we are certain that the huge catastrophe will not equally impact all places nor the expanse of all continents and seas. Certain privileged countries, as genuine Arks of rock, will shelter men who will have taken refuge there. There for one day, lasting two centuries, generations will watch ---anxious witnesses of the effects of divine power ---the gigantic duel between water and fire; there, in a relative calmness, at an equal temperature, in the pale and even light of a low ceiling of clouds, the chosen people will wait for peace to come and for the last clouds, dispersed by the breath of the golden age, to uncover the multicolored magic of a double rainbow, the brightness of new skies and the charm of a new earth.

For us who never accepted the arguments of rationalism, we deem that the Mosaic flood is indisputable and real. Furthermore, we know to what extent the Bible is superior to other books, how it remains the immutable Eternal Book, the Book of Cycles par excellence, in which, under the veil of parables, the revelation of human history is sealed, even over and beyond the annals of each people. It is the story in extenso of the travel accomplished by each cyclic generation. And since history forever repeats itself, the Bible, which figuratively describes its process, will forever remain the unique source, the true collection of historical events and of human revolutions, as much for bygone periods as for those that will succeed one another in the future.

Our purpose is not here to undertake to refute the arguments by which the adversaries of Moses' tradition have contested the accuracy of his testimony, not to provide the arguments by which the advocates of the revealed religion have established the authenticity and divine inspiration of its books.

We will only attempt to show that the reality of the flood is attested by the specific traditions of all the peoples, of the old as well as of the new continent.

The sacred books of the Hindus and the Iranians make mention of a flood. In India, Noah is called Vaisaswata or Satyavrata. The Greek legends speak of Ogyes and Deucalion; those of Chaldea, of Xixouthros or Sisouthros; those of China, of Fo-ki; those of Peru, of Bochica. According to the Assyrian-Chaldean cosmogony, as men, created by Marduk, became evil, the council of the gods decided to punish them. Only one man was just and because of this fact, he was loved by God Ea; his name was Utnapishtim, king of Babylon. So Ea revealed in a dream to Utnapishtim the imminent coming of the cataclysm and the means of escaping the wrath of the gods. The Babylonian Noah, therefore built an ark and locked himself up with his relatives, his family, his servants, the craftsmen who had constructed the vessel, and a whole herd of animals. Immediately darkness filled the sky, the waters of the abyss fell and covered the earth. Utnapishtim's ark floated for seven days and finally rested on top of a mountain. The just one, now saved, let a dove and a swallow fly, which returned to the boat, and then a crow which did not return. Then he came out of the ark and offered a sacrifice to the gods. For the Aztecs and other tribes who lived on the plateau of Mexico, it is Coxcox or Tezpi who plays the role of the Biblical Noah.

The Mosaic flood had the same importance, the same scope, the same repercussions as all the previous floods. Somehow it is the typical description of the periodic catastrophe resulting from the reversal of the poles. It is the simplified interpretation of the successive floods, of which Moses was probably aware, either because he had been an eyewitness to one of them -- which would justify his own name --or because he had obtained it through divine revelation. To us, the ark of salvation seems to represent the geographical location where the chosen ones gather when the great perturbation is near, rather than a boat hand-built by man. By its form, the ark already reveals itself as a cyclic figure rather than as a true ship. In a text where we must especially, according to the word of the Scriptures, take care to consider the spirit rather than the letter, it is impossible for us to take the building of the ship in a literal sense as well as the search "for all the pure and impure animals", and their reunion by couples. A disaster that imposes, for two centuries, to living and free beings, living conditions so different from their normal ones, so contrary to their needs go beyond the limits of our reason. It should not be forgotten that during the entire trial, the hemisphere, given over to the rush of water, is plunged into the most total darkness. It is

indeed worth knowing that Moses speaks of cyclic days, whose secret value is equal to regular years. Let us be more specific: it is written that the flood rains lasted 40 days and that the waters covered the earth for 150 days, that is 190 days total. Then God caused a warm wind to blow, and the level of the sheet of water went down. The ark landed on Mount Ararat (1), in Armenia. Noah opened the window (the return to light) and liberated a crow which, held back by corpses, did not come back. He then let a dove fly which immediately came back to the ark, for at that time trees were still submerged. The patriarch then waited seven days and again let the bird fly, which returned toward evening bringing back a green olive branch. The flood was over. It had lasted 197 cyclic days, give or take three years, two actual centuries.

Can we admit that a ship exposed to the storms for such a long time would be capable of resisting it? And, on the other hand, what should we think of its cargo? The implausibility, even so, could not totally shake our convictions. We hold the Mosaic account to be true, and positive as far as its basis, that is to say, as far as the actuality of the event of the flood is concerned, but most of the circumstances which accompany it, particularly those concerned with Noah, with the ark, and with the coming and goings of the animals are clearly allegorical. The text contains an esoteric teaching of considerable scope. Let us simply note that Noah, who has the same cabalistic meaning as Noel (in Greek [\*520-1] ---Noe --Christmas in English), is a contraction of the Greek [\*520-2] (Neos-Helios), New Sun. The ark [\*510-3] (Arche) indicates the beginning of the new era. The rainbow (2) signifies the covenant that God makes with man, in a cycle which is just beginning; it is the born-again or renewed symphony, [\*510-4] (Sumphonia): consent, agreement, union, pact. It is also the belt of Iris [\*510-5] ---Zone), the privileged zone.

Esdras' Book of Revelation informs us about the symbolic value of the books of Moses: "On the third day, while I was under a tree, a voice came to me from the side of that tree and said to me: 'Esdras, Esdras!'. I answered: 'Here I am', I got up and stood. The voice continued: 'I appeared to Moses and I spoke to him from the bush while my people were slaves in Egypt. I sent him as a messenger; I caused my people to come out of Egypt, I led them to Mount Sinai and I established them for a long time near me. I told them of many marvels; I taught them the mystery of days, I showed them the last times and I gave them this order: Tell this, hide that'"

(3).

But if we only consider the fact of the flood, we will be led to recognize that such a cataclysm was bound to leave profound signs of its passage and to somewhat modify the topography of the continents and the seas. It would be a serious mistake to believe that the geographical outline of ones and the others, their reciprocal situations, their layout on the surface of the globe the same 25 centuries ago at the most, from that they are today. In spite of our respect for the work of scientists who were concerned with prehistoric times, we should accept, only with the utmost reserve, the maps of the quaternary period reproducing the current configuration of the globe. It is obvious, for example, that an important part of the French soil was submerged for a long time, covered with sea sand, abundantly provided with shells, and of various calcareous terrains with imprints of ammonites. Let us also recall that the island of Jersey was still connected to the Cotentin Peninsula in Normandy in 709, the year when the waters of the Channel invaded the vast forest which went as far as Ouessant and was used as shelter for many villages.

History also reports that the Gauls, questioned as to what could inspire in them the greatest of terror, used to respond: "We have only one fear, it is that the sky fall on our heads". But this jest which was made out to be a proof of their daring bravery, is it not perhaps hiding a quite different reason? Instead of a simple bragging, would it not be a persistent memory of a real event? Who could dare to assert that our ancestors were not indeed the horrified victims of a collapsing sky in formidable cataracts, among the darkness of which a night lasted for generations?

## **ATLANTIS**

Did this mysterious island, of which Plato left the enigmatic description, ever exist? A question difficult to solve, given the weakness of the means which science possesses to penetrate the secret of the abysses. Nevertheless, some observations seem to support the partisans of the existence of Atlantis. Indeed, soundings done in the Atlantic Ocean have allowed us to bring back to the surface fragments of lava whose structure irrefutably proves that they have been crystallized while in contact with air. It therefore seems that the volcanoes which ejected this lava were then rising on lands that had not yet been flooded. Another argument was thought to be discovered which seemed appropriate to justify the assertion of the Egyptian priests and Plato's tale, in this particular fact that the flora of Central America is similar to that of Portugal; the same vegetable species, transmitted by way of land would indicate a close continental relationship between the old and the new world. As for us, we see nothing impossible in the fact that Atlantis could have held an important place among the inhabited regions, nor in the fact that a civilization could have developed to the extent of reaching this high degree that God seems to have fixed as the being the limit of human progress: "You shall go no farther". Limits beyond which the symptoms of decadence manifest themselves, the fall is more pronounced if ruin is not sped up by the sudden eruption of an

unforeseen catastrophe.

Faith in the truthfulness of Plato's works results in believing the reality of the periodical upheavals of which the Mosaic Flood, we said it, remains the written symbol and the sacred prototype. To those who negate what the priests of Egypt entrusted to Solon, we would only ask to explain to us what Aristotle's master wanted to reveal by this fiction of a sinister nature. For we indeed believe that beyond doubt, Plato became the propagator of very ancient truths, and that consequently his books contain a set, a body of hidden knowledge. His *Geometric Number*, and *Cave* have their signification; why should the myth of Atlantis not have its own. Atlantis must have undergone the same fate as the others, and the catastrophe which submerged it falls obviously into the same cause as that which buried, 48 centuries later, under a profound sheet of water, Egypt, the Sahara, and the countries of Northern Africa. But more favored than the land of the Atlantean, Egypt gained from a raising of the bottom of the ocean and came back to the light of day, after a certain time of immersion. For Algeria and Tunisia with their dry "chotts" covered with a thick layer of salt, the Sahara and Egypt with their soils constituted for a large part of sea sand show that the waters invaded and covered vast expanses of the African continent. The columns of the Pharaohs' temples bear on them undeniable traces of immersion; in the hypostyle chambers, the slabs, still extant, which form the ceilings have been raised and moved by the oscillating motion of the waves; the disappearance of the outer coating of the pyramids and in general that of the stone joints (the Colossus of Memnon who used to sing) the evident traces of corrosion by water that can be noticed on the Sphinx of Giza, as well as on many other works of Egyptian statuary have no other origin. Moreover, it is probable that the priestly caste did not ignore the fate which was reserved for their country. This is perhaps the reason why the royal hypogaea were carved deep into the rock and that their openings were hermetically sealed. Could we not also recognize in it the effect of this belief in a future flood, in the mandatory crossing that the soul of the deceased had to accomplish after the body's death, and which justified the presence, among so many other symbols, of these rigged small boats, this miniature flotilla, which are a part of the funereal furniture from Ezekiel (4), which announces to the disappearance of Egypt, is categorical and cannot lend itself to any ambiguity:

"I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven I will make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord God. I will also vex the hearts of many people, when I shall bring thy destruction among the nations, into the countries which thou hast not known... When I shall make the land of Egypt desolate, and the country shall be destitute of that whereof it was full, when I shall smite all them that dwell therein, then shall they know that I am the Lord".

## **THE CONFLAGRATION**

The cyclic history begins, at the 6th chapter of Genesis, with the narrative of the Flood; it ends, at the 20th chapter with the Book of Revelation, in the blazing flames of Judgment Day. Moses, rescued from the waters, writes the first one; St John, sacred figure of the solar exaltation, closes the book with the seals of fire and of sulphur.

In Melle (Deux-Sevres), one can admire the mystic knight, of whom the visionary of Patmos speaks, and who must come in the fullness of light and spring forth from the fire, in the manner of a pure spirit (Plate XLII). It is a solemn and noble statue that, under a semicircular arch of the St Peter Church, stands above the Southern porch, which because of its orientation is always subjected to the rays of the sun. The bow and the crown are given to him in the midst of the ineffable divine glory, whose lashing luster burns up everything it illuminates. While our horseman does not show the symbolic weapon, he is however covered with the sign of all royalties. His rigid bearing, his great stature announce power, but the expression of his face seems stamped with some sadness. His features compare to that of Christ, of the King of Kings, of the Lord of Lords, of the Son of Man who, according to Lentulus' report, was never seen to laugh, although he was often seen to cry. And we understand that it is not without melancholy that he comes back down here, to the places of his Passion, he, the eternal messenger of his Father, to impose on the perverted world, the ultimate trial, and to ruthlessly reap a shameful mankind. Mankind, ripe for the supreme punishment, is represented by the character hit and trampled by the horse, without its rider betraying the slightest concern.

Each period of 1200 years begins and ends with a catastrophe; human evolution expands and grows in the space of two scourges. Fire and water, the agents of all material mutations, work together during the same amount of time and each on an opposite region of the Earth. And, as the solar displacement, that is to say the ascent of the celestial body to the zenith of the pole, remains the bog engine for this elemental conflagration, its result is that the same hemisphere is once submerged at the end of a cyclic can once calcined at the end of the next one. While the South undergoes the paired heat of the sun with the fire of the earth, the North undergoes the constant affusion of the Southern seas, vaporized in the midst of the blazing fire, then condensed into huge clouds, constantly forced back. Now, since, during the previous cycle, the waters of the flood drowned our Northern Hemisphere, we should think that the flames of Judgment Day will consume it, during the last days of the present one.

We should calmly wait for our last hour; one of punishment for many, and of martyrdom for some.

In a concise, albeit very clear, manner, St Peter, the Christian Great Initiate, accurately marks the difference presented by the two cataclysms as they succeed one another in the same hemisphere, that is to say in ours, for the present case: "Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming?, for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they are willingly ignorant, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water. Whereby the world that was then, being overflowed with water, perished. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men... But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with great noise, and the element shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up... Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" (5) .

The obelisk of Dommartin-sur-Tigeaux (Seine-et-Marne) is the tangible, expressive image, absolutely conforming to tradition, of the double terrestrial calamity, of the conflagration and of the flood, on the terrible Judgment Day (Plate XLIII).

Erected upon a mound, at the culminating point of the Crecy Forest (altitude 134 meters), the obelisk towers above the surroundings, and, by the openings of the forest roads, can be glimpsed from afar. The spot it is in was admirably chosen. It occupies the center of a geometrically regular crossing, formed by the intersection of three roads, which gives it the appearance of a radiating six-rayed star. So this monument seems to be erected on the place of the ancient hexagram; a figure composed of the water and fire triangles, which is used as the signature of the physical Great Work and of its result, the Philosophers' Stone.

The work, quite stylish, is made of three distinct parts: an oblong strongly built base, with a square section and rounded angles; a shaft formed by a quadrangular pyramid with chamfered edges; finally an amortissement concentrated all the interest of this building. It shows, as a matter of fact, a terrestrial globe given over to the joined forces of water and fire. Resting on the waves of a raging sea, the sphere of the world, hit on the higher pole by the sun in a helical reversal, catches fire and throws off lightnings and thunderbolts. Here is, as we said, the vivid representation of the huge conflagration and flood, equally purifying and dispensing of justice.

Two sides of the pyramid are exactly aligned on the highway's North-South axis. On the Southern side, one can notice the image of an old oak sculpted in bas-relief. According to Monsieur Pignard-Peguet (6), this oak tree was above a Latin inscription which is now hammered out. The other facets bore, as intaglio engravings, a scepter on one, a hand of justice on the other, a medallion bearing the King's coat of arms on the last one.

If we question the oak of stone, it can answer us that times are near, because it is its figurative foreboding. It is the revealing symbol of our times of decadence and perversion; and the initiate, to whom we owe the obelisk, carefully chose the oak tree as a frontispiece for his work, in the fashion of a cabalistic prologue, in charge of pinpointing in time the ill-omened period of the end of the world. The characteristics of this period, which is ours, are clearly indicated in the 24th chapter of The Gospel of St Matthew: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars... and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matt. 24: 6-8). These frequent geological tremors, accompanied with unexplained climatic changes, the consequences of which are propagated among the different peoples, which they worry and among the societies, which they upset, are symbolically expressed by the oak. This word, whose French pronunciation (chene) is lisped, phonetically corresponds to the Greek word [\*520-1] (Khen), and designates the common goose. The old oak tree, because of this fact, takes on the same value as the expression the old goose and the secret meaning of the old law (7), heralding the return of the Ancient Covenant or of the Reign of God.

The Tales of Mother Goose (8) (mother law, primary law) are hermetical narratives where esoteric truths mingle with the marvelous and legendary setting of the Saturnalia, of Paradise, and of the Golden Age.

## **THE GOLDEN AGE**

In the time of the Golden Age, the regenerated man knows no religion. He only gives thanks to the Creator, whose sun, his most sublime creation, seems to reflect the ardent, luminous, and benevolent image. He respects, honors and venerates God in this radiating globe which is the heart and brain of Nature and the dispenser of earthly goods. Visible representative of the Lord, the Sun is also the tangible evidence of his power, of his greatness, and of his goodness. In the midst of the radiating celestial body, under the pure sky of a rejuvenated earth, man admires the divine works, without outer manifestations, without rites, without veils. Contemplative, and ignorant of need, desire and suffering, he holds toward the master of the

Universe this touching and deep gratitude that simple souls possess, and this boundless affection that binds the son to the Father. The Golden Age, a solar age par excellence, has for cyclic symbol the very image of the celestial body, the hieroglyph that has always been used by the old alchemists, in order to express the metallic gold or mineral sun. On the spiritual level, the Golden Age is personified by the evangelist St Luke. The Greek [\*520-2] (Luchas), from [\*520-3] (Luchnos), light, lamp, torch, lucis in Latin), brings us to consider the Gospel according to Luke, as the Gospel according to the Light. It is the Solar Gospel esoterically conveying the journey of the celestial body and that of its rays, back to their primary state of splendor. It marks the dawn of a new era, the exaltation of the radiating power over the regenerated earth and the return of the yearly and cyclical orb ([\*521-1] ---Lucabas ---in Greek inscriptions, meaning year). St Luke has for the attribute the bull or winged ox, a spiritualized solar figure, the emblem of the vibratory and luminous movement, brought back to viable living conditions of animated beings.

This happy and blessed time of the golden age, during which Adam and Eve lived in a state of simplicity and ignorance, is designated under the name of Earthly Paradise. The Greek word [\*520-2] (Paradeisos), paradise, seems to derive from the Persian or Chaldean root of Pardes, which means delicious garden. At least, it is in the sense that it is used by the Greek authors, in particular by Xenophoros and Diodorus of Sicily, to qualify the magnificent gardens that the Kings of Persia used to possess. The same meaning is applied by the Seventy in their translation of Genesis (Ch. II, v. 8), to the marvelous stay of our first parents. Men have wanted to find on which geographical part of the globe, God had placed this Eden with an enchanting setting. The hypotheses do not agree much with one another on this point; thus, some writers such as Philo the Jew and Origenus cut the discussion short by claiming that the earthly Paradise, as Moses describes it, never had any physical existence. According to them it is appropriate to understand in an allegorical sense everything ascribed to it in the Scriptures.

All the same, we consider accurate all the descriptions that have been made of the earthly Paradise, or, if you prefer, of the golden age; but we are not going to dwell on the various theses aimed at proving that the refuge, inhabited by our ancestors, was located in one well defined country. Of we deliberately don't specify where it was located, it is only because, during each cyclic revolution, there is only one thin belt left, that is respected and which remains fit for habitation on its earthly soil. However we emphasize it, the zone of salvation and mercifulness is located sometimes in the Northern Hemisphere, in the beginning of the cycle, sometimes in the Southern Hemisphere, at the beginning of the next cycle.

Let's recapitulate. The earth, as everything that lives from it, in it and through it, has its foreseen and determined time, its evolutionary times rigorously fixed, established, separated by as many inactive periods. It is therefore condemned to die, in order to be born again and these temporary lives occurring between its regeneration, or birth, and mutation, or death, are called Cycles by most of the ancient philosophers. The cycle then is the time separating two convulsions of the earth of the same order, which are accomplished after a complete revolution of the Great Circular Period, divided into four epochs of equal duration, which are the four Ages of the World. These four divisions of the life of the earth succeed one another according to the rhythm which forms the solar year: Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. Thus the cyclical ages correspond to the seasons of the annual seasonal movement, and they, as a whole, the names of Great Period, Great Year, and even more frequently, Solar Cycle.

**END**

(1) In Greek, Arara, or Arera, perfect tense of ararisko means to be attached, fixed, stopped, firm, immutable. (2) Translator's note: Rainbow in French is arc-en-ciel, literally the Ark in the Heaven. (3) Rene Basset: Apocryphes Ethiopiens (Apocryphal Writings from Ethiopia), Paris, Bibliotheque de la Haute Science, 1899, Ch. 14, v. 1-6. (4) Ezekiel, chap. 327-9, 15, The Lamentation for Pharoah. (5) II Peter 3:3-7, 10, 13. (6) Histoire Generale des Departementes, Seine-et-Marne (Illustrated History of the French Departments, Seine-et-Marne), Auguste Gout et Cie., Orleans, 1911, p. 249. (7) Translator's note: in French vieille oie (old goose) and vieille loi (old law) have almost the same pronunciation. (8) Translator's note: In French "Les contes de ma mere l'oie". My mother the goose and my mother the law, sound exactly the same.

## **APPENDICES PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION**

Long considered a chimera, alchemy appears to the scientific world more and more every day. The words of scientists on the constitution of matter and their recent discoveries show and give evidence of the dissociation potential of chemical elements. Nowadays, no one any longer doubts that the elements, once regarded as simple, are in fact any partisans. The deceptive concept of inertia disappears from the Universe, and that which only yesterday seemed heresy has today become dogma. With an impressive uniformity of action, but in varying degrees, life manifests itself in the three kingdoms of nature, once clearly separated, and among which there is no longer any distinction made. Origin and vitality are shared by the triple group of the ancient classification. Crude substance proves to be animate. Beings and things evolve, progress through constant transformations and new beginnings. Through the multiplicity of their exchanges and combinations, they

separate themselves from the original unity, only to resume their original simplicity under the influence of decompositions. Sublime harmony of the great Totality, immense circle through which the Spirit goes in its eternal activity and which has for center the unique living fragment, emanating from the creative Logos.

And so, after having strayed from the correct path, modern science seeks to rejoin it, progressively adopting ancient concepts. Much like successive civilizations, human progress obeys the inescapable law of perpetual renewal. Though it be against all, Truth always triumphs, in spite of its slow, painful, and tortuous advance. Sooner or later common sense and simplicity gets the better of sophistry and prejudices. "For there is nothing", the Gospel teaches, "which cannot be discovered and nothing so secret that it cannot be known". (Matt. 10:26).

Yet, we should not believe that traditional science, whose elements Fulcanelli assembled, has been adapted for the general public in the present work. The author makes no such pretense. He would greatly delude himself who hoped to understand the secret doctrine after a simple reading. "Our books have not been written for all", repeat the old masters, "though all are called upon to read them". For each one of us must contribute his personal effort which is definitely essential if he wants to acquire the notions of a science which has never ceased to be esoteric. This is why the philosophers, aiming to hide its principles from the masses, have concealed the ancient knowledge in the mystery of words and the veil of allegories.

The ignoramus will not so easily forgive alchemists their allegiance to the rigorous discipline they have freely accepted. I know my master cannot shun this same criterion. Before all, he had to respect the divine will, giver of light and revelation. He also owed obedience to the philosophers' law which imposes upon initiates the necessity of inviolable secrecy.

In antiquity, and especially in Egypt, primordial submission applied to all branches of science and the industrial arts. Potters, enamellers, goldsmiths, foundry workers, worked inside of temples. The working personnel, of workshops and laboratories were part of the priestly class and answered directly to the priests. From the Middle Ages up to the 19th century history shows us numerous examples of similar organizations in chivalry, the monastic orders, freemasonry, trade guilds, etc., many professional associations jealously guarded the secrets of their science or their trades; they always maintained a mystical or symbolic character, kept traditional customs, and practiced religious ethics. We know the tremendous respect which the gentlemen glassworkers enjoyed with kings and princes, and to which extent they took care to prevent the circulation of the secrets specific to the noble industry of glassmaking.

These exclusionary rules have a profound reason. If I were to be asked, I would simply say that the privilege of science should remain the prerogative of a scientific elite. The most beautiful discoveries prove to be more harmful than useful once they have fallen into the popular domain, and are distributed without discernment to the masses and blindly exploited by them. Man's nature pushes him voluntarily towards evil and the worse. More often than not, that which could bring him well-being turns to his disadvantage and eventually becomes the instrument of his ruin. Methods of modern warfare are, alas! The most striking and the saddest proof of this disastrous state of mind. Homo homini lupus (Man is wolf to man). For the mere reason that they used overly obscure language, it would be unfair in the face of so serious a danger to bury the memory of our great ancestors under a reprobation that they do not deserve.. Must we condemn them all and despise them, only for the fact that they showed too much restraint? By shrouding their works in silence and their revelations in parables, the philosophers acted wisely. Respectful of social institutions, they harm no one and ensure their own safety.

Allow me, on this topic, a simple anecdote.

An admirer of Fulcanelli was once conversing with one of our best chemists and asked for his opinion on metallic transmutation.

"I believe it is possible", said the scientist, "though its realization is rather doubtful". "And, if some sincere witness certified that he had seen it, and if he brought you a categorical proof", replied the master's friend, "what would you think?".

Answered the chemist: "I would think that such a man should be mercilessly hounded and suppressed as a dangerous criminal".

Consequently, prudence, extreme caution, and absolute discretion appear fully justified. For, after this, who could blame Adepts for the particular style which they use in their divulgations? Who would dare to throw the first stone at the author of this book?

Yet, because of the opinion we might have formed of a teaching where clear language remains forbidden, we should not conclude that there is nothing to discover in the books of the philosophers. Much to the contrary. To be gifted with a little sagacity is sufficient to know how to read them and understand the essentials.

Among ancient authors and modern writers, Fulcanelli is without doubt the most sincere and the most convincing. He establishes the hermetic theory on a solid basis, supports it with evident analogical facts, and then presents it in a simple and precise manner. To discover on what ground the principles of the art have been laid, the student, because of the clear and firm development, only needs to make a few efforts. He will even be able to accumulate a great number of the necessary pieces of knowledge. Thus equipped, he will then be able to attempt this great work and leave the speculative domain for that of positive realizations.

From this moment on, he will encounter the first difficulties, and he will have to clear numerous and practically insurmountable obstacles. There is not a researcher who doesn't know these stumbling blocks, these insurmountable limits against which I myself, several times, nearly failed. Of this, my master has kept the permanent memory, even more than I did. Much like Basil Valentine, his true initiator, he was held in check without being able to find a solution for more than 30 years!

Fulcanelli elaborated on the practical details much further than anyone else, out of charity for the workers, his brothers, in order to help them vanquish these trying causes of interruption. His method is different from that employed by his predecessors; it consists in describing in detail all the operations of the Work. After having divided them into several fragments. He thus takes each of the phases of the Work, begins its explanation in a chapter, interrupts it to continue it in another, and completes it in a final passage. This parceling out, which turns the Magistry into a philosophical puzzle, will not frighten the educated investigator; but it quickly discourages the layman, incapable of finding his way in this labyrinth of a different nature, and unqualified to uncover the correct sequence of the manipulations.

Such is the essential interest of this book which Fulcanelli presents to the cultivated reader, called upon to judge the work according to its value, according to its originality, or perhaps to appreciate it according to its merit.

Finally, I would feel I had overlooked something if I did not mention the remarkable and splendid drawings of the painter, Julien Champagne. This excellent artist is worthy here, again, of the greatest praise. I am also happy to extend my thanks to the editor, Monsieur Jean Schemit, whose trustworthy taste and proven competence so perfectly guided the building of the material form of the book *The Dwellings of the Philosophers*.

*Eugene Canseliet*

*F.C.H.*

*April 1929*

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# **The Emerald Tablet**

by  
**Hermes**

A fundamental truth, without error, perfect and complete.

As above, so below; the lesser and greater; microcosm and macrocosm: they are the same. Following this principle, all things were made from the One.

And as all things arose from a thought by the One; thus all things were formed as an adaption of the One. This is the fundamental principle.

Its father is the Sun, its mother is the Moon, it is carried by the wind, it is nursed by the earth.

Its power is complete if it can be turned into earth.

Seperate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the dense, the light from the heavy, with care and wisdom.

It repeatedly ascends from earth to heaven, and then descends from heaven to earth, thus receiving power from both the high and the low.

Then you will have the glory of the whole world. All ignorance will flee from you.

It is true force and the most powerful, for it conquers all subtle things and penetrates all solid things.

This is how the world was made.

Each level is a reflection of the one above; the microcosm is in accordance with the macrocosm. Now you know how all things are made through adaption from the One.

This is the path of knowledge. Hence I am Hermes Thrice-Great, having three parts of the philosophy of the whole world.

I have said all that is needed concerning the operation of the Sun.

<http://bookofaquarius.forgottenbooks.org>

# The Fount of Chemical Truth

by Eirenaeus Philalethes

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Our Magistry consists of three parts: the first deals with the essential and substantial composition of our Stone; the second describes their manner of combination; the third the mode of chemical procedure. Our substances are "red ore," or matured Sulphur, and water, undigested Mercury, or "white ore." To these a vessel is added, a furnace, and a triple fire. In discussing their manner of combination, we have to consider their weight and the regimen. The weight is twofold, and so is the regimen: between them they produce the following processes -- Calcination, Dissolution, Separation, Conjunction, Putrefaction, Distillation, Coagulation, Sublimation, Fixation, and Exaltation. The first two produce the black, viscous powder, by means of the "unnatural fire," a temperate, incomburent, and altering ignition. There is then a further change into a mineral water. The three operations which follow are the result of the first and third fires, namely, natural and contra-natural, and "circulate" the substance, until the gross is separated from the subtle, and the whole is evenly tempered, the separated elements being then recombined, impregnated, and putrefied.

The five last operations are the result of natural fire which increases and gets stronger from day to day, purifying the putrefied substance of its dross, by continual ascensions and descents. This process is therefore called distillation, volatilization, ablution, imbibition, humectation of the earth, and is continued until the dryness gradually thickens the substances, and, finally, under the influence of coction or continued sublimation, induces fixation, the terminal point of which is exaltation, an exaltation which is not local, from the bottom to the surface, but qualitative, from vileness to the highest excellence.

These operations are sometimes called regimens; but there are only two kinds of fire, the natural and the non-natural, the latter being employed to call out the activity of the former. Putrefaction precedes regeneration, and is caused by the strife of the two fires. That part of the work which is subsequent to putrefaction and conjunction, when the Sulphur and the water have become one, and also receive congelation, is effected by the natural fire alone.

The substances are our body (commonly styled Lemnian earth) and our water (our true rain water). Our water is the life of all things, and if you can by much toil obtain it, you will have both silver and gold. It is the water of Saltpetre, and outwardly resembles Mercury, while inwardly at its heart there burns purest infernal fire. Do not be deceived with common quicksilver, but gather that Mercury which the returning Sun, in the month of March, diffuses everywhere, till the month of October, when it is ripe.

Know that our Mercury is before the eyes of all men, though it is known to few. When it is prepared, its splendour is most admirable; but the sight is vouchsafed to none, save the sons of knowledge. Do not despise it, therefore, when you see it in sordid guise; for if you do, you will never accomplish our Magistry -- and if you can change its countenance, the transformation will be glorious. For our water is a most pure virgin, and is loved of many, but meets all her wooers in foul garments, in order that she may be able to distinguish the worthy from the unworthy. Our beautiful maiden abounds in inward hidden graces; unlike the immodest woman who meets her lovers in splendid garments. To those who do not despise her foul exterior, she then appears in all her beauty, and brings them an infinite dower of riches and health. Our Queen is pure above measure, and her splendour like that of a celestial being -- and so indeed she is called by the Sages, who also style her their quintessence. Her brilliancy is such as baffles imagination, and, if you would have any idea of it, you must see it with your own eyes. Our water is serene, crystalline, pure, and beautiful- though it can assume its true form only through the aid of our Art. In that form it is our sea, our hidden fountain, from which gold derives its birth by natural descent; yet it is also stronger than gold, and overcomes it, wherefore gold is united to it, and is washed in it, and the two together grow up into a strong hero, whom neither Pope nor Emperor can buy for a price. Hence you should, above all things, seek this water, by means of which (with the solitary addition of a clean and perfect body) the Stone may be prepared.

But it requires profound study to become acquainted with all the secrets of our sea, and with its ebb and flow. It took me 18 months, after I had discovered the spring of our water, to find the method of making it well forth, because I did not know the meaning of the fiery furnace of the Sages. When I discovered it, indeed, the sight which I beheld richly rewarded me for all my pains. I was then suddenly, as by a flash of inspiration, enabled to understand all the secret words and enigmas of the Sages. Our water is the fire which causes both death, and, through death, a more glorious life. Whoever discovers it has reached the autumn of his Magistry, as Nature will then (when the pure body has been put into it) perform all the other processes, and carry the substance onward to perfection through all the different regimens. This water, though one, is not simple, but compounded of two things: the vessel and the fire of the Sages. and the bond which holds the two together. So when we speak of our vessel, and our fire, we mean by both expressions, our water; nor is our furnace anything diverse or distinct from our water. There is then one vessel, one furnace, one fire, and all these make up one water. The fire digests, the vessel whitens and penetrates, the furnace is the: bond which comprises and encloses all, and all these three are our Mercury. There are many kinds of fire (and of water) in our Magistry, but all these only represent different aspects of our Mercury.

There is only one thing in the whole world from which our Mercury can be obtained. It is like gold in essence, but different in substance, and if you change its elements you will have what you seek. Join heaven to earth in the fire of love, and you will see in the middle of the firmament the bird of Hermes. Do not confound the natures, but separate and re-combine them, and you will reign in honour all your life.

In the South-west there is a high mountain (very near the Sun), one of seven, and the second in height This mountain is of a very hot temperature (because it is not far from the Sun), and in this mountain is enclosed a vapour or spirit, whose services are

indispensable for our work. But it does not ascend, unless it is quickened, nor is it quickened unless you dig knee-deep on the summit of the mountain. If you do this, a subtle exhalation (or spirit) ascends, and is congealed by the air into drops of beautifully limpid water -- which is our water, our fire, our vessel, and our furnace; not common Mercury, but the hot and moist liquid of most pure Salt, which we call Mercury, because in comparison with the Sun, it is immature and cold. If the Almighty had not created this Mercury, the transmutation of metals would be impossible, because gold does not tinge unless it be first tinged itself. Our Mercury is the beloved spouse of gold, and changes its body into a purely spiritual substance; gold loves it so, that for very love he dies, and is revived by his spouse, and she is impregnated by him, and conceives, and bears a most beautiful royal son. The whole knowledge of our Art consists in the discovery of this our sea; any Alchemist who is ignorant of it, is simply wasting his money. Our sea is derived from the mountain of which I told you above. The exhalation or white smoke which ascends there, will accomplish our whole Magistry. There is another secret which you should know if you wish to see your hope fulfilled, viz., how you are to dig a hole in the mountain, as its surface is impenetrable to ordinary tools, its dryness being such that it has become harder than a flint. But in the places of Saturn a small herb is found, called Saturnia, whose twigs appear dry, but in whose roots there is abundance of juice. This herb you should carefully take up with the roots, and carry with you to the foot of the mountain, and, with the help of fire, bury it beneath the mountain; its virtue will at once penetrate the whole mountain, and soften its earth. Then you may ascend to the summit, easily dig a hole knee deep, and pour in so much dry and viscous water, that it penetrates to where the herb lies buried, and makes it ascend as a fume, which carries upward with it the spirit of the mountain. This spirit is the strength of fire mingling with water, and dwelling in it. The spirit of Saturnia is the whitening fume, the vapour of the mountain is fire, and all these things are fire. Thus you obtain Saturnia, the royal plant and mineral herb, which together with fat flesh makes such a soup as to eclipse the richest banquets in the world. Here is an enigmatic description of our water, which should in course of time and study, become plain to the diligent enquirer. There is the King (gold), and the water which is the King's Bath; our water is the vessel, inasmuch as our King is enclosed in it, and the furnace, inasmuch as our fire is enclosed in it, and our fire, inasmuch as the virtue or spirit of the mountain dwells in it, and the woman, inasmuch as it receives the vapour of the plant Saturnia; and as the dear friend of the Sun penetrates, whitens, and softens it, and causes it to emit its sperm. Then the fiery virtue which is in the water, begins to act on our body, wasting and mortifying it, until at length the innate heat of the Sun is roused into activity. Our Stone is called a little world, because it contains within itself the active and the passive, the motor and the thing moved, the fixed and the volatile, the mature and the crude -- which, being homogeneous, help and perfect each other. We have already shewn that our object in adding matured Sulphur to crude Mercury (the same thing in different stages of development), is to shorten and accelerate the natural process. Gold is a hot and dry body, silver a frigid and humid one, Mercury the means of conveying tinctures. The body of the Sun is most highly digested, that of the Moon imperfect and immature, while Mercury is the bond by which these two contraries are united. Join the Moon to Mercury by means of proper heat, so that the two become one Mercury which retains its inward fire; then the Mercury will be freed from all dross and superfluities, and it will become transparent like the tears we shed, though not exactly perspicuous. If you then unite this purified Mercury to gold, in which is the Moon and fire, the hot and dry will love the-cold and humid, and they will unite

on the bed of the fire of friendship; the man will dissolve over the woman, and the woman be coagulated over the man, till the spirit and the body become one by commixtion. Continue the same operation (let the heaven descend to the earth) till the spirit puts on the body, and both are fixed together. Then our Stone will have obtained its royal virtue. For Mercury is the water of all metals, and they are digested in it. When vegetables are boiled in ordinary water, which is naturally frigid and humid, it partakes of their qualities, and is yet separable from them; so the pure Mercury, which is in all metals and minerals, is perfectly separable from the dross and foreign matter which has become mixed up with them; yet the different minerals and metals qualify the Mercury in the same way as the water is qualified by the vegetables cooked in it. There are these two differences between the Mercury and the water, that the water is not coagulated and fixed with the vegetables as our water is with the metals; and that, while the colour of common water is changed by anything boiled in it, Mercury retains its own colour and fluxibility, though its essence is qualified. Therefore the Mercury is effectual in the dissolution of the metal, and the metal in the coagulation of the Mercury; and as, in the dissolution, the form and colour of the metal is latent in the form and colour of the Mercury, so, in coagulation, the form and colour of the Mercury is hidden in the form and colour of the metal; neither do the qualities of the metal in dissolution prevent the fluxibility of the Mercury, nor the qualities of Mercury in coagulation the fixity of the metal. Do you not here observe a wonderful harmony between Mercury and the metals? For their love is like that of mother and son, sister and brother, male and female. Hence they are calculated mutually to perfect each other, the water imparting to the body a spiritual and volatile nature, while the body gives to the water a corporeal substance. The reason that the colour of Mercury is not changed in coction by the dissolved body, is this: the earth and water in the Mercury are homogeneous, and so well tempered that neither can be separated from the other, and they are so well mixed that the whole substance exhibits (together with great fluxibility) so great a consistency as entirely to conceal the colours -- and only if a part of the Mercury is destroyed or marred by some deleterious chemical corrosive, are the colours seen. The relations of Mercury in respect of earth and water are these: in respect of water it is fluxible and liquid, in respect of earth it moistens nothing but what is of the same essence with it. These hints will enable you to detect any errors in your treatment of Mercury. Some obstruct or divide its homogeneity by unduly drying up its water; others corrupt the earth and render it diaphanous by disproportionate mixing. Mercury is the sperm of the metals; it contains in itself the Sulphur by which alone it is digested (through which Nature would in course of time have matured it into gold); nor would it be possible to convert Mercury into gold without it. This mature Sulphur, then, is radically mixed with the Mercury, and rapidly digests it, while itself is putrefied by the Mercury, and is revived again, not as common, but as spiritual, penetrative, and tinging gold, which has power to purify imperfect metals of all their dross, and to change them into its own nature. Thus you see that none of the Mercury should be destroyed, or violently dealt with; all you have to do is to add to it a mature body sprung from the same root, and mix the two in their smallest parts, by means of our cunning conjunction (which is performed, not by a manual, but by a purely natural process, of which the Artist does not even understand the cause). We must distinguish, however, between our transmutative conjunction, and a sort of conjunction practised by sophists which is merely a fusing together of the two substances, and leaves each exactly what it was before. In our operation the spirit of gold infuses itself into the spirit of Mercury, and their union becomes as inseparable as that of water mixed with water. The conjunction can take place only by means of

the Moon or an imperfect body and fire; and this Moon is the sap of the water of life, which is hidden in Mercury, and is stirred up by fire; it is a spirit which enters the body, and compels it to retain its soul. We speak not of common Mercury (which lacks the spirit and fire), but of our Mercurial water -- though common Mercury may be made like it by the addition of that which it lacks. Our conjunction is the grand secret of our Art for earth is not inseparably united to water, but the union of water with water is indissoluble; hence our conjunction can take place only after dissolution, which dissolution takes place through the Moon and fire that are in the Mercury. For the Moon penetrates and whitens, and the fire mortifies and frets, while water combines both these properties, according to the philosophical dictum: "The fire which I shew you, is water," and, "Unless the bodies are subtilized by fire and water, nothing can be done in our Magistry." Thus everything, from beginning to end, is accomplished, not by sophisticated operations, but by our Mercury, which, unless it be violently impeded, is kept to the right road by the necessity of arriving at a certain goal.

Some Alchemists fail because they put (common) gold with Mercury in a phial over the fire, and thus sow good seed in barren earth. But gold is not the substance of our Stone in its whole essence, nor yet Mercury. What we want for our work of generation is the seed of gold which is profoundly hidden in our metal. This seed must be received into its own proper womb, and there mingle with the female seed, in order that, being kindly fostered with heat, and fed with its proper aliment, it may become that part of gold which is of abundant use in our work. It is not the whole of a man that generates the infant, but only his seed, which is rightly disposed in the proper womb; and so only the seed of gold (and not the whole metal) is useful for our metallic generation. Gold is the Father of our Stone, the substance of our Stone is in gold, but gold is not the substance of our Stone; yet there is that in gold (the sperm) which, by right manipulation, may become our Stone. We extract from gold, by a cunning process, that which is its most highly matured virtue, and this is called, not common, dead, but our living gold. The difference between common gold and our gold, is that which exists between a Father and his seed; common gold is dead and useless, as far as our work is concerned, until it emits its living seed. Take the body of gold, then, and gently extract from it its seed, and you will have the living male seed of our Stone, which we now no longer call gold, but ore, magnesia, lead, etc. -- because it is no longer a body, like gold, but a chaos, or spirit, which cannot revert to its corporeal form. Aristotle says: "The first thing you should do is to sublime the Mercury, then you should put a pure body into the pure Mercury." The sublimation of the Mercury which is here referred to, is not an artificial, but a true and natural one. It is the " first preparation of the thin substance," by which the eclipse caused by the interposition of Earth is removed from the Moon, enabling her to receive the light of the Sun -- which happens when the murky sphere of Saturn (that overshadowed the whole horizon) is removed, and Jupiter ascends the throne; then there rises upward a mist of dazzling whiteness, whence there is distilled upon the earth a pure, sweet, and fragrant dew, that softens it and stirs up great winds at its centre; these winds bear our Stone upward, where it is endowed with heavenly virtue, and thence descending once more to its nurse, the earth, is clothed upon with a corporeal nature, and thus receives the strength both of things above and of things below. This living gold is "that which is, but does not appear till it pleases the Artist, and in the knowledge of which is the secret of all perfection." Mercury is our field, in which the Sun rises and sets; let the two be inseparably united on the bed of love, till from this (regenerate) Mercury there

comes forth a quickening virtue, which is able to raise the dead. Then there will appear the royal child, whose father is the Sun, whose mother is the Moon... Besides these things, we need, of course, a furnace of clay, a vessel of glass, and a triple fire; but we do not call these three our vessel, our fire, or our furnace, because ordinary sophists employ these things as well as the Sages; when we speak of our vessel, our furnace, and our fire, the terms are to be interpreted in accordance with the explanation which we gave above. Of this fire a Sage might well say: "Behold, the fire, which I will shew you, is water "; - and again, "The vessel of the Sages is their water." Another Sage says, that all our operations take place in our humid fire, in our secret furnace, and our hidden vessel, and thereby clearly shews that there must be a fire, vessel, and furnace, other than those which ignorant Alchemists possess in greater perfection and abundance than we. Our appliances are part of our substance, and are described by Sendivogius, for instance, as the "vessel of Nature," and the "fire of Nature." This practice is followed by Flamellus, Artephius, Lullius, and all other Sages; and I tell you that these three appliances are, after all, only one; for the nature of our substance is one. Our fire is that which dissolves and heats bodies more effectually than ordinary fire; hence it is called ardent wine and a most strong fire, and the Sages bid us burn our ore with our most strong fire -- words which are falsely interpreted of an ordinary coal fire. Of this fire John Mehungus writes: "No artificial fire can infuse so high a degree of heat as that which comes from heaven."

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# THE GLORY OF THE WORLD;

OR,

TABLE OF PARADISE;

THAT IS TO SAY,

**A TRUE ACCOUNT OF THE ANCIENT SCIENCE WHICH ADAM LEARNED  
FROM GOD HIMSELF; WHICH NOAH, ABRAHAM, AND SOLOMON  
HELD AS ONE OF THE GREATEST GIFTS OF GOD; WHICH  
ALSO ALL SAGES, AT ALL TIMES, PREFERRED TO THE  
WEALTH OF THE WHOLE WORLD, REGARDED AS  
THE CHIEF TREASURE OF THE WHOLE  
WORLD, AND BEQUEATHED ONLY TO  
GOOD MEN;**

NAMELY,

**THE SCIENCE OF THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE.**

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2 PET. iii., 5:

*"For this they willingly, through their wickedness, are ignorant  
of, that through the Word at God the heavens were of old, and  
the earth standing out of the water, and in the water."*





# THE GLORY OF THE WORLD,

OR,

## TABLE OF PARADISE:

A most precious book, containing art, the like of which is not to be found upon earth; shewing the truth concerning the true Philosophy, and the most noble medicine, and priceless Tincture, together with divers other valuable Arts, and the Instruments required for them.

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NOW, in the name of God, the Almighty Creator and Preserver of this World, I venture to shew forth the hidden mysteries of Nature, which God has planted there, and deigns to reveal to men, that they may see how marvellously things are created, and how wonderfully all classes of natural objects are brought forth: for a testimony to all believing Christian men, and for a comfort to all afflicted and troubled hearts—seeing that all things created perish and are decomposed only to be renewed again, to be multiplied, animated, and perfected after their kind. For nothing that is created, or born, is at rest, but daily undergoes increase or multiplication on the part of Nature, until it becomes that which is created and ordained to be the treasure of all mankind.

Therefore, beseech God to give you such wisdom and understanding as will enable you to understand this Art, and to bring it, by His blessing, to a good issue for His own glory, and the good of your neighbour.

If then you would obtain this knowledge at the hand of God, you must confess yourself a miserable sinner, and implore His blessing, which alone can enable you to receive His Gift

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worthily, and to bear in mind that He has bestowed it upon you out of pure mercy, and that any pride or presumptuous insolence on your part will most certainly entail its loss, in addition to His wrath, and eternal condemnation. You must resolve to begin this blessed and divine work in the name of God, for the service of all good Christians, and the building up of our faith; to be a good athlete in the war against unbelievers; to shun the company of wicked men; never to open your mouth against the righteous; but to bestow your bounty upon the needy in order that after this life you may receive the crown of eternal joy and beatitude. For this treasure, which is above all other earthly treasures, is granted to him alone who approves himself humble, honest, gentle, and faithful, as far as the weakness of human nature allows, and keeps the laws of God through God's bounty and blessing, and who is not likely to mistake the true nature of the gift, or to abuse it against his own eternal welfare. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit, the loving bounty of the great God, which comes down from the Father of light. He who masters this Art, must have asked and obtained wisdom of God, since he has not only gold, silver, and all the riches of this world, but also perfect health, length of days, and, what is better still, the comfort to be derived

from a reassuring type of the bitter passion and death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, His descent into hell, His glorious and most holy Resurrection on the third day, and His victory and triumph over sin, death, Devil, and hell—a victory that must carry joy and comfort to all that have the breath of life.

Let me now shew you how wonderfully the human and divine natures of Jesus Christ were united and joined together in one Person. The soul and body of Christ and His divine nature were so inseparably joined together that they cannot be severed throughout all eternity. Nevertheless Christ had to die, and His soul had to be separated from His body, and once more joined to it on the third day, that His body might be glorified, and rendered as subtle as His soul and spirit. For He had received His body of the substance of the most Blessed Virgin Mary, and therefore it had to be perfected by temporary separation from His soul and spirit. Nevertheless, His divinity remained united in one essence with the body and soul of Christ—it was with the body in the tomb, and with His soul in Paradise.

The body of Christ had to be separated from its soul in order that it might receive the same power and glory. But now, Christ having been dead, and His soul having afterwards been reunited to His body, they are henceforth inseparably conjoined into one subtle essence. His divine omnipotence which He received from His Father, which governs all things in heaven and earth, and is equally perfect from all eternity, is now one Person with the Christ Jesus, who suffered, died, rose again, and ascended into heaven, in endless power, glory, majesty, might, and honour.

Therefore, O sinful man, render thanks to Almighty God for the grace and fatherly loving kindness shewn to you; and rest assured that you may obtain the glorification which was given to Christ. For Christ rose first that he might open up for you a way unto His heavenly Father. Like Him, you too must be crucified to this world by many hardships, tribulations, and anxieties. But that you may understand the glorification of the body, and its renewal to eternal life, you should diligently consider God's fatherly love and mercy towards fallen man. Bear in mind that all things that come down from Him are good and perfect gifts. Take care, therefore, lest you foully abuse the gifts bestowed upon you freely, without any merit of your own, to the destruction of your soul; rather let all your actions shew that you love and fear God, and then every labour to which you set your hand will prosper, and from beginning to end you will pursue the work successfully and joyously. Commit your care to God, trust His word, and keep His holy commandments: then God will be with you in all things, will bless your toil, and in His fatherly love forefend all loss and harm. Your art will then afford you true comfort, yield you all you need, refresh you amid all your hardships, supply you with the means of relieving the necessities of others, and constantly keep before your eyes a living type of your own glorious resurrection, and of that of all Christian believers—whereby we must exchange this earthly and mortal life for endless joy and the glory of eternal and incorruptible beatitude.

Let me then tell you, who would be a true lover of this Art, that it was first delivered by God to Adam in Paradise. For it is a true revelation of many secrets and mysteries. It shews you the vanity of your body and of your life in this world; but it also solaces you with the hope of eternal salvation. It suggests to you the reflection that if God has infused such wonderful virtues into mere inanimate natural objects, surely we, who are so much better than they, must be reserved for some high and glorious destiny. I

beseech you, therefore, to acquit yourself wisely in all that you do—not to be in haste,—but to reveal this mystery to no mortal man, unless he be a lover of this Art and of a godly, sincere, and merciful temper. Such was the practice of the ancient Sages to whom this wisdom was revealed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. You must also confess that this Art is real, for the sake of those who will not believe that Jesus Christ proceeded from His Almighty Heavenly Father, and was also born of a pure virgin. Moreover, you must ask God to enlighten you by the gift of His Holy Spirit, to sharpen your understanding, to open your eyes, and to grant you a profound insight into that unfathomable wisdom which lies hid in our Art, and which no Sage has ever been able to express in his writings. For there are many secrets in Nature which it is impossible for our unaided human reason to apprehend. If you follow my directions and suffer yourself to be guided by the grace of God, then the work which you undertake for the glory of God, and for the good of your neighbour, will have a joyful issue. Feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; clothe the naked; comfort the afflicted; visit the sick and the prisoners: and you shall have what you desire.

ROBERT VALENS RUGL.

"A spirit is within, which by deliberate skill you must separate from the body. Simply disjoin the material part from the vapour. You should then add the cold water of the spring. With this you should unweariedly sprinkle both. You will then have the true Elixir of all this Art."

*Exhortation and Information*

to all the lovers of this Art, in which they can see, as in a mirror, all the fundamental and essential requirements thereof; whether it is possible or not to arrive at the true Art, and concerning the same.

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I would warn all and sundry, but especially you, my beloved disciples, in clear and impressive language, to be on your guard against all fantastical teaching, and to listen to the truthful information which I shall now proceed to give you.

In the first place, you must give a wide berth to the false Alchemy of the vulgar herd. I have experienced this so much that I am loath to recommend any to undertake the work, since this Art is so well hidden that no mortal on earth can discover it unless Sol and Luna meet. If you give diligent heed to my warning you may attain to a knowledge thereof, but if you do not, you will never approach any nearer to it. Know also that there is only *one* thing in the whole world that enters into the composition of the Stone, and that, therefore, all coagulation, and admixture, of different ingredients, would shew you to be on a wrong scent altogether. If you could perform all the different operations of our art, yet all your dissolving, coagulating, decomposing, distilling, augmenting, albefying, &c., would be useless, without a true knowledge of our Matter. For our Art is good and precious, nor can any one become a partaker of it, unless it be revealed to him by God, or unless he be taught by a skilled Master. It is a

treasure such as the whole world cannot buy. Do not, therefore, my sons, spend your toil until you know what that is on which you are to operate. For even if you knew the right Matter, your information would be useless to you without a knowledge of the method of preparing it. The Stone in its final and effective form is not to be found anywhere in the whole world, either in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath; nor in any metal, nor in anything that grows, nor yet even in gold or silver. It must be prepared, *i.e.*, developed, into its final form; yet for all that, it cannot, strictly speaking, be made better than God created it, nor can the Tincture be prepared out of it: the 'Tincture' must be added to it, and therefore has nothing to do with our main object, since it is a different thing altogether. If it were in any metal, we should surely have to look for it in the Sun or Moon; yet the Moon cannot contain it, or it would long since have become the Sun. Neither is it in mercury, or in any sulphur, or salt, or in herbs, or anything of that nature, as you shall see hereafter. Now we will conclude our exhortation, and proceed to describe the Art itself.

*There follow some Methods of Recognising our Stone.*

## I.

Know that our Stone is one, and that it is justly called a Stone. For it *is* a Stone, and could bear no name so characteristic, as that of the Stone of the Sages. Yet it is not any one of our existing stones, but only derives its appellation from its similarity to them. For our Stone is so prepared as to be composed of the four elements. On this account it has been called by different names, and assumes different forms, although it is *one* thing, and its like is not found upon earth. It is a Stone, and not a stone in the sense of having the nature of any one stone; it is fire, yet it has not the appearance, or properties, of fire; it is air, yet neither has it the appearance, or properties, of air; it is water, but has no resemblance, or affinity, to the nature of water. It is earth, though it has not the nature, or appearance, of earth, seeing that it is a thing by itself.

*Another way of Knowing our Precious Stone.*

## II.

An ancient philosopher says: Our Stone is called the sacred rock, and is divided, or signified, in four ways. Firstly, into earth; secondly, into its accretion; thirdly, into fire; and fourthly, into the flame of fire. If any one knows the method of dissolving it, of extracting its salt, and of perfectly coagulating it, he is initiated in the mysteries of the Sages. Therefore if the salt turn white, and assume an oily appearance, then it tinges. There are three stages in our Art. Firstly, the transmutation of the whole thing into one salt; secondly, the rendering of three subtle bodies intangible; thirdly, the repetition of the whole solution of the whole thing. If you understand this, set your hand to the work. For the Matter is only one thing, and would remain one thing, though a hundred thousand books had been written about it, because this Art is so great a treasure that the whole world would not be a sufficient compensation for it. It is described in obscure terms, yet openly named by all, and known to all. But if all knew its secret, no one would work, and it would lose its value. On this account it would be impious to describe it in universally intelligible language. He to whom God will reveal it, may understand these dark expressions. But because most men do not understand them, they are inclined to regard our Art as impossible, and the Sages are

branded as wicked men and swindlers. Learned doctors, who thus speak of us, have it before their eyes every day, but they do not understand it, because they never attend to it And then, forsooth, they deny the possibility of finding the Stone; nor will any one ever be able to convince them of the reality of our Art, so long as they blindly follow their own bent and inclination In short, they are too wise to discern it, since it transcends the range of the human intellect, and must be humbly received at the hand of God.

*Yet Another Way of Knowing our Blessed Stone.*

The philosopher, Morienus, calls our Stone, water: and he had good reasons for the name. O water of bitter taste, that preservest the elements! O glorious nature, that overcomest Nature herself! O thou that resemblest Nature, which dissolvest her tractable nature, that exaltest Nature—that art crowned with light, and preservest in thyself the four elements, out of which the quintessence is made! Thou art for the simple, seeing that thou art most simple in thy operation. Having conceived by a natural process, thou bringest forth vapour, and art a good mother. Thou needest no outward help; nature preserves nature, and is not separated from nature by the operation of nature. The thing is easy to find, the knowledge is easy, altogether familiar, yet it is as a miracle to many. Thy solution is great glory, and all thy lovers are named above. Thou art a great arcanum and to the many thou appearest impossible!

*Explanation.*

Know, my son, that our Stone is such that it cannot adequately be described in writing. For it is a stone, and becomes water through evaporation; yet it is no stone, and it by a chemical process it receives. a watery form it is at first like any other liquid water, being a thin fluid; yet its nature is not like that of any other water upon earth. There is only one spring in all the world from which this water may be obtained. That spring is in Judæa, and is called, the Spring of the Saviour, or of beatitude. By the grace of God its situation was revealed to the Sages. It issues in a secret place, and its waters flow over all the world. It is familiar to all, yet none knows the principle, reason, or way to find the spring, or discover the way to Judæa. But whoever does not know the right spring will never attain to a knowledge of our Art. For this reason, that Sage might well exclaim, "O water of a harsh and bitter taste!" For, in truth, the spring is difficult to find; but he who knows it may reach it easily, without any expense, labour, or trouble. The water is, of its own nature, harsh and bitter, so that no one can partake of it; and, because it is of little use to the majority of mankind, the Sage doth also exclaim, "O water, that art lightly esteemed by the vulgar, who do not perceive thy great virtues, in thee lie, as it were, hid the four elements. Thou hast power to dissolve, and conserve, and join nature, such as is possessed by no other thing upon earth." If you would know the properties and appearance of this Stone, know that its appearance is aqueous, and that the water is first changed into a stone, then the stone into water, and the water at length into the Medicine. If you know the Stone without the method of its preparation, your knowledge can be of no more use to you than if you knew the right method without being acquainted with the true Matter. Therefore our hearts are filled with gratitude to God for both kinds of knowledge.

*Concerning the Treasure in the Tincture.*

For let me tell you that when you have the red [tincture] you have something that all the treasures of the world will not buy. For it transmutes all metals into true gold, and is therefore much better than the preparation of the Sun. As a medicine it excels all other gold; all diseases may be cured by drinking one drop of the tincture in a glass of wine; and it has power to work many other marvels which we cannot here mention at length. If you wish to prepare the tincture for the Moon, take five half-ounces of the red tincture, and mix it well with five hundred half-ounces of the Moon, which have been subjected to the action of fire, then melt it, and the whole will be changed into the Tincture and the Medicine. Of this take half an ounce, and inject it into five hundred half-ounces of Venus or any other metal, and it will be transmuted into pure silver. Of the red tincture, which you have diligently prepared, take one part to a thousand parts of gold, and the whole will be changed into the red tincture. Of this, again, you may take one part to a thousand parts of Venus, or any other metal, and it will be changed into pure gold. For this purpose you need not buy any gold or silver. The first injection you can make with about a drachm of both; and then you can transmute with the tincture more and more.

You should also know that in our Art we distinguish two things—the body and the spirit: the former being constant, or fixed, while the other is volatile. These two must be changed, the one into the other: the body must become water, and the water body. Then again the body becomes water by its own internal operation, and the two, *i.e.*, the dry and the liquid, must once more be joined together in an inseparable union. This conjunction could not take place if the two had not been obtained from *one* thing; for an abiding union is possible only between things of the same nature. Of this kind is the union which takes place in our Art; for the constituent parts of the Matter are joined together by the operation of nature, and not by any human hand. The substance is divided into two parts, as we shall explain further on. For instance, the Eagle is a "water," which being extracted is then a body dead and lifeless: if it is to be restored to life, the spirit must once more be joined to it, and that in a unique fashion, as we see that it devours gradually again the one eagle after the other. Then the body loses all its grossness, and becomes new and pure; nor can this body and soul ever die, seeing that they have entered into an eternal union, such as the union of our bodies and souls shall be at the last day.

#### *Another Description of our Stone.*

The Enigma of the wise (the Stone) is the Salt and Root of the whole Art, and, as it were, its Key, without which no one is able either to lock or unlock its secret entrance. No man can understand this Art who does not know the Salt and its preparation, which takes place in a convenient spot that is both moist and warm; there the dissolution of its liquid must be accomplished, while its substance remains unimpaired. These are the words of Geber.

#### *Explanation.*

Know that the Salt of which Geber speaks has none of the specific properties of salt, and yet is called a Salt, and is a Salt. It is black and fetid, and when chemically prepared, assumes the appearance of blood, and is at length rendered white, pure, and clear. It is a good and precious Salt which, by its own operation, is first impure and then pure. It dissolves and coagulates itself, or, as the Sage says, it locks and unlocks

itself. No Salt has this property but the Salt of the Sages. Its chemical development it may undergo in a moist and convenient place, where its moisture (as the Sage says) may be dissolved in the Bath of Mary. He means that it must be warm enough for its water to be distilled, yet not warmer than the excrement of horses, which is not fresh.

*Another Description of our Stone.*

Alexander the Great, King of Macedonia, in his "Philosophy" has the following words: Know that the Salt is fire and dryness. Fire coagulates, and its nature is hot, dry, and penetrating, even unto the inmost part. Its property is to become white even as the Sun and the Moon with the variations in the extremes of fire, to wit, of the natural fire, while the Sun restores redness and the Moon whiteness, and brings bodies to their spiritual condition at the same time that it removes their blackness and bad sulphur. With it bodies are calcined: it is the secret of the red and white tincture, the foundation and root of all things, and the best of all created things after the rational soul of man. For no Stone in the whole world has a greater efficacy, nor can any child of this earth find the Art without this Stone. Blessed be God in heaven, who hath created this Art in Salt for the transmutation of all things, seeing that it is the quintessence which is above all things, and in all things. God Most High has not only from Heaven blessed creatures in this fashion, but praise, excellence, power, and wisdom are to be recognised as existing in this Salt. He who can dissolve and coagulate it, is well acquainted with the arcana of this Art. Our Salt is found in a certain precious Salt, and in all things. On this account the ancient Sages called it the "common moon," because all men need it. If you would become rich, prepare this Salt till it is rendered sweet. No other salt is so permanent, or has such power to fix the "soul," and to resist fire. The Salt of the earth is the soul; it coagulates all things, is in the midst of the earth when the earth is destroyed; nor is there anything on the earth like its tincture. It is called Rebis (Two-thing), is a Stone, Salt, *one* body, and, to the majority of mankind, a vile and a despised thing. Yet it purifies and restores bodies, represents the Key of our whole Art, and all things are summed up in it. Only its entering in is so subtle that few perceive it: yet if it enter a body, it tinges it and brings it to perfection. What then should you desire of God but this Salt and the ingressions thereof?

If a man lived a hundred thousand years, he could never sufficiently marvel at the wonderful manner in which this noble treasure is obtained from ashes, and again reduced to ashes. In the ashes is Salt, and the more the ashes are burnt, the more ashes it affords; notice also, that that proceeds from fire, and returns to fire, which proceeds from [the] earth. All must confess that in the Salt there are two salts that kill mercury. This is a most profound saying. For sulphur, and the radical liquid, are generated in earth of a most subtle nature, and thus is prepared the Philosopher's Stone, which causes all things, even as the philosophers set forth, to arise out of *one* thing, and one nature, without the addition of any foreign substance. Our Matter is one of the commonest things upon earth, and contains within itself the four elements. It is, indeed, nothing short of marvellous that so many seek so ordinary a thing, and yet are unable to find it. We might put down many other characteristics of this Salt, but I prefer to leave the further elaboration of this subject to the reader, and to confine myself to a more detailed account of its fruits, entrance, and life, of the mode of opening the garden, and catching a glimpse of the glorious roses, of the way in which they multiply, and bear fruit a thousand-fold; also how you may cause the dead body



to re-appear, and to be raised again to immortal life, by the power of which it may be able to enter imperfect bodies, purify them, and bring them to perfection, and to a state of immutable permanence.

I now propose to speak of the Stone under three aspects, viz., as the vegetable, the animal, and the mineral Stone; and among these again, of the one which contains those four elements that impart life to all. Place this one substance in an air-tight alembic, and treat it according to the precepts of our Art, which we shall set forth further on. Then the sowing in the field can take place, and you obtain the Mineral Stone, and the Green Lion that imbibes so much of its own spirit. Then life returns to its spirit through the alembic, and the dead body lies at the bottom of the vessel. In the latter there are still two elements which the fire cannot sever—for sooner [than that] the ashes are burned in the fire itself, and the Salt thereby becomes stronger. The earth must be calcined until it turns white; then the earth is severed of its own accord, and is united to its own earth. For every thing strives to be joined to its like. Give it the cold and humid element to drink, and leave it standing eight days, that the two may be well mixed. You must see yourself what is best to be done after this: for I cannot give you any further information at present. Sun and Moon must have intercourse, like that of a man and woman: otherwise the object of our Art cannot be attained. All other teaching is false and erroneous. Think upon this Salt as the true foundation of our Art; for its worth outweighs all the treasures of this world. Itself is not developed into the tincture, but the tincture must be added to it. Nor is the substance of our Art found in any metal.

*Another Description of the Matter and the Method.*

*By Senior.*

Natural things, according to this Sage, are those which have been generated and produced out of a natural substance by a natural method. Now in its first, or lunar, stage, our Stone is produced from a coagulated white earth, as the Sage says: Behold our Sun in our white earth, and that by which the union in our Art is effected; which is twice transmuted into water, and whose volatile exhalation, representing that which is most precious in our Substance, is the highest consolation of the human body. With this water the inward mercury of the metals must be extracted. Hence it follows that our Stone is obtained from the elements of two luminaries (gold and silver), being called our quicksilver and incombustible oil, the soul and light of bodies—which alone can afford to dead and imperfect bodies eternal light and life. Therefore I pray and beseech you, my son, to crush quicksilver from our Substance with intelligence and great activity.

*The Purging the "Earth" of Its Superfluous Earth.*

The aforesaid earth, or Matter, you must purify, or calcine, so as to extract its water and spirit. The latter you must enclose in a phial, and pour common aqua vitæ upon it till the substance is covered to the height of three or four fingers; then subject it to the action of fire for an hour, and diligently distil it by the bath. What remains you must again calcine, and extract with its water till you find nothing more in the "earth." The earth keep for the second stage of the process. The water you have extracted distil over a gentle fire. Then you will find at the bottom of the distilling vessel a certain

beautiful substance, resembling a crystal stone, which is purged of all earthly grossness, and is called "our earth." This substance you must place in a glass (pumpkin-shaped) distilling vessel, and calcine until it becomes dry and white, and yet liquid withal. Then you have obtained the treasure of this world, which has virtue to purify and perfect all earthly things: it enters into all, it nourishes the fixed salt in all things by means of Mercury or the body.

*Another Description of our Stone.*

Know, my sons, that the Stone out of which our Art is elaborated, never touches the earth after its generation. If it touch the earth, it is of no use for our purpose, although at its first birth it is generated by the Sun and Moon, and embodies certain earthy elements. It is generated in the earth, then broken, destroyed, and mortified. Out of it arises a vapour which is carried with the wind into the sea, and thence brought back again to the land, where it almost immediately disappears. It must be caught in the air, before it touches the ground; otherwise it evaporates. As soon as it is borne from the sea to the land, you must promptly seize it, and enclose it in your phial, then manipulate it in the manner described. You may know its coming by the wind, rain, and thunder, which accompany it; therefore it should not escape you. Though it is born anew every day, yet it existed from the beginning of the world. But as soon as it falls to the ground, it becomes useless for the purposes of our Art.

"From our earth wells forth a fertilizing fountain, whence flow two precious stones. The first straightway hastens to the rising of the Sun; the other makes its way to the setting thereof. From them fly forth two Eagles, plunge into the flames, and fall once more to the earth. Both are furnished with feathers, and Sun and Moon, being placed under their wings, are perfected."

Know also that two waters flow forth from this fountain; the one (which is the *spirit*) towards the rising Sun, and the other, *the body*, towards the setting Sun. The two are really only *one* very limpid water, which is so bitter as to be quite undrinkable. The quantity of this water is so great that it flows over the whole earth, yet leads to nothing but the knowledge of this Art. The same also is misused too often by those who desire it. Take also the "fire," and in it you will find the Stone, and nowhere else in the whole world. It is familiar to all men, both young and old, is found in the country, in the village, in the town, in all things created by God; yet it is despised by all. Rich and poor handle it every day. It is cast into the street by servant maids. Children play with it. Yet no one prizes it, though, next to the human soul, it is the most beautiful and the most precious thing upon earth, and has power to pull down kings and princes. Nevertheless, it is esteemed the vilest and meanest of earthly things. It is cast away and rejected by all. Indeed it is the Stone which the builders of Solomon disallowed. But if it be prepared in the right way, it is a pearl without price, and, indeed, the earthly antitype of Christ, the heavenly Corner Stone. As Christ was despised and rejected in this world by the people of the Jews, and nevertheless was more precious than heaven and earth; so it is with our Stone among earthly things: for the spring where it is found is called the fount of nature. For even as through Nature all growing things are generated by the heat of the Sun, so also through Nature is our Stone born after that it has been generated.

When you have found the water which contains our Stone, you must take nothing away from it, nor add anything to it: for it must be entirely prepared by means of that which it contains within itself. Then extract the water in an alembic, and separate the liquid from the dry. The body will then remain alone on the glass, while the water runs down into the lower part. Thereupon unite the water once more to the body in the manner described above, and your task will be accomplished. Know also that the water in which is our Stone, is composed in well-balanced proportions of the four elements. In the chemical process you will learn to distinguish earth, oil, and water, or body, spirit, and soul: the earth is at the bottom of the glass vessel, the oil, or soul, is with the earth, and the water is the spirit which is distilled from it. In the same way you will come upon two colours, namely, white and red, representing the Moon and the Sun. The oil is the fire, or the Sun, the water is air, or the Moon; and Sun and Moon are silver and gold which must enter into union. But enough, what I have said in this Epistle ought to enable you to find the Stone, and if herein you fail to discover it, rest assured that it will never become known to you. Be thou, therefore, a lover of the Art, and commended unto God the Almighty even unto all eternity. Written in the year 1526 after the birth of our Lord.

Thus do the Sages write concerning the two waters which yet are only *one* water—and in this alone the Stone is to be found. Know also that by so much as the earthly part is wanting, by also so much does the heavenly part abound more fully. Now this Stone renders all dry and arid bodies humid, all cold bodies warm, all impure bodies clear and pure. It contains within itself all healing and transmuting virtue, breathed into it by the art of the Master and the quickening spirit of fire. Thanks be unto God therefore in all time.

*The Sun is its Father, the Moon its Mother.*

If you have those two spirits, they bring forth the Stone, which is prepared out of one part of Sulphur, or Sun, and four parts of Mercury, or Moon. The Sulphur is warm and dry, the Mercury cold and moist. That must again be dissolved into water, which before was water, and the body, which before was mercury, must again become mercury.

*Concerning the First Matter, or Seed of the Metals, including that of the Husband, and that of the Spouse.*

Metals have their own seed, like all other created things. Generation and parturition take place in them as in everything else that grows. If this were not the case, we should never have had any metals. Now, the seed is a metallic Matter which is liquefied from earth. The seed must be cast into its earth, and there grow, like that of every other created thing. Therefore, we must prepare the earth, or our first Matter, and cast into it the seed, whereupon it will bring forth fruit after its kind. This motion is required for the generation out of *one* thing, viz., that first Matter; the body must become [a] spirit, and the spirit body: thence arises the medicine which is transmuted from one colour to another. Now, that which is sought in the white produces white, and the red, in like manner, gives red. The first Matter is *one* thing, and fashioned into its present shape by the hand of God, and not of man—joined together, and transmuted into its [being] essence by Nature alone. This we take, dissolve, and again conjoin, and wash with its own water, until it becomes white, and then again red. Thus

our earth, in which we now may easily see our Sun and Moon, is purified. For the Sun is the Father of metals, and the Moon is their Mother: and if generation is to take place, they must be brought together as husband and wife. By itself neither can produce anything, and therefore the red and the white must be brought together. And though a thousand books have been written about it, yet for all that, the first substance is riot more than one. It is the earth into which we cast our grain, that is to say, our Sun and Moon, which then bear fruit after their kind. If itself be cast into metals, it is changed into that which is best, viz., Sun and Moon. This is most true. Thanks be unto God.

*A Simple Account of the True Art.*

According to the Sages, no body is dissolved without the coagulation of the spirit. For as soon as the spirit is transmuted into the body, [the Stone] receives its power. So long as the spirit is volatile, and liable to evaporate, it cannot produce any effect: when it is fixed, it immediately begins to operate. You must therefore prepare it as the baker prepares the bread. Take a little of the spirit, and add it to the body, as the baker adds leaven to the meal, till the whole substance is leavened. It is the same with our spirit, or leaven. The Substance must be continuously penetrated with the leaven, until it is wholly leavened. Thus the spirit purges and spiritualizes the body, till they are both transmuted into one. Then they transmute all things, into which they are injected, into their own nature. The two must be united by a gentle and continuous fire, affording the same degree of warmth as that with which a hen hatches her eggs. It must then be placed in a St. Mary's Bath, which is neither too warm nor too cold. The humid must be separated from the dry, and again joined to it. When united, they change mercury into pure gold and silver. Thenceforward you will be safe from the pangs of poverty. But take heed that you render thanks unto God for His gracious gift which is hidden from many. He has revealed the secret to you that you may praise His holy name, and succour your needy neighbour. Therefore, take diligent heed, lest you hide the talent committed to your care. Rather put it out at interest for the glory of God, and the good of your neighbour. For every man is bound to help his fellowman, and to be an instrument in the hand of God for relieving his necessities. Of this rule Holy Scripture affords an illustration in the example of Joseph, Habakkuk, Susanna, and others.

*Here follows my TESTAMENT which I have drawn up in your favour, my beloved Sons, with all my Heart.*

For your sakes, beloved students of this Art, and dear Sons, I have committed to writing this my testament, for the purpose of instructing, admonishing, warning, and informing you as to the substance, the method, the pitfalls to be avoided, and the only way of understanding the writings of the Sages. For as Almighty God has created all things out of the dry and the humid elements, our Art, by divine grace, may be said to pursue a precisely similar course. If therefore any man know the principle and method of creative nature, he should have a good understanding of our Art. If anyone be unacquainted with Natures methods, he will find our Art difficult, although in reality it is as easy as to crush malt, and brew beer. In the beginning when, according to the testimony of Scripture, God made heaven and earth, there was only *one* Matter, neither wet nor dry, neither earth, nor air, nor fire, nor light, nor darkness, but one single substance, resembling vapour or mist, invisible and impalpable. It was called

Hyle, or the first Matter. If a thing is once more to be made out of nothing, that "nothing" must be united, and become *one* thing; out of this *one* thing must arise a palpable substance, out of the palpable substance *one* body, to which a living soul must be given—whence through the grace of God, it obtains its specific form. When God made the substance, it was dry, but held together by moisture. If anything was to grow from that moisture, it had to be separated from that which was dry, so as to get the fire by itself, and the earth by itself. Then the earth had to be sprinkled with water, if anything moist was to grow out of it, for without moisture nothing can grow. In the same way, nothing grows in water, except it have earth wherein to strike root. It then the water is to bedew the earth, there must be something to bring the water into contact with the earth; for example, the wind prevents all ordinary water from flowing to the sea, and remaining there. Thus one element without the aid of another can bear no fruit; if there was nothing to set the wind in motion it would never blow—therefore the fire has received the office of impelling and obliging it to do its work. This you may see when you boil water over the fire; for then there arises a steam which is really *air*, *water* being nothing but coagulated air, and air being generated from water by the heat of the Sun. For the Sun shines upon the water, and heats it until steam is seen to issue forth. This vapour becomes wind, and, on account of the large quantity of [the] air, we get moisture and rain: so air is once more changed or coagulated into water, or rain, and causes all things upon earth to grow, and fills the rivers and the seas.

It is the same with our Stone, which is daily generated from [the] air by the Sun and Moon, in the form of a certain vapour, yea, even through the Red Sea; it flows in Judea in the channel of Nature whither it behoves us to bring it. If we catch it, we lop off its hands and feet, tear off its head, and try to bring it to the red [colour]. If we find anything black in it, we throw it away with the entrails and the filth. When it has been purified, we take its limbs, join them together again, whereupon our King revives, never to die again, and is so pure and subtle as to pervade all hard bodies, and render them even more subtle than itself. Know also that when God, the Almighty, had set Adam in Paradise, He shewed him these two things in the following words: "Behold, Adam, here are two things, one fixed and permanent, the other volatile: their secret virtue thou must not make known to *all* thy sons."

Earth, my brother, is constant, and water volatile, as you may see when anything is burnt. For then that which is constant remains, while that which is volatile evaporates. That which remains resembles ashes, and if you pour water on it, it becomes an alkali, the efficacy of the ashes passing into the water. If you clarify the lye, put it into an iron vessel, and let the moisture evaporate over a fire, you will find at the bottom the substance which before was in the lye, that is to say, the salt of the matter from which the ashes were obtained. This salt might very well be called the Philosopher's Stone, from being obtained by a process exactly similar to that which is employed in preparing the *real* Stone, though at the same time it profits nothing in our work. For the substance which contains our Stone is a lye, not indeed prepared by the hand of man from ashes and water, but joined together by Nature, according to the creation and ordination of God, commingled of the four elements, possessed of all that is required for its perfect chemical development. If you take the substance, which contains our Stone, subject it to a S. Mary's Bath in an alembic, and distil it, the water will run down into the antisternium, and the salt, or earth, remain at the bottom, and is so dry as to be without any water, seeing that you have separated the moist from the

dry. Pound the body small, put it into the S. Mary's Bath, and expose it to heat till it is quite decomposed. Then give it its water to drink, slowly, and at long intervals, till it is clarified. For it coagulates, dissolves, and purifies itself. The distilled water is the spirit which imparts life to its body, and is the alone soul thereof. Water is wind (air), and wind is life, and the life is [in the] soul. In the chemical process, you find water and oil—but the oil always remains with the body, and is, as it were, burnt blood. Then it is purified with the body by long-continued gentle heat. But you should be careful not to set about this Art before you understand my instructions, which at the end of this first part are bequeathed to you in the form of a Testament. For the Stone is prepared out of nothing in the whole world, except this substance, which is essentially one. He who is unacquainted therewith can never attain the Art. It is that one thing which is not dug up from mines, or from the caverns of the earth, like gold, silver, sulphur, salt, &c., but is found in the form which God originally imparted to it. It is formed and manifested by an excessive thickening of air; as soon as it leaves its body, it is clearly seen, but it vanishes without a trace as soon as it touches the earth, and, as it is never seen again, it must therefore be caught while it is still in the air—as I told you once before. I have called it by various names, but the simplest is perhaps that of "Hyle," or first principle of all things. It is also denominated the One Stone of the Philosophers, composed of hostile elements, the Stone of the Sun, the Stone of the Metals, the runaway slave, the aëriform Stone, the Thirnian Stone, Magnesia, the corporeal Stone, the Stone of the jewel, the Stone of the free, the golden Stone, the fountain of earthly things, Xelis, or Silex (flint), Xidar, or Radix (root), Atrop, or Porta (gate). By these and many other names it is called, yet it is only *one*. If you would be a true Alchemist, give a wide berth to all other substances, turn a deaf ear to all other advisers, and strive to obtain a good knowledge of our Stone, its preparation, and its virtue.

My Son, esteem this my Testament very highly: for in it I have, out of love and compassion towards you, given the reins to the warm-hearted impulse which constrains me to reveal more than I ought to reveal. But I beseech you, by the Passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, not to communicate my Testament to ignorant, unworthy, or wicked men, lest God's righteous vengeance light upon you, and hurl you into the yawning gulf of everlasting punishment, from which also may the same merciful God most mercifully preserve us.

It is by no means a light thing to shew the nature of the aforesaid Hyle. Hyle is the first Matter, the Salt of the Sages, Azoth, the seed of all metals, which is extracted from the body of "Magnesia" and the Moon.

Hyle is the first principle of all things—the Matter that was from the beginning. It was neither moist, nor dry, nor earth, nor water, nor light, nor darkness, but a mixture of all these things, and this mixture is HYLE.

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## HERE FOLLOWS THE SECOND PART OF THIS BOOK.

In the beginning, when God Almighty had created our first parent Adam, together with all other earthly and heavenly bodies, He set him in Paradise, and forbade him, under penalty of eternal death, to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. So long as Adam obeyed the Divine precept he had immortality, and possessed all that he needed for perfect happiness. But when he had partaken of the forbidden fruit, he was, by the command of God, driven forth into this world, where he and his descendants have since that time suffered nothing but poverty, disease, anxiety, bitter sorrow, and death. If he had been obedient to the Divine injunction, he would have lived a thousand years in Paradise in perfect happiness, and would then have been translated to heaven; and a like happy destiny would have awaited all his descendants. For his disobedience God visited him with all manner of sufferings and diseases; but in His mercy also shewed him a medicine whereby the different defects brought in by sin might be remedied, and the pangs of hunger and disease resisted, as we are, for instance, preserved and strengthened by bodily meat and drink.

It was on account of this original sin that Adam, in spite of his great wisdom and the many arts that God had taught him, could not accomplish his full thousand years. But if he had not known the virtues of herbs, and the Medicine, he would certainly not have lived as long as he did. When, however, at length his Medicine would no longer avail to sustain life, he sent his son Seth to Paradise to fetch the tree of life. This he obtained after a spiritual manner. But Seth did seek also and was given some olives of the Tree of the Oil of Mercy, which he planted on the grave of his father. From them sprang up the blessed Tree of the Holy Cross, which through the atoning death of our Redeemer became to us wretched, sinful men, a most potent tree of life, in gracious fulfilment of the request of our first parent Adam. On the other hand, the suffering, disease, and imperfection brought not only upon men, but also upon plants and animals, by the fall of Adam, found a remedy in that precious gift of Almighty God, which is called the Elixir, and Tincture, and has power to purge away the imperfections not only of human, but even of metallic bodies; which excels all other medicines, as the brightness of the sun shames the moon and the stars. By means of this most noble Medicine many men, from the death of Adam to the fourth monarchy, procured for themselves perfect health and great length of days. Hence those who had a good knowledge of the Medicine, attained to three hundred years, others to four hundred, some to five hundred, like Adam; others again to nine hundred, like Methusalem and Noah; and some of their children to a longer period still, like Bacham, Ilrehur, Kalix, Hermes, Geber, Albanus, Ortulanus, Morienus, Alexander of Macedonia, Anaxagoras, Pythagoras, and many others who possessed the Medicine of the Blessed Stone in silence, and neither used it for evil purposes, nor made it known to the wicked; just as God Himself has in all times hidden this knowledge from the proud, the impure, and the froward. But cease to wonder that God has put such excellent virtue into the Stone, and has imparted to it the power of restoring animal bodies, and of perfecting metals: for I hope to explain to you the whole matter in the three parts of my Book, which I have entitled GLORY of the WORLD. If you will accept my teaching, and follow my directions, you will be able to prove the truth of my assertions by your own happy experience. Now when you have attained this great result, take care that you do not hide your talent. Use it for the solace of the suffering, the building of Christian schools and churches, and the glory of the Holy Trinity.

Otherwise God will call you to an eternal account for your criminal neglect of His gift. May God deign to keep us from such a sin, and to establish us in His Holy Word!

*To the Reader.*

If it should seem unto you a tedious matter, my friendly reader, to read through and digest my book, I advise you to cheer yourself on by bearing in mind the great object you have in view. If you do so you will find the book very pleasant reading, and a joy indeed. Since God—praised in all times be his Holy and Venerable Name!—in His unspeakable mercy has made known to me the magistry of this most true and noble Art, I am moved and constrained by brotherly love to shew you the manner of producing this treasure, in order that you may be able to avoid the ruinous trouble and expense to which I was put in the course of a long and fruitless search. I will endeavour to be as clear and outspoken as possible, in order to vindicate myself from the possible charge of imposture, malice, and avarice. I am most anxious that the gift which God has committed to my trust shall not rust, or rot, or be useless in my hands. For this most precious Medicine is so full of glorious potency as to be most justly styled the Oil of Mercy, for reasons which your own understanding will suggest to you. It is therefore unnecessary for me to go into this preliminary question at any great length. I may at once proceed to give you an account of the Art itself, and to put you on your guard against all seducing deceivers,—in short, to open up to you a true, unerring, and joyful road to the knowledge and possession of the Stone, and to the operations of this Art.

Therefore, I—who possess the Stone, and communicate to you this Book—would faithfully admonish and beseech you to keep this my TABLE of PARADISE and GLORY of the WORLD, from all proud and unjust oppressors of the poor; from all presumptuous, shallow, scornful, calumnious, and wicked persons, so as not to put it into their hands, on pain of God's everlasting punishment. I beseech you to take this warning to heart; but, on the other hand, to communicate and impart this my Table to all true, poor, pious, honest, and benevolent persons, who will gratefully reverence and rightly use the merciful gift of God, and conceal it from the unworthy. Nevertheless, even if my book should find its way into the hands of wicked men, God will so smite them with blindness as to prevent them from apprehending too much of my meaning, and frustrate all their attempts to carry out my directions. For God knows how to confound the wicked, and bring their presumption to nought; as we are also told by David in his psalms: "Thine enemies shalt thou hold in thine hand, and shalt restrain them in the snares of their mind." I beseech you, therefore, my sons, to give diligent heed to my teaching; then you will spend this life in health and happiness, and at length inherit everlasting joy. I pray that God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, may grant this my petition.

*An Account of the True Art.*

I make known to all ingenuous students of this Art that the Sages are in the habit of using words which may convey either a true or a false impression; the former to their own disciples and children, the latter to the ignorant, the foolish, and the unworthy. Bear in mind that the philosophers themselves never make a false assertion. The mistake (if any) lies not with them, but with those whose dulness makes them slow to apprehend the meaning. Hence it comes that, instead of the waters of the Sages, these



inexperienced persons take pyrites, salts, metals, and divers other substances which, though very expensive, are of no use whatever for our purpose. For no one would dream of buying the true Matter at the apothecary's; nay, that tradesman daily casts it into the street as worthless refuse. Yet the matter of our Stone is found in all those things which are used by ignorant charlatans: for it is our Stone, our Salt, our Mercury, our verdigris, halonitre, salmiac, Mars, sulphur, &c. It is not dug out with pick-axes from ordinary mountains, seeing that our Stone is found in our mountains and springs; our Salt is found in our salt-spring, our metal in our earth, and from the same place we dig up our mercury and sulphur. But what we mean by our mines and springs these charlatans cannot understand. For God has blinded their minds and made gross their senses, and left them to carry on their experiments with all manner of false substances. Nor do they seem able to perceive their error, or to be roused from their idle imaginations by persistent failure. Where they should have distilled with gentle heat they sublime over a fierce fire, and reduce their substance to ashes, instead of developing its inherent principles by vitalizing warmth. Again, when they should have dissolved, they coagulated instead, and so on. By these false methods they could, of course, obtain no good result; but instead of blaming their own ignorance they lay the fault on their teacher, and even deny the genuineness of our Art. As a matter of fact, all their mistakes arise from their misinterpreting the meaning of words which should have put them on the right scent. For instance, when the Sages speak of calcining, these persons understand that word to mean "burning," and consequently render their substance useless by burning it to ashes. When the Sages "dissolve," or transmute into "water," these shallow persons corrode with aqua fortis. They do not understand that the dissolution must be effected with something that is contained within our substance, and not by means of any foreign appliance. These foolish devices bear the same relation to our Art that a dark hole bears to a transparent crystal. It is their own ignorance that prevents them from attaining to a true knowledge; but they put the blame on our writings, and call us charlatans and impostors. They argue that if the Stone could be found at all, they must have discovered it long ago, their eyes being as keen and their minds as acute as they are. "Behold," say they, "how we have toiled day and night, how many books we have read, how many years we have spent in our laboratories: surely if there were anything in this Art, it could not have escaped us." By speaking thus, they only exhibit their own presumption and folly. They themselves have no eyes, and they make that an argument for blaspheming our high and holy Art. Therefore, you should first strive to make yourself acquainted with the secrets of Nature's working, and with the elementary principles of the world, before you set your hand to this task. After acquiring this knowledge, carefully peruse this book from beginning to end; you will then be in a position to judge whether our Art is true or false. You will also know what substance you must take, how you must prepare it, and how your eager search may be brought to a successful issue. Let me enjoin you, therefore, to preserve strict silence, to let nobody know what you are doing, and to keep a good heart: then God will grant you the fulfilment of all your wishes.

*Here follows my own Opinion and Philosophical Dictum.*

I now propose to put down a brief statement of the view which I take of this matter. He who understands my meaning, may at once pass on to the opinions of the various Sages, which I have placed at the end of my book. He who does not apprehend my meaning, will find it explained in the following treatise.

Since I know the blessed and true Art, with the nature and the matter of the Stone, I have thought it my duty freely to communicate it to you—not in a lawyer's style, nor in pompous language, but in few and simple words. Whoever peruses this book carefully, and with an elementary knowledge of natural relations, cannot miss the secret which I intend to convey. I am afraid that I shall be overwhelmed with reproaches for speaking out with so much plainness, seeing that this Art has never, from the beginning of the world, been so clearly explained as I mean to explain it in this Book. Nevertheless, I am well aware that I am now declaring a secret which must for ever remain hidden from the wise of this world, and from those who are established in their own conceits. But I must now proceed to give you the result of my experience.

My beloved sons and disciples, and all ye that are students of this Art; I herewith, in the fulness of Christian faith and charity, do make known to you that the Philosopher's Stone grows not *only* on "*our*" tree, but is found, as far as its effect and operation are concerned, in the fruit of all other trees, in all created things, in animals, and vegetables, in things that grow, and in things that do not grow. For when it rises, being stirred and distilled by the Sun and the Moon, it imparts their own peculiar form and properties to all living creatures by a divine grace; it gives to flowers their special form and colour, whether it be black, red, yellow, green, or white; in the same way all metals and minerals derive their peculiar qualities from the operation of this Stone. All things, I say, are endowed with their characteristic qualities by the operation of this Stone, *i.e.*, the conjunction of the Sun and Moon. For the Sun is the Father, and the Moon the Mother of this Stone, and the Stone unites in itself the virtues of both its parents. Such are the peculiar properties of our Stone, by which it may be known. If you understand the operation, the form, and the qualities, of this Stone, you will be able to prepare it; but if you do not, I faithfully counsel you to give up all thought of ever accomplishing this task.

Observe, furthermore, how the seeds of all things that grow, as, for instance, grains of wheat or barley, spring forth from the ground, by the operation of the Stone, and the developing influences of Sun and Moon; how they grow up into the air, are gradually matured, and bring forth fruit, which again must be sown in its own proper soil. The field is prepared for the grain, being well ploughed up, and manured with well rotted dung; for the earth consumes and assimilates the manure, as the body assimilates its food, and separates the subtle from the gross. Therewith it calls forth the life of the seed, and nourishes it with its own proper milk, as a mother nourishes her infant, and causes it to increase in size, and to grow upward. The earth separates, I say, the good from the bad, and imparts it as nutriment to all growing things; for the destruction of one thing is the generation of another. It is the same in our Art, where the liquid receives its proper nutriment from the earth. Hence the earth is the Mother of all things that grow; and it must be manured, ploughed, harrowed, and well prepared, in order that the corn may grow, and triumph over the tares, and not be choked by them. A grain of wheat is raised from the ground through the distillation of the moisture of the Sun and Moon, if it has been sown in its own proper earth. The Sun and Moon must also impel it to bring forth fruit, if it is to bring forth fruit at all. For the Sun is the Father, and the Moon the Mother, of all things that grow.

In the same way, in our soil, and out of our seed, our Stone grows through the distilling of the Sun and Moon; and as it grows it rises upwards, as it were, into the

air, while its root remains in the ground. That which is above is even as that which is below; the same law prevails; there is no error or mistake. Again, as herbs grow upward, put forth glorious flowers and blossoms, and bear fruit, so our grain blossoms, matures its fruit, is threshed, sifted, purged of its chaff, and again put in the earth, which, however, must previously have been well manured, harrowed, and otherwise prepared. When it has been placed in its natural soil, and watered with rain and dew, the moisture of heaven, and roused into life by the warmth of the Sun and Moon, it produces fruit after its own kind. These two sowings are peculiar characteristics of our Art. For the Sun and Moon are our grain, which we put into our soil, as soul and spirit—and such as are the father and the mother will be the children that they generate. Thus, my sons, you know our Stone, our earth, our grain, our meal, our ferment, our manure, our verdigris, our Sun and Moon. You understand our whole magistry, and may joyfully congratulate yourselves that you have at length risen above the level of those blind charlatans of whom I spoke. For this, His unspeakable mercy, let us render thanks and praise to the Creator of all things, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*Concerning the Origin of Metals.*

My son, I will now proceed to explain to you more in detail the generation of the metals, and the way in which they receive their growth and development, with their special form and quality. You will thereby be enabled to understand, even from the very foundation, with marvellous accuracy and clearness, the principle that underlies our whole Art. Permit me, therefore, to inform you that all animals, trees, herbs, stones, metals, and minerals, grow and attain to perfection, without being necessarily touched by any human hand: for the seed is raised up from the ground, puts forth flowers, and bears fruit, simply through the agency of natural influences. As it is with plants, so it is with metals. While they lie in the heart of the earth, in their natural ore, they grow, and are developed, day by day, through the influence of the four elements: their fire is the splendour of the Sun and Moon; the earth conceives in her womb the splendour of the Sun, and by it the seeds of the metals are well and equally warmed, just like the grain in the fields. Through this warmth there is produced in the earth a vapour or spirit, which rises upward and carries with it the most subtle elements. It might well be called a fifth element: for it is a quintessence, and contains the most volatile parts of all the elements. This vapour strives to float upward through the summit of the mountains, but, being covered with great rocks, they prevent it from doing so: for when it strikes against them, it is compelled to descend again. It is drawn up by the Sun, it is forced down again by the rocks, and as it falls the vapour is transmuted into a liquid, *i.e.*, sulphur and mercury. Of each of these a part is left behind—but that which is volatile rises and descends again, more and more of it remaining behind, and becoming fixed after each descent. This "fixed" substance is the metals, which cleave so firmly to the earth and the stones that they must be smelted out in a red-hot furnace. The grosser the stones and the earth of the mountains are, the less pure will the metal be; the more subtle the soil and the stones are, the more subtle will be the vapour, and the sulphur and mercury formed by its condensation—and the purer these latter are, the purer, of course, will the metals themselves be. When the earth and the stones of the mountain are gross, the sulphur and mercury must partake of this grossness, and cannot attain to their proper development. Hence arise the different metals, each after its own kind. For as each tree of the field has its own peculiar shape, appearance, and fruit, so each mountain

bears its own particular ore; those stones and that earth being the soil in which the metals grow. The quality of this soil is to a great extent dependent upon planetary influences. The nearer the mountains lie to the planets, the more do metals grow in them; for the qualities of metals are determined by planetary influences. Mountains that are turned towards the sun have subtle stones and earth, and produce nothing but gold. If they are more conveniently situated for being influenced by the moon, their metallic substance is turned into silver. For all metals, when perfectly developed, must ultimately become Moon and Sun, though some need to be operated on by the Sun and Moon longer than others: for the Sun is the Father, and the Moon the Mother, of all things that grow. Thus you see that gold glitters like the Sun, and silver like the Moon. Now, children always resemble their parents; and all metallic bodies contain within themselves the properties of the Sun: to change the baser metals into gold and silver, there is positively nothing wanting but gentle solar warmth. In this respect there exists a close analogy between animal and vegetable growth. When the Sun retires in the winter, the flowers droop and die, the trees shed their leaves, and all vegetable development is temporarily suspended. In the summer again, when the heat of the Sun is too great, not being sufficiently tempered by the cooling influences of the Moon, all vegetation is withered and burnt up. If there is to be perfect growth, the Sun and Moon must work together, the one heating and the other cooling. If the influence of the Moon prevails unduly, it must be corrected by the warmth of the Sun; the excessive heat of the Sun must be tempered by the coldness of the Moon. All development is sustained by solar fire. Imperfect metals are what they are, simply because they have not yet been duly developed by solar influences.

Now, by the special grace of God, it is possible to bring this natural fire to bear on imperfect metals by means of our Art, and to supply the conditions of metallic growth without any of the hindrances which in a natural state prevent perfection. Thus by applying our natural fire, we can do more towards "fixing" imperfect bodies and metals in a moment, than the Sun in a thousand years. For this reason our Stone has also power to cure all things that grow, acting on each one according to its kind. For our Matter represents a perfect and inseparable union of the four elements, which indeed is the sum of our Art, and is consequently able to reconcile and heal all discord in all manner of metals and in all things that grow, and to put to flight all diseases, For disease is discord of the elements, (one unduly lording it over the rest) in animal as well as in metallic bodies. Now as soon as our blessed Medicine is applied, the elements are straightway purified, and joined together in amity; thus metallic bodies are fixed, animal bodies are made whole of all their diseases, gems and precious stones attain to their own proper perfection.

You should also know that all stones are generated by the Sun and Moon out of the sulphur and volatile mercury; if they do not become metals, that is entirely due to their own grossness. In the same way, all plants are generated from sulphur and mercury, and that by the heat of the Sun and Moon. For the Sun and Moon are the mercury in our Matter. The Sun is warm and dry, the Moon warm and moist; for in [the] earth is hid a warm and dry fire, and in that fire dwells warm and moist air—and from these is generated mercury which is both warm and moist. Hence there may be distinguished two chief constituent principles, to wit, moist and dry, that is, earth, wind, and water, unto which mercury is conjoined, and the same is warm and moist. Mercury and sulphur, in our substance, and in all things, spring from the moist and dry, the moist and dry being stirred by the warmth of the Sun, and distilled and

sublimed,—in each thing according to its specific nature. Thus our Stone is that mercury which is mixed of the dry and the moist. But the common mercury is useless for our purpose—for it is volatile, while our mercury is fixed and constant. Therefore have nothing to do with the common mercury, but take our mercury which is the principle of growth in all bodies, whether human, vegetable, or metallic; which imparts to all flowers their fragrance and colour. This mercury represents an harmonious mixture of the four elements, hot and dry, Sun and Moon. It is generated in the form of a vapour in the fields and on the mountains, by the warmth of the Sun: that vapour is condensed into a moisture, from which arise sulphur and mercury, and from them again metals. The same process takes place in our Art, which represents the union of the warm and moist, by means of warmth. For our substance is generated in the form of a vapour out of warmth and moisture, and changed into sulphur. In this fire and water, and nowhere else, is our Stone to be found. For the vapour carries upward with it most subtle earth, most subtle fire, most subtle water, and most subtle air, and thus presents a close union of the most subtle elements. This is the first Matter, and may be divided into water and earth, which two are again joined together by gentle heat, even as in the woods and mountains mercury is joined with a quick earth and rare water by means of a temperate warmth, and in the long process of time is converted into metal. So is it ordained in our Art, and not otherwise does the process take place. When you, therefore, see that our substance, having been first generated in the form of a vapour, permits itself to be separated into water and earth, you may know that the Stone is composed of the four elements. Know also that the vapour in the mountains is true mercury (which cannot be said of the ordinary mercury); for wherever there is vapour in the mountains, there is true mercury, which by ascending and descending, in the manner described above, becomes fixed, and inseparable from its earth, so that where the one is, there the other must abide.

Thus I have told you plainly enough how the metals are generated, what mercury is, and how it is transmuted into metals. I will therefore conclude this part of my treatise, and tell you in the following section how you may actually perform the chemical process. You see that it is not so incredible, after all, that all metals should be transmuted into gold and silver, and all animal bodies delivered from every kind of disease; and I hope and trust that God will permit you practically to experience the truth of this assertion.

*Now I will tell you how you must produce the Fire and  
Water, in which is prepared the Mercury required  
for the red and white Tincture,*

Take fire, or the quicklime of the Sages, which is the vital fire of all trees, and therein doth God Himself burn by divine love. In it purify Mercury, and mortify it for the purposes of our Art; understand, with vulgar Mercury, which you wish to fix in water or fire. But the Mercury which lies hidden in this water, or fire, is therein fixed of itself. The Mercury which is in the fire must be decomposed, clarified, coagulated, and fixed with indelible, living, or Divine fire, of that kind which God has placed in the Sun; and wherein God Himself burns as with Divine love for the consolation of all mankind. Without this fire our Art can not be brought to a successful issue. This is the fire of the Sages which they describe in such obscure terms, as to have been the indirect cause of beguiling many innocent persons to their ruin; so even that they have perished in poverty because they knew not this fire of the Philosophers. It is the most

precious fire that God has created in the earth, and has a thousand virtues—nay, it is so precious that men have averred that the Divine Power itself works effectually in it. It has the purifying virtue of Purgatory, and everything is rendered better by it. It is not wonderful, therefore, that a fire should be able to fix and clarify Mercury, and to cleanse it from all grossness and impurity. The Sages call it the living fire, because God has endowed it with His own Divine, and vitalising power.

In the writings of the Sages, this fire goes by different names. Some call it "burnt" wine, others assign to it three names from the analogy of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost; Body, Soul, and Fire, or Spirit.

The Sages further say: The fire is fire, and also water, containing within itself both cold and heat, moisture, and dryness, nor can anything extinguish it but itself. Hence others say that it is an inextinguishable fire, which is continually burning, purifying, and tinging all metals, consuming all their impurities, and combining Mercury with the Sun in so close an union that they become one and inseparable.

Therefore our great Teachers say that as God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are three Persons, and yet but one God; so this fire unites these three things, namely, the Body, Spirit, and Soul, or Sun, Mercury, and Soul. The fire nourishes the Soul which binds together the Body and the Spirit, and thus all three become one, and remain united for ever. Again, as an ordinary fire, on being supplied with fuel, may spread and fill the whole world, so this Tincture may be multiplied, and so this fire may enter into all metals; and one part of it has power to change two, three, or five hundred parts of other metals into gold.

Again, the Sages call this fire the fire of the Holy Spirit, because as the Divinity of Christ took upon itself true flesh and blood without forfeiting anything of its Divine Nature, so the Sun, the Moon, and Mercury, are transmuted into the true Tincture, which remains unaffected by all outward influences, and endures, and will endure, for ever. Once more, as God feeds many wicked sinners with his blood, so this Tincture tinges all gross and impure metals, without being injured by contact with them. So also, therefore, may it be compared with the sacro-saintly Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist, from which no sinner is excluded, how impure soever he may have been. You have thus been made acquainted with the all but miraculous virtue of this fire: remember that no student of this Art can possibly do without it. For another Sage says: "In this invisible fire you have the whole mystery of this Art, as the three Persons of the Holy Trinity are truly concluded in one substance." In this fire the true Art is summed up in three palpable things, which yet are invisible and incomprehensible, like the Holy Spirit. Without those three things our Art can never be brought to perfection. One of them is fire; the second, water; the third, earth; and all those three are invisibly present in one essence, and are the instrumental cause of all perfection in Nature.

*Now will I also describe the operation of those Three  
Things in our Art, and will at once begin  
with all Three.*

Our wise Teacher Plato says: "Every husbandman who sows good seed, first chooses a fertile field, ploughs and manures it well, and weeds it of all tares; he also takes care that his own grain is free from every foreign admixture. When he has committed the seed to the ground, he needs moisture, or rain, to decompose the grain, and to raise it to new life. He also requires fire, that is, the warmth of the Sun, to bring it to maturity." The needs of our Art are of an analogous nature. First, you must prepare your seed, *i.e.*, cleanse your Matter from all impurity, by a method which you will find set forth at length in the Dicta of the Sages which I subjoin to this Treatise. Then you must have good soil in which to sow your Mercury and Sun; this earth must first be weeded of all foreign elements if it is to yield a good crop. Hence the Sage enjoins us to "sow the seed in a fruitful field, which has been prepared with living fire, and it will produce much fruit."

#### *What is the Urine of Children?*

I will now truly inform you concerning the Urine of Children, and of the Sages. The spirit which is extracted from the metals is the urine of children: for it is the seed and the first principle of metals. Without this seed there is no consummation of our Art, and no Tincture, either red or white. For the sulphur and mercury of gold are the red, the sulphur and mercury of silver are the white Tincture: the Mercury of the Sun and Moon fixes all Mercury in imperfect metals, and imparts excellence and durability even to common Mercury. Dioscorides has written an elegant treatise concerning this Urine of Children, which he calls the first Matter of metals.

#### *What is the Mercury of the Sages?*

Mercury is nothing but water and salt, which have been subjected for a long space of time to natural heat so as to be united into one. This is Mercury, or dry water, which is not moist, and does not moisten anything; of course, I do not speak of crude common mercury, but of the Mercury of the Sages. The Sages call it the fifth element. It is the vital principle which brings all plants to maturity and perfection. The other quintessence, which is in the earth, and partly material, contains within itself its own seed which grows out of its soil. The heavenly quintessence comes to the aid of the earthly, removes the grossness of its earth, and brings the aforesaid seed to maturity. For Mercury, and the Celestial Quintessence, drain off all harmful moisture from the quintessence of the earth. This Mercury is also called sulphur of the air, sulphur being a hardening of mercury; or we may describe them as husband and wife, from whom issue many children in the earth. You must not think that I desire to hide from you my true meaning: nay, I will further endeavour to illustrate it in the following way. Common sulphur, as you know, coagulates common mercury; for sulphur is poisonous, and mercury deadly. How then can you obtain from either of them anything suitable for perfecting the other, seeing that both require to be assisted by some external agent? On the other hand, I tell you that if, after the conjunction of our fixed sulphur with our sublimed mercury, you sprinkle a mere particle of it upon crude mercury, the latter is at once brought to perfection. Again, you may clearly perceive that the quintessence of the earth has its operation in the winter when the earth is closed up with frost; while the Quintessence of the Stars operates in the summer time, when it removes all that is injurious in the inferior quintessence, and thus quickens everything into vigorous growth. The two quintessences may also be driven off into water, and there conserved. An earthly manifestation you may behold

in the colours of the rainbow, when the rays of the Sun shine through the rain. But, indeed, there is not a stone, an animal, or a plant, that does not contain both quintessences. In short, they embody the secret of our whole Magistry, and out of them our Stone is prepared. Hermes, in his Emerald Table, expresses himself as follows: "Our Blessed Stone, which is of good substance, and has a soul, ascends from earth to heaven, and again descends from heaven to earth. Its effectual working is in the air; it is joined to Mercury; hence the Sun is its Father, the Moon its Mother; the wind has borne it in her womb, the earth is its nursing mother, and at length that which is above is also that which is below. The whole represents a natural mixture: for it is a Stone and not a Stone, fixed and volatile, body and soul, husband and wife, King and Queen." Let what I have said suffice, instead of many other words and parables.

### *Composition.*

Albertus expresses himself thus concerning the conjunction of the Stone: "The elements are so subtle that no ordinary method of mingling will avail. They must first be dissolved into water, then mixed, and placed in a warm spot, where they are united after a time by natural warmth. For the Elixir and the two solutions must be conjoined in the proportion of three parts of the Elixir and one part of the crushed body. This must again be coagulated and dissolved, and so also again until the whole has become *one*, without any transmutation. All this is accomplished by the virtue of our mercurial water; for with it the body is dissolved. It is that which purifies, conjoins, dissolves, and makes red and white." Aristotle says of it as follows: This water is the earth in which Hermes bids us sow the seed; the Sun or Moon, as Senior hath it, for extraction of the Divine water of sulphur and mercury, which is fire, warming and fructifying by the igneous virtue thereof. This is the Mercury and that is the water which wets not the hand. It is the Mercury which all Sages have loved and used, and of which they have acknowledged the virtue so long as they lived.

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## **THE THIRD PART OF THIS TREATISE, CONTAINING THE DICTA OF THE SAGES.**

i. I will now proceed to quote the very words of the various Sages in regard to this point, in order that you may the more easily understand our meaning. Know then that Almighty God first delivered this Art to our Father, Adam, in Paradise. For as soon as He had created him, and set him in the Garden of Eden, He imparted it to him in the following words: "Adam, here are two things: that which is above is volatile, that which is below is fixed. These two things contain the whole mystery. Observe it well, and make not the virtue that slumbers therein known to thy children; for these two things shall serve thee, together with all other created things under heaven, and I will lay at thy feet all the excellence and power of this world, seeing that thou thyself art a small world."

ii. ABEL, the son of Adam, wrote thus in his Principles: After God had created our Father, Adam, and set him in Paradise, He subjected to his rule all animals, plants, minerals, and metals. For man is the mountain of mountains, the Stone of all stones,



the tree of trees, the root of roots, the earth of earths. All these things he includes within himself, and God has given to him to be the preserver of all things.

iii. SETH, the son of Adam, describes it thus: Know, my children, that in proportion as the acid is subjected to coction, by means of our Art, and is reduced into ashes, the more of the substance is extracted, and becomes a white body. If you cook this well, and free it from all blackness, it is changed into a stone, which is called a white stone until it is crushed. Dissolve it in water of the mouth, which has been well tempered, and its whiteness will soon change to redness. The whole process is performed by means of this sharp acid and the power of God.

iv. ISINDRUS: Our great and precious Matter is air, for air ameliorates the Matter, whether the air be gross or tenuous, warm or moist. For the grossness of the air arises from the setting, the approach, and the rising of the Sun. Thus the air may be hot or cold, or dry and rarefied, and the degrees of this distinguish summer and winter.

v. ANAXAGORAS says: God and His goodness are the first principle of all things. Therefore, the mildness of God reigns even beneath the earth, being the substance of all things, and thus also the substance beneath the earth. For the mildness of God mirrors itself in creating, and His integrity in the solidity that is beneath the earth. Now we cannot see His goodness, except in bodily form.

vi. SENIOR, or PANDOLPHUS, says: I make known to posterity that the thinness, or softness, of air is in water, and is not severed from the other elements. If the earth had not its vital juice, no moisture would remain in it.

vii. ARISTEUS delivers himself thus briefly: Know that the earth is round, and not flat. For if it were perfectly flat, the Sun would shine everywhere at the same moment.

viii. PYTHAGORAS: That which is touched and not seen, also that which is known but not looked upon, these are only heaven and earth; again, that which is not known is in the world and is perceived by sight, hearing, smell, taste, or touch. Sight shews the difference between black and white; hearing, between good and evil; taste, between sweet and bitter; touch, between subtle and gross; smell, between fragrant and fetid.

ix. ARISTEUS, in his Second Table, says: Beat the body which I have made known to you into thin plates; pour thereon our salt water, *i.e.*, water of life, and heat it with a gentle fire until its blackness disappears, and it becomes first white, and then red.

x. PARMENIDES: The Sages have written about many waters, stones, and metals, for the purpose of deceiving you. You that desire a knowledge of our Art, relinquish Sun, Moon, Saturn, and Venus, for our ore, and our earth, and why so? Every thing is of the nature of no thing.

xi. LUCAS: Take the living water of the Moon, and coagulate it, according to our custom. By those last words I mean that it is already coagulated. Take the living water of the Moon, and put it on our earth, till it becomes white: here, then, is our magnesia, and the natures of natures rejoice.

xii. ETHEL: Subject our Stone to coction till it becomes as bright as white marble. Then it is made a great and effectual Stone, sulphur having been added to sulphur, and preserving its property.

xiii. PYTHAGORAS: We exhibit unto you the regimen concerning these things. The substance must drink its water, like the fire of the Moon, which you have prepared. It must continue drinking its own water and moisture, till it turns white.

xiv. PHILETUS: Know, ye sons of philosophy, that the substance, the search after which reduces so many to beggary, is not more than one thing of most effectual properties. It is looked down upon by the ignorant, but held in great esteem by the Sages. Oh, how great is the folly, and how great also is the presumptuous ignorance of the vulgar herd! If you knew the virtue of this substance, kings, princes, and nobles would envy you. We Sages call it the most sharp acid, and without this acid nothing can be obtained, neither blackness, whiteness, nor the Tincture.

xv. METHUSALEM: With air, vapour, and spirit we shall have vulgar mercury changed into as good a silver as the nature of minerals will allow in the absence of heat.

xvi. SIXION: Ye sons of philosophy, if you would make our substance red, you must first make it white. Its three natures are summed up in whiteness and redness. Take, therefore, our Saturn, subject it to coction in aqua vitæ until it turns white, becomes thick, and is coagulated, and then again till it becomes red. Then it is *red lead*, and without this lead of the Sages nothing can be effected.

xvii. MUNDINUS: Learn, O imitators of this Art, that the philosophers have written variously of many gums in their books, but the substance they refer to is nothing but fixed and living water, out of which alone our noble Stone can be prepared. Many seek what they call the essential "gum," and cannot find it. I reveal unto you the knowledge of this gum and the mystery which abides therein. Know that our gum is better than Sun and Moon. Therefore it is highly esteemed by the Sages, though it is very cheap; and they say: Take care that you do not waste any of our "gum." But in their books they do not call it by its common name, and that is the reason why it is hidden from the many, according to the command which God gave to Adam.

xviii. DARDANIUS: Know, my sons, that the Sages take a living and indestructible water. Do not, then, set your hands to this task until you know the power and efficacy of this water. For nothing can be done in our Art without this indestructible water. For the Sages have described its power and efficacy as being that of spiritual blood. Transmute this water into body and spirit, and then, by the grace of God, you will have the spirit firmly fixed in the body.

xix. PYTHAGORAS, in his Second Book, delivers himself as follows: The Sages have used different names for the substance, and have told us to make the indestructible water white and red. They have also apparently indicated various methods, but they really agree with each other in regard to all essentials, and it is only their mystic language that causes a semblance of disagreement. Our Stone is a stone, and not a stone. It has neither the appearance nor the properties of stone, and yet it is a stone. Many have called it after the place where it is found; others after its colour.

xx. NEOPHIDES: I bid you take that mystic substance, white magnesia. And have a care that the Stone be pure and bright. Then place it in its aqueous, vessel, and subject it to gentle heat, until it first becomes black, then again white, and then red. The whole process should be accomplished in forty days. When you have done this, God shows you the first substance of the Stone, which is an eagle-stone, and known to all men.

xxi. THEOPHILUS: Take white Magnesia, *i.e.*, quicksilver, mingled with the Moon. Pound it till it becomes thin water; subject it to coction for forty days; then the flower of the Sun will open with great splendour. Close well the mouth of the phial, and subject it to coction during forty days, when you will obtain a beautiful water, which you must treat in the same way for another forty days, until it is thoroughly purged of its blackness, and becomes white and fragrant.

xxii. BÆLUS says: I bid you take Mercury, which is the Magnesia of the Moon, and subject it and its body to coction till it becomes soft, thin, and like flowing water. Heat it again till all its moisture is coagulated, and it becomes a Stone.

xxiii. BASAN says: Put the yellow Matter into the bath, together with its spouse, and let not the bath be too hot, lest both be deprived of consciousness. Let a gentle temperature be kept up till the husband and the wife become one; sprinkle it with its sweat, and set it in a quiet place. Take care you do not drive off its virtue by too great heat. Honour then the King and his Queen, and do not burn them. If you subject them to gentle heat, they will become, first black, then white, and then red. If you understand this, blessed are ye. But if you do not, blame not Philosophy, but your own gross ignorance.

xxiv. ARISTOTLE: Know, my disciples, the Sages call our Stone sometimes earth, and sometimes water. Be directed in the regulation of your fire by the guidance of Nature. In the liquid there is first water, then a stone, then the earth of philosophers in which they sow their grain, which springs up, and bears fruit after its kind.

xxv. AGODIAS: Subject our earth to coction, till it becomes the first substance. Pound it to an impalpable dust, and again enclose it in its vessel. Sprinkle it with its own moisture till an union is effected. Then look at it carefully, and if the water presents the appearance of ) (, continue to pound and heat. For, if you cannot reduce it to water, the water cannot be found. In order to reduce it to water, you must stir up the body with fire. The water I speak of is not rain water, but indestructible water which cannot exist without its body, which, in its turn, cannot exist, or operate, without its own indestructible water.

xxvi. SIRETUS: What is required in our Art is our water and our earth, which must become black, white, and red, with many intermediate colours which shew themselves successively. Everything is generated through our living and indestructible water. True Sages use nothing but this living water which supersedes all other substances and processes. Coction, califaction, distillation, sublimation, desiccation, humectation, albefaction, and rubrefaction, are all included in the natural development of this one substance.

xxvii. MOSINUS: The Sages have described our substance, and the method of its preparation, under many names, and thus have led many astray who did not understand our writing. It is composed of red and white sulphur, and of fixed or indestructible water, called permanent water.

xxviii. PLATO: Let it suffice you to dissolve bodies with this water, lest they be burned. Let the substance be washed with living water till all its blackness disappears, and it becomes a white Tincture.

xxix. ORFULUS: First, subject the Matter to gentle coction, of a temperature such as that with which a hen hatches her eggs, lest the moisture be burnt up, and the spirit of our earth destroyed. Let the phial be tightly closed that the earth may crush our substance, and enable its spirit to be extracted. The Sages say that quicksilver is extracted from the flower of our earth, and the water of our fire extracted from two things, and transmuted into our acid. But though they speak of many things, they mean only *one* thing, namely, that indestructible water which *is* our substance, and our acid.

xxx. BATHON: If you know the Matter of our Stone, and the mode of regulating its coction, and the chromatic changes which it undergoes—as though it wished to warn you that its names are as numerous as the colours which it displays—then you may perform the putrefaction, or first coction, which turns our Stone quite black. By this sign you may know that you have the key to our Art, and you will be able to transmute it into the mystic white and red. The Sages say that the Stone dissolves itself, coagulates itself, mortifies itself, and is quickened by its own inherent power, and that it changes itself to black, white, and red, in Christian charity and fundamental [truth](#).

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xxxii. LEAH, the prophetess, writes briefly thus: Know, Nathan, that the flower of gold is the Stone; therefore subject it to heat during a certain number of days, till it assumes the dazzling appearance of white marble.

xxxiii. ALKIUS: You daily behold the mountains which contain the husband and wife. Hie you therefore to their caves, and dig up their earth, before it perishes.

xxxiv. BONELLUS: All ye lovers of this Art, I say unto you, in faith and love: Relinquish the multiplicity of your methods and substances, for our substance is one thing, and is called living and indestructible water. He that is led astray by many words, will know the persons against whom he should be on his guard.

xxxv. HIERONYMUS: Malignant men have darkened our Art, perverting it with many words; they have called our earth, and our Sun, or gold, by many misleading names. Their salting, dissolving, subliming, growing, pounding, reducing to an acid, and white sulphur, their coction of the fiery vapour, its coagulation, and transmutation

into red sulphur, are nothing but different aspects of one and the same thing, which, in its first stage, we may describe as incombustible and indestructible sulphur.

xxxvi. HERMES: Except ye convert the earth of our Matter into fire, our acid will not ascend.

xxxvii. PYTHAGORAS, in his Fourth Table, says: How wonderful is the agreement of Sages in the midst of difference! They all say that they have prepared the Stone out of a substance which by the vulgar is looked upon as the vilest thing on earth. Indeed, if we were to tell the vulgar herd the ordinary name of our substance, they would look upon our assertion as a daring falsehood. But if they were acquainted with its virtue and efficacy, they would not despise that which is, in reality, the most precious thing in the world. God has concealed this mystery from the foolish, the ignorant, the wicked, and the scornful, in order that they may not use it for evil purposes.

xxxviii. HAGIENUS: Our Stone is found in all mountains, all trees, all herbs, and animals, and with all men. It wears many different colours, contains the four elements, and has been designated a microcosm. Can you not see, you ignorant seekers after the Stone, who try, and vainly try, such a multiplicity of substances and methods, that our Stone is one earth, and one sulphur, and that it grows in abundance before your very eyes? I will tell you where you may find it. The first spot is on the summit of two mountains; the second, in all mountains; the third, among the refuse in the street; the fourth, in the trees and metals, the liquid of which is the Sun and Moon, Mercury, Saturn, and Jupiter. There is but one vessel, one method, and one consummation.

xxxix. MORIENUS: Know that our Matter is not in greater agreement with human nature than with anything else, for it is developed by putrefaction and transmutation. If it were not decomposed, nothing could be generated out of it. The goal of our Art is not reached until Sun and Moon are conjoined, and become, as it were, one body.

xl. THE EMERALD TABLE: It is true, without any error, and it is the sum of truth; that which is above is also that which is below, for the performance of the wonders of a certain one thing, and as all things arise from one Stone, so also they were generated from one common Substance, which includes the four elements created by God. And among other miracles the said Stone is born of the First Matter. The Sun is its Father, the Moon its Mother, the wind bears it in its womb, and it is nursed by the earth. Itself is the Father of the whole earth, and the whole potency thereof. If it be transmuted into earth, then the earth separates from the fire that which is most subtle from that which is hard, operating gently and with great artifice. Then the Stone ascends from earth to heaven, and again descends from heaven to earth, and receives the choicest influences of both heaven and earth. If you can perform this you have the glory of the world, and are able to put to flight all diseases, and to transmute all metals. It overcomes Mercury, which is subtle, and penetrates all hard and solid bodies. Hence it is compared with the world. Hence I am called Hermes, having the three parts of the whole world of philosophy.

xli. LEPRINUS says: The Stone must be extracted from a two-fold substance, before you can obtain the Elixir which is fixed in one essence, and derived from the one indispensable Matter, which God has created, and without which no one can attain the Art. Both these parts must be purified before they are joined together afresh. The body

must become different, and so must the volatile spirit. Then you have the Medicine, which restores health, and imparts perfection to all things. The fixed and the volatile principle must be joined in an inseparable union, which defies even the destructive force of fire.

xlii. LAMECH: In the Stone of the Philosophers are the first elements, and the final colours of minerals, or Soul, Spirit, and Body, joined unto one. The Stone which contains all these things is called Zibeth, and the working of Nature has left it imperfect.

xliii. SOCRATES: Our Mystery is the life of all things, or the water. For water dissolves the body into spirit, and summons the living spirit from among the dead. My son, despise not my Practical Injunction. For it gives you, in a brief form, everything that you really need.

xliv. ALEXANDER: The good need not remain concealed on account of the bad men that might abuse it. For God rules over all, according to His Divine Will. Observe, therefore, that the salt of the Stone is derived from mercury, and is that Matter, most excellent of all things, of which we are in search. The same also contains in itself all secrets. Mercury is our Stone, which is composed of the dry and the moist elements, which have been joined together by gentle heat in an inseparable union.

xlv. SENIOR teaches us to make the Salt out of ashes, and then, by various processes, to change it into the Mercury of the Sages, because our Magistry is dependent on our water alone, and needs nothing else.

xlvi. ROSARIUS: It is a stone, and not a stone, viz., the eagle-stone. The substance has in its womb a stone, and when it is dissolved, the water that was coagulated in it bursts forth. Thus the Stone is the extracted spirit of our indestructible body. It contains mercury, or liquid water, in its body, or fixed earth, which retains its nature. This explanation is sufficiently plain.

xlvii. PAMPHILUS: The Salt of the Gem is that which is in its own bowels; it ascends with the water to the top of the alembic, and, after separation, is once more united and made one body with it by means of natural warmth. Or we may, with King Alexander, liken the union to that of a soul with its body.

xlviii. DEMOCRITUS: Our Substance is the conjunction of the dry and the moist elements, which are separated by a vapour or heat, and then transmuted into a liquid like water, in which our Stone is found. For the vapour unites to the most subtle earth the most subtle air, and contains all the most subtle elements. This first substance may be separated into water and earth, the latter being perceptible to the eye. The earth of the vapour is volatile when it ascends, but it is found fixed when the separation takes place, and when the elements are joined together again it becomes fixed mercury. For the enjoyment of this, His precious gift, we Sages ceaselessly praise and bless God's Holy Name.

xlix. SIROS: The body of the Sages, being calcined, is called everlasting water, which permanently coagulates our Mercury. And if the Body has been purified and dissolved, the union is so close as to resist all efforts at separation.

I. NOAH, the man of God, writes thus in his Table: My children and brethren, know that no other stone is found in the world that has more virtue than this Stone. No mortal man can find the true Art without this Stone. Blessed be the God of Heaven who has created this property in the Salt, even in the Salt of the Gem!

li. MENALDES: The fire of the Sages may be extracted from all natural things, and is called the quintessence. It is of earth, water, air, and fire. It has no cause of corruption or other contrary quality.

lii. HERMES, in his second Table, writes thus: Dissolve the ashes in the second element, and coagulate this substance into a Stone. Let this be done seven times. For as Naaman the Syrian was purged of his leprosy by washing himself seven times in Jordan, so our substance must undergo a seven-fold cleansing, by calcining and dissolving, and exhibiting a variety of ever deepening colours. In our water are hidden the four elements, and this earth, which swallows its water, is the dragon that swallows its tail, *i.e.*, its strength.

liii. NUNDINUS: The fire which includes all our chemical processes, is three-fold: the fiery element of the air, of water, and of the earth. This is all that our Magistry requires.

liv. ANANIAS: Know, ye Scrutators of Nature, that fire is the soul of everything, and that God Himself is fire and soul. And the body cannot live without fire. For without fire the other elements have no efficacy. It is, therefore, a most holy, awful, and divine fire which abides with God Himself in the Most Holy Trinity, for which also we give eternal thanks to God.

lv. BONIDUS: In the fountain of Nature our Substance is found, and nowhere else upon earth; and our Stone is fire, and has been generated in fire, without, however, being consumed by fire.

lvi. ROSINUS: Two things are hidden in two things, and indicate our Stone: in earth is fire, and air in water, yet there are only two outward things, *viz.*, earth and water. For Mercury is our Stone, consisting as it does both of moist and dry elements. Mercury is dry and moist in its very nature, and all things have their growth from the dry and moist elements.

lvii. GEBER: We cannot find anything permanent, or fixed, in fire, but only a viscous natural moisture which is the root of all metals. For our venerable Stone nothing is required but mercurial substances, if they have been well purified by our Art, and are able to resist the fierce heat of fire. This Substance penetrates to the very roots of metals, overcomes their imperfect nature, and transmutes them, according to the virtue of the Elixir, or Medicine.

lviii. AROS: Our Medicine consists of two things, and one essence. There is one Mercury, of a fixed and a volatile substance, composed of body and spirit, cold and moist, warm and dry.

lix. ARNOLDUS: Let your only care be to regulate the coction of the Mercurial substance. In proportion as it is itself dignified shall it dignify bodies.

lx. ALPHIDIUS: Transmute the nature, and you will find what you want. For in our Magistry we obtain first from the gross the subtle, or the spirit; then from the moist the dry, *i.e.*, earth from water. Thus we transmute the corporeal into the spiritual, and the spiritual into the corporeal, the lowest into the highest, and the highest into the lowest.

lxi. BERNARDUS: The middle substance is nothing but coagulated mercury; and the first Matter is nothing but twofold mercury. For our Medicine is composed of two things, the fixed and the volatile, the corporeal and the spiritual, the cold and the warm, the moist and the dry. Mercury must be subjected to coction in a vessel with three divisions, that the dryness of the active fire may be changed into vaporous moisture of the oil that surrounds the substance. Ordinary fire does not digest our substance, but its heat converted into dryness is the true fire.

lxii. STEPHANUS: Metals are earthly bodies, and are generated in water. The water extracts a vapour from the Stone, and out of the moisture of [the] earth, by the operation of the Sun, God lets gold grow and accumulate. Thus earth and water are united into a metallic body.

lxiii. GUIDO BONATUS writes briefly concerning the quintessence, as being purer than all elements. The quintessence contains the four elements, that is, the first Matter, out of which God has created, and still creates, all things. It is Hyle, containing in a confused mixture the properties of every creature.

lxiv. ALRIDOS: The virtue and efficacy of everything is to be found in its quintessence, whether its nature be warm, cold, moist, or dry. This quintessence gives out the sweetest fragrance that can be imagined. Therefore the highest perfection is needed.

lxv. LONGINUS describes the process in the following terms: Let your vessel be tightly closed and exposed to an even warmth. This water is prepared in dry ashes, and is subjected to coction till the two become one. When one is joined to the other, the body is brought back to its spirit. Then the fire must be strengthened till the fixed body retains that which is not fixed by its own heat. With this you can tinge ten thousand times ten thousand of other substances.

lxvi. HERMES, in his Mysteries, says: Know that our Stone is lightly esteemed by the thankless multitude; but it is very precious to the Sages. If princes knew how much gold can be made out of a particle of Sun, and of our Stone, they would never suffer it to be taken out of their dominions.

"The Sages rejoice when the bodies are dissolved; for our Stone is prepared with two waters. It drives away all sickness from the diseased body, whether it be human or metallic."

By means of our Art, we do in one month what Nature cannot accomplish in a thousand years: for we purify the parts, and then join them together in an inseparable and indissoluble union.



lxvii. NERO: Know that our Mercury is dry and moist, and conjoined with the Sun and Moon. Sun and Moon in nature are cold and moist mercury and hot and dry sulphur, and both have their natural propagation by being joined in one thing.

*Here follows a True Explanation of some of the Foregoing  
Philosophical Dicta, the meaning, word for word  
and point for point, being clearly set forth.*

I now propose to say something about the meaning of the obscure and allegorical expressions used by some of the Sages whom I have quoted. Be sure that they all were true Sages, and really possessed our Stone. It may have been possessed by more persons since the time of Adam, but the above list includes all of whom I have heard. I need not here review all their sayings; for the words of the least of them are sufficient for imparting to you a knowledge of this Art; and my ambition goes no higher than that. If I have enumerated so large a number of authorities, I have only done so in order that you might the better understand both the theory and practice of this Art, and that you might be saved all unnecessary expense. For this reason I have declared this true philosophy with all the skill that God has given me. I hope the initiated will overlook any verbal inaccuracy into which I have fallen, and that they will be induced by my example to abstain from wilfully misleading anxious enquirers. I may have fallen into some errors of detail, but as to the gist of my work, I know what I have written, and that it is God's own truth.

*Explanation of the Saying of Adam.*

When God had created our first parent Adam, and set him in Paradise, He shewed him two things, namely, earth and water. Earth is fixed and indestructible, water is volatile and vaporous. These two contain the elements of all created things: water contains air, and earth fire—and of these four things the whole of creation is composed. In earth are enclosed fire, stones, minerals, salt, mercury, and all manner of metals; in water, and in air, all manner of living and organic substances, such as beasts, birds, fishes, flesh, blood, bones, wood, trees, flowers, and leaves. To all these things God imparted their efficacy and virtue, and subjected them to the mastery and use of Adam. Hence you may see how all these things are adapted to the human body, and are such as to meet the requirements of his nature. He may incorporate the virtue of outward substances by assimilating them in the form of food. In the same way, his mind is suitably constructed for the purpose of gaining a rational knowledge of the physical world. That this is the case, you may see from the first chapter of Genesis.

On the sixth day of the first year of the world, that is to say, on the 15th day of March, God created the first man, Adam, of red earth, in a field near Damascus, with a beautiful body, and after His own image. When Adam was created, he stood naked before the Lord, and with outstretched hands rendered thanks to Him, saying: O Lord, Thy hands have shaped me: now remember, I pray Thee, the work of Thy hands, which Thou hast clothed with flesh, and strengthened with bones, and grant me life and loving-kindness.

So the Lord endowed Adam with great wisdom, and such marvellous insight that he immediately, without the help of any teacher—simply by virtue of his original righteousness—had a perfect knowledge of the seven liberal arts, and of all animals,

plants, stones, metals, and minerals. Nay, what is more, he had perfect understanding of the Holy Trinity, and of the coming of Christ in the flesh. Moreover, Adam was the Lord, King, and Ruler of all other creatures which, at the Divine bidding, were brought to him by the angel to receive their names. Thus all creatures acknowledged Adam as their Lord, seeing that it was he to whom the properties and virtues of all things were to be made known. Now the wisdom, and knowledge of all things, which Adam had received, enabled him to observe the properties, the origin, and the end of all things. He noted the division and destruction, the birth and decay of physical substances. He saw that they derive their origin from the dry and the moist elements, and that they are again transmuted into the dry and the moist. Of all these things Adam took notice, and especially of that which is called the first Matter. For he who knows how all things are transmuted into their first Matter, has no need to ask any questions. It was that which existed in the beginning before God created heaven and earth; and out of it may be made one new thing which did not exist before, a new earth, fire, water, air, Sun, Moon, Stars, in short, a new world.

As in the beginning all things were created new, so there is a kind of new creation out of the first substance in our Art. Now although God warned Adam generally not to reveal this first substance—viz., the moist and the dry elements—yet He permitted him to impart the knowledge to his son Seth. Abel discovered the Art for himself, by the wisdom which God had given him, and inscribed an account of it on beechen tablets. He was also the first to discover the art of writing; further, he foretold the destruction of the world by the Flood, and wrote all these things on wooden tablets, and hid them in a pillar of stone, which was found, long afterwards, by the children of Israel. Thus you see that our Art was a secret from the beginning, and a secret it will remain to the end of the world. For this reason it is necessary carefully to consider all that is said about it, and especially the words of the Lord to Adam: for they exhibit in a succinct form the secret of the whole Art.

#### *Explanation of the Saying of Abel.*

This saying partly explains itself, and is partly explained by what we said about God's words to Adam. Yet I will add a few remarks concerning it. Man hath within him the virtue and efficiency of all things, whence he is called a small world, and is compared to the large world, because the bones which are beneath his skin, and support his body, may be likened to the mountains and stones, his flesh to the earth, his veins to the rivers, and his small veins to the brooks which are discharged into them. The heart is the sea into which the great and small rivers flow; his hair resembles the growing herbs—and so with all other parts of his body. Again, his inward parts, such as the heart, lungs, and liver, are comparable to the metals. The hairs have their head in the earth (*i.e.*, the flesh) and their roots in the air, as the Sages say, that the root of their minerals is in the air, and their head in the earth. That which ascends by distillation is volatile, and is in the air; that which remains at the bottom, and is fixed, is the head, which is in the earth. Therefore, the one must always exist in conjunction with the other if it is to be effectual. Hence man may be compared to an inverted tree: for he has his roots, or his hair, in the air, while other trees have their hairs. or their roots, in the earth.

And of our Stone, too, the Sages have justly said that it has its head in the earth, and its root in the air. This similitude has a two-fold interpretation. First, with regard to

the place in which our Matter is found; secondly, with regard to the dissolution and second conjunction of the Stone. For when our Stone rises upward in the alembic, it has its root in the air; but if it would regain its virtue and strength, it must once more return to its earth, and then it has its head and perfect potency in the earth. Hence our Stone, too, is not inaptly denominated a small world; it is called the mountain of mountains, from which our ore is derived, since it is evolved from the first substance in a way analogous to that in which the great world was created. Know that if you bury anything in [the] earth, and it rots, as food is digested in the human body, and the gross is separated from the subtle, and that which is fetid from that which is pure, then that which is pure is the first Matter which has been set free by decay. If you understand this, you know the true Art. But keep it to yourself, and cast not pearls before swine; for the vulgar regard our Art with ignorant contempt.

*Explanation of the Saying of Seth, Son of Adam.*

By "acid which is to be subjected to coction, and transmuted into ashes," the Sage Seth means distilled water, which we call seed. If this, by diligent coction, is condensed into a body—which he calls ashes—the body loses its blackness by being washed till it becomes white; for, by constant coction, all blackness and gross impurity are removed. If it were not for this earth, the spirit would never be coagulated; for it would have no body into which it could enter—seeing that it cannot be coagulated and fixed anywhere but in its own body. On the other hand, the spirit purifies its body, as Seth says, and makes it white. He says further: "If you diligently heat it, and free it from its blackness, it is changed into a Stone, which is called the white coin of the Stone." That is to say, if it is slowly heated with a gentle fire, it is by degrees changed into a body which resists fire, and is named a Stone. It is fixed, and it has a brilliantly white appearance. A coin it is called, because, as he who has a coin may purchase with it bread or whatever else he needs, so he who has this Stone may purchase for himself health, wisdom, longevity, gold, silver, gems, etc. Hence it is justly called the Coin, since it can buy what all the riches in the world cannot procure. It is struck by the Sages, who, instead of the image of a prince, impress upon it their own image. Therefore it is denominated the COIN of the SAGES, because it is their own money, struck in their own mint.

Again, when the Sage says, "Heat the Stone till it breaks [itself], and dissolve it in the well-tempered water of the Moon," he means that the Stone must be heated by that which is in itself, until it is changed into water, or dissolved. All this is done by its own agency; for the body is called Moon, when it has been changed into water; and the extracted spirit, or distilled water, is called Sun. For the element of [the] air is concealed in it; but the body must be broken in its own water, or dissolved by itself. The "well-tempered water of the Moon" is the gentle inward heat which changes it into water, and yields two waters, viz., the distilled spirit, and the dissolved body. These two waters are again united by slow and gentle coction, the distilled spirit becoming coagulated into a body, the dissolved body becoming a spirit. The fixed becomes volatile, and the volatile fixed, by dissolution and coagulation, and both assume, first a white, and then a red colour. The change to white and red is produced by the same water, and the white is always followed by the red, just as the black is followed by the white. When the Sage says, in conclusion, "that the whole can be accomplished only with the best acid, through the power of God alone," he means that the one thing from which alone our Stone can be procured may be compared to the

sharpest acid, and that, by means of our Art, this acid is changed into the best of earthly things, which all the treasures of all kings and princes are not sufficient to buy.

*Explanation of the Saying of Isindrus.*

Good Heavens! How skilfully the Sages have contrived to conceal this matter. It would surely have been far better if they had abstained from writing altogether. For the extreme obscurity of their style has overwhelmed thousands in ruin, and plunged them into the deepest poverty, especially those who set about this task without even the slightest knowledge of Nature, or of the requirements of our Art. What the Sages write is strictly true; but you cannot understand it unless you are already initiated in the secrets of this Art. Yea, even if you were a Doctor of the Doctors, and a Light of the World, you would be able to see no meaning in their words without this knowledge. They have written, but you are none the wiser. They half wished to communicate the secret to their posterity; but a jealous feeling prevented them from doing so in plain language. To the uninitiated reader these words of Isindrus must appear nothing short of nonsense: "Great is the air, because the air corrects the thing, if it is thin or thick, hot or cold." But the Sage means that when it ascends with the water, it is hot air, for fire and air bear our Stone like secret fire concealed therein, and the water which ascends from the earth, by that ascension becomes air, and thin; and when it descends, it descends into water which contains fire; thus the earth is purified, seeing that the water takes [the] fire with it into the earth. For the fire is the Soul, and the Moon the Spirit. Therefore, the air is great, because it bears with it water and fire, and imparts them to all things, though thereby (by this loss of water) itself becomes cold. Then the air becomes thick, when with its fire it is transmuted into the body, and thus the air corrects the thing by its thickness. For it bears out our Stone as it carries it in, and purifies it both in its ascent and in its descent. In the same way air purifies all things that grow (*i.e.*, plants), gives them their food (*i.e.*, water), and imparts to them its fire, by which they are sustained. Of this you may convince yourself by ocular demonstration. For the air bears the clouds, and sheds them upon earth in the form of rain; which rain contains secret fire derived from the earth, and the rays of the Sun by which it was drawn upward—and this fire it gives to all things as food. And although the rays of the Sun and Moon are immeasurably subtle, swift, and intangible; yet the rays of our Sun and Moon are much swifter and more subtle than those which are received by the plants in their growth. For the earth digests the rays of the Sun and Moon, and they sustain in the most wonderful manner things of vegetable growth; and all the living rays of the Sun and Moon nourish all created things. For by this digestion they obtain their life. For this reason the air may be called great, because through the grace of God it accomplishes great things.

Again, when the Sage says, "If the air becomes thick," *i.e.*, when the Sun turns aside, or is changed, "there is a thickness, till it rises," he means that if the distilled water which is taken for the Sun, or fire, approaches its body, and is changed into it, then the Sun stoops down to the earth. Thereby the air becomes thick, being joined to the earth, and if the Sun is once more elevated the air becomes thin; that is to say, when the water is extracted from the earth by means of the alembic, the fire rises upward, *i.e.*, the Sun is exalted, and the air becomes thin. Again, when he says, "This also is hot and cold, and thickness, and thinness, or softness," the Sage means that the Sun is hot, and the Moon cold; for the earth, when dissolved, is the Moon, and water, in which is fire, is the Sun: these two must be conjoined in an inseparable union. This

union enables them to reduce the elements of all metallic and animal bodies, into which they are injected, to perfect purity and health. When the Sage adds that thickness and thinness denote summer and winter, he means that our Art is mingled of thickness and thinness, or two elements which must be united by gentle warmth, like that of winter and summer combined. This temperate warmth, which resembles that of a bath, brings the Sun and Moon together. Thus I have, by the grace of God, interpreted to you the parabolic saying of Isindrus.

*Explanation of the Saying of Anaxagoras.*

From the beginning of all things God is. He is likened to light and fire, and He may be likened to the latter in His essence, because fire is the first principle of all things that are seen and grow. In the same way, the first principle of our Art is fire. Heat impels Nature to work, and in its working are manifested Body, Spirit, and Soul; that is, earth and water. Earth is the Body, oil the Soul, and water the Spirit; and all this is accomplished through the Divine goodness and lenity, without which Nature can do nothing; or, as the Sage says: "God's lenity rules all things; and beneath the thickness of the earth, after creation, are revealed lenity and integrity." That is to say: If the earth is separated from the water, and itself dissolved into oil and water, the oil is integrity, and the water lenity; for the water imparts the soul to the oil and to the body, and [the body] receives nothing but what is imparted to it by heaven, that is, by the water—and the water is revealed under the oil, the oil under the earth. For the fire is subtle, and floats upward from the earth with subtle waters, and is concealed in the earth. Now oil and air and earth are purified by their own spirit. Therefore the oil is integrity in the body, and the spirit lenity. And the spirit in the first operation descends to the body and restores life to the body; although the oil is pure and remains with the body, yet it cannot succour the body without the help of the spirit; for the body suffers violence and anguish while it is dissolved and purified. Then, again, the "thickness of the earth" is transmuted into a thin substance such as water or oil, and thus the "lenity" is seen in the body. For the body is so mild or soft as to be changed into water, or oil, although before it was quite dry. Therefore oil is seen in the earth, which is the fatness or life of the water, &c., an union of fire, air, and water. Now give the water to the body to drink, and it will be restored to life. And though those three elements have ascended from the earth, yet the virtue remains with the body, as you may see by dissolving it into oil and water. But the oil cannot operate without the spirit, nor can the spirit bear fruit without the oil and the body. Therefore they must be united; and all "lenity" and "integrity" are seen in the body when it is transmuted to white and red.

*Explication of the Opinion of Pythagoras.*

This Sage asks what that is which is touched, and yet not seen. He means that the substance which is prepared by our Art is one thing, which is tangible and invisible. That is to say, it is felt, but not seen, nor is the mode of its operation known. He who knows it, but knows not its operation, as yet knows nothing as he ought. This one thing, which alone is profitable for the purposes of our Art, proceeds from a certain dark place, where it is not seen, nor are its operation or its virtue known to any but the initiated. A great mystery is also concealed in the Matter itself, namely, air and fire, or the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars. This is concealed in it, and yet is invisible, as the Sage says: What is not seen, or known, is only heaven. That which is felt, and not seen, is earth. Earth, says the Sage, is thickness, or body, which is found at the bottom

of the Matter, has accumulated in the Matter, and can be felt and known. By the words, "that is between heaven and earth, which is not known," (*i.e.*, in the world), the Sage means that the Matter of our Stone is found in the small world; not in rocks and mountains, or in the earth, but between heaven and earth, *i.e.*, in the air. Again, when he says that "in it are senses, and entirety, as smell, taste, hearing, touch," he would teach us that in human nature there is entirety of mind and perception; for man can know, feel, and understand. He would also teach us how our Stone is to be found, namely, by sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. By sight, because the Matter of the Stone is thick, or thin and clear, and turns black, white, and red. By smell, because, when its impurity is purged away, it emits a most sweet fragrance. By taste, because it is first bitter and disagreeable, but afterwards becomes most pleasant. By touch, because that sense enables us to distinguish between the hard and the soft, the gross and the subtle, between water and earth, and between the different stages of distillation, putrefaction, dissolution, coagulation, fermentation, and injection, which the substance goes through. The different processes of the task are perceived with the senses, and it should be accomplished within forty-six days.

*Loosening of the Knot of Aristeus.*

"Take the body which I have shewn you, and beat it into thin leaves," *i.e.*, take the earth which cleaves to our substance, and, by having become dry, becomes visible and knowable; for now it is water and earth. The earth is thus shewn, and divided into two parts, earth and water. Let that earth be taken, placed in a phial, and put in a warm bath, by the warmth of which it is dissolved, through its own internal coction, into water; this the Sage calls beating into thin leaves. The body which is thus obtained is variously described as the Philosopher's Stone, or the Stone of leaves. "Add some of our salt water, and this is the water of life." That means: After its dissolution into water, it must receive our salt water to drink—for this water has been previously distilled from it, and is the water of life; for the soul and spirit of the body are hidden in it, and it is called our sea water; the same also is its natural name, because it is obtained from the invisible hidden sea of the Sages, the sea of the smaller world. For our Art is called the smaller world, and thus it is the water of our sea. If this water is added to the body, and heated and purified with it, the body is purged by long coction, and its colour changes from black to a brilliant white, while the water is coagulated, and forms, by indissoluble union with the body, the imperishable Philosopher's Stone, which you must use to the glory of God, and the good of your neighbour.

*Exposition of the Saying of Parmenides.*

Jealous Sages have named many waters and metals and stones, simply for the purpose of deceiving you; herein the philosophers would warn us that they have used secrecy, lest the whole mystery should be manifested before all the world. Those who follow the letter of their directions are sure to be led astray, and to miss entirely the true foundation of our Art. The fault, however, lies not with the Sages so much with the ignorance of their readers. The Sages name it a *stone*; and so it *is* a stone, which is dug up from our mine. They speak of metals; and there are such things as metals liquefied from our ore. They speak of water; but our water we obtain from our own spring. The red and white sulphur they refer to are obtained from our air. Their salt is obtained from our salt mines. *It* is our Sun, our verdigris, halonitre, alkali, orpiment, arsenic, our poison, our medicine, etc. By whatever name they call it they cannot

make it more than one thing. It is rightly described by all the Sages, but not plainly enough for the uninitiated enquirer. For such an one knows neither the substance nor its operation. The Sage says: "Relinquish Sun, Moon, and Venus for our ore," *i.e.*, it is not to be found in any earthly metals, but only in *our* ore. Whoever rightly understands the concluding words of the Sage has received a great blessing at the hand of God.

*Explanation of the Saying of Lucas.*

By the living water of the Moon this Sage means our water, which is twofold. The distilled water is the Moon; the Sun, or fire, is hidden in it, and is the Father of all things. Hence it is compared to a man, because the Sun is in the water. It is also called living water; for the life of the dead body is hidden in the water. It is the water of the Moon, because the Sun is the Father and the Moon the Mother. Hence, also, they are regarded as husband and wife. The Body is the Moon, or Mother, and the distilled water, or male principle, rises upward from the earth; and for that reason is sometimes called Moon. For it is the water of the Moon, or Body. It has left the Body, and must enter it again before our Art can be perfected. Hence the Body, or Moon, has well been designated the female principle, and the water, or Sun, the male principle, for reasons which have been set forth at length in this book.

Again, when the Sage says, "Coagulate it after our fashion," those last three words mean that the body must receive its spirit to drink gradually, and little by little, until it recovers its life, and health, and strength, which takes place by means of the same gentle heat which digests food in the stomach, and matures fruit in its place. For it is our custom to eat, drink, and live in gentle warmth. By this regimen our body is preserved, and all that is foul and unprofitable is driven out from our body. According to the same fashion of gentle coction, all that is fetid and black is gradually purged out of our Stone. For when the Sage says "after *our* fashion," he wishes to teach you that the preparation of the Stone bears a strict analogy to the processes of the human body. That the chemical development of our substance is internal, and caused by the operation of Nature and of its four elements, the Sage indicates by the words, "Everything is already coagulated." The substance contains all that is needed; there is nothing to be added or taken away, seeing that it is dissolved and again conjoined by its own inherent properties. When the Sage continues, "I bid you take water of life, which descends from the Moon, and pour it upon our earth till it turns white," he means that if water and earth are separated from each other, then the dry body is our earth, and the extracted water is the water of the Moon, or water of life. This process of adfusion, desiccation, attrition, coagulation, etc., is repeated till the body turns white; and then takes place [our](#) conglutination, which is indissoluble. "Then," as the Sage says, "we have our Magnesia, and the Nature of natures rejoices." Its spirit and body become one thing: they were one thing, and after separation have once more become one thing; therefore, one nature rejoices in the restoration of the other.

*Exposition of the Saying of Ethelius.*

He says: "Heat our Stone until it shines like dazzling marble; then it becomes great, and a mystic Stone; for sulphur added to sulphur preserves it on account of its fitness." That is to say: When the moist and the dry have been separated, the dry which lies at the bottom, and is called our Stone, is as black as a raven. It must be

subjected to the coction of our water (separated from it), until it loses its blackness, and becomes as white as dazzling marble. Then it is the mystic Stone which by coction has been transmuted into fixed mercury with the blessing of God. The Stone is mystic, or secret, because it is found in a secret place, in an universally despised substance where no one looks for the greatest treasure of the world. Hence it may well be called The HIDDEN STONE. By the joining of two sulphurs and their mutual preservation, he means that though, after the separation of spirit and body, there seem to be two substances, yet, in reality, there is only one substance; so the body which is below is "sulphur," and the spirit which is above is also "sulphur." Now, when the spirit returns to the body, one sulphur is added to another; and they are bound together by a mutual fitness, since the body cannot be without the spirit, nor the spirit without the body. Hence there are these two sulphurs in the body, the red and the white, and the white sulphur is in the black body, while the red is hid beneath it. If the spirit is gradually added to the body, it is entirely coagulated into the body, sulphur is added to sulphur, and perfection is attained through the fitness which exists between them. The body receives nothing but its own spirit; for it has retained its soul, and what has been extracted from a body can be joined to nothing but that same body. The spirit delights in nothing so much as in its own soul, and its own body. Hence the Sage says: "When the spirit has been restored to the body, the sulphur to the sulphur, and the water to the earth, and all has become white, then the body retains the spirit, and there can be no further separation." Thus you have the well purged earth of the Sages, in which we sow our grain, unto infinity, that it may bring forth much fruit.

*Explanation of the Saying of Pythagoras.*

You have good cause to wonder at the great variety of ways in which the Sages have expressed the same thing. Nevertheless, their descriptions apply only to one Matter, and their sayings refer only to a single substance. For when our Sage says, "We give you directions concerning these things: We tell you that it is dry water, like the water of the Moon, which you have prepared," he means that we Sages must give directions, according to the best of our ability. If those directions, rightly understood, do not answer the purpose, you may justly charge us with fraud and imposture. But if you fail through not taking our meaning, you must blame your own unspeakable stupidity, which follows the letter, but not the spirit of our directions. When the Sage further says that it must drink its own water, he would teach you that after the separation of the dry from the moist, the water extracted from the body is the right water, and the water of the Moon, prepared by putrefaction and distillation. This extracted water is regarded as the male principle, and the earth, or body, as the female principle. The water of the husband must now be joined in conjugal union to that of the wife; the body must, at intervals, drink of its own prepared water, and become ever purer, the more it drinks, till it turns most wonderfully white. Then it is called "our calx," and you must pour the water of our calx upon the body, until it is coagulated, becoming tinged, and a most bright quality returns to it, and the body itself is saturated with its own moisture. If you wish to obtain the red tincture, you should dissolve and coagulate, and go through the whole process over again. Verily, this is God's own truth, an accurate, simple, and plain statement of the requirements of our Art.

*Explanation of the Emerald Table of Hermes.*



Hermes is right in saying that our Art is true, and has been rightly handed down by the Sages; all doubts concerning it have arisen through false interpretation of the mystic language of the philosophers. But, since they are loth to confess their own ignorance, their readers prefer to say that the words of the Sages are imposture and falsehood. The fault really lies with the ignorant reader, who does not understand the style of the Philosophers. If, in the interpretation of our books, they would suffer themselves to be guided by the teaching of Nature, rather than by their own foolish notions, they would not miss the mark so hopelessly. By the words which follow: "That which is above is also that which is below," he describes the Matter of our Art, which, though one, is divided into two things, the volatile water which rises upward, and the earth which lies at the bottom, and becomes fixed. But when the reunion takes place, the body becomes spirit, and the spirit becomes body, the earth is changed into water and becomes volatile, the water is transmuted into body, and becomes fixed. When bodies become spirits, and spirits bodies, your work is finished; for then that which rises upward and that which descends downward become *one* body. Therefore the Sage says that that which is above is that which is below, meaning that, after having been separated into two substances (from being one substance), they are again joined together into one substance, *i.e.*, an union which can never be dissolved, and possesses such virtue and efficacy that it can do in one moment what the Sun cannot accomplish in a thousand years. And this miracle is wrought by a thing which is despised and rejected by the multitude. Again, the Sage tells us that all things were created, and are still generated, from one first substance, and consist of the same elementary material; and in this first substance God has appointed the four elements, which represent a common material into which it might perhaps be possible to resolve all things. Its development is brought about by the distillation of the Sun and Moon. For it is operated upon by the natural heat of the Sun-and Moon, which stirs up its internal action, and multiplies each thing after its kind, imparting to the substance a specific form. The soul, or nutritive principle, is the earth which receives the rays of the Sun and Moon, and therewith feeds her children as with mother's milk. Thus the Sun is the father, the Moon is the mother, the earth the nurse—and in this substance is that which we require. He who can take it and prepare it is truly to be envied. It is separated by the Sun and Moon in the form of a vapour, and collected in the place where it is found. When Hermes adds that "the air bears it in its womb, the earth is its nurse, the whole world its Father," he means that when the substance of our Stone is dissolved, then the wind bears it in its womb, *i.e.*, the air bears up the substance in the form of water, in which is hid fire, the soul of the Stone; and fire is the Father of the whole world. Thus, the volatile substance rises upward, while that which remains at the bottom, is the "whole world" (seeing that our Art is compared to a "small world"). Hence Hermes calls fire the father of the whole world, because it is the Sun of our Art, and air, Moon, and water ascend from it; the earth is the nurse of the Stone, *i.e.*, when the earth receives the rays of the Sun and Moon, a new body is born, like a new foetus in the mother's womb. The earth receives and digests the light of Sun and Moon, and imparts food to its foetus day by day, till it becomes great and strong, and puts off its blackness and defilement, and is changed to a different colour. This, "child," which is called "our daughter," represents our Stone, which is born anew of the Sun and Moon, as you may easily see, when the spirit, or the water that ascended, is gradually transmuted into the body, and the body is born anew, and grows and increases in size like the foetus in the mother's womb. Thus the Stone is generated from the first substance, which contains the four elements; it is brought forth by two things, the body and the spirit; the wind bears it in its womb, for it carries the Stone

upward from earth to heaven, and down again from heaven to earth. Thus the Stone receives increase from above and from below, and is born a second time, just as every other foetus is generated in the maternal womb; as all created things bring forth their young, even so does the air, or wind, bring forth our Stone. When Hermes adds, "Its power, or virtue, is entire, when it is transmuted into earth," he means that when the spirit is transmuted into the body, it receives its full strength and virtue. For as yet the spirit is volatile, and not fixed, or permanent. If it is to be fixed, we must proceed as the baker does in baking bread. We must impart only a little of the spirit to the body at a time, just as the baker only puts a little leaven to his meal, and with it leavens the whole lump. The spirit, which is *our* leaven, in like fashion transmutes the whole body into its own substance. Therefore the body must be leavened again and again, until the whole lump is thoroughly pervaded with the power of the leaven. In our Art the body leavens the spirit, and transmutes it into one body, and the spirit leavens the body, and transmutes it into one spirit. And the two, when they have become one, receive power to leaven all things, into which they are injected, with their own virtue.

The Sage continues: "If you gently separate the earth from the water, the subtle from the hard, the Stone ascends from earth to heaven, and again descends from heaven to earth, and receives its virtue from above and from below. By this process you obtain the glory and brightness of the whole world. With it you can put to flight poverty, disease, and weariness; for it overcomes the subtle mercury, and penetrates all hard and firm bodies." He means that all who would accomplish this task must separate the moist from the dry, the water from the earth. The water, or fire, being subtle, ascends, while the body is hard, and remains where it is. The separation must be accomplished by gentle heat, *i.e.*, in the temperate bath of the Sages, which acts slowly, and is neither too hot nor too cold. Then the Stone ascends to heaven, and again descends from heaven to earth. The spirit and body are first separated, then again joined together by gentle coction, of a temperature resembling that with which a hen hatches her eggs. Such is the preparation of the substance, which is worth the whole world, whence it is also called a "little world." The possession of the Stone will yield you the greatest delight, and unspeakably precious comfort. It will also set forth to you in a typical form the creation of the world. It will enable you to cast out all disease from the human body, to drive away poverty, and to have a good understanding of the secrets of Nature. The Stone has virtue to transmute mercury into gold and silver, and to penetrate all hard and firm bodies, such as precious stones and metals. You cannot ask a better gift of God than this gift, which is greater than all other gifts. Hence Hermes may justly call himself by the proud title of "Hermes Trismegistus, who holds the three parts of the whole world of wisdom."

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## **ANOTHER TRACT,**

**CORRESPONDING TO THE FIRST, WHICH MAY BE  
READ WITH GREAT PROFIT.**

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## **PREFACE.**

We may justly wonder that the Sages who have written about this most precious and secret Art, have thought it necessary to invent so many occult [and](#) allegorical expressions, by means of which our Art is concealed not only from the unworthy, but from earnest and diligent students of the truth. Foolish persons, indeed, who read their books, and hear of the riches and all the other good things which this Art affords, experience a pleasant tickling sensation in their ears, and straightway behold visions of themselves sitting on golden thrones, and commanding all the treasures of the universe; they fancy that the Art can be learned in the twinkling of an eye, soon come to regard themselves as great Doctors, and are unable to conceive the possibility of their making a mistake, or being led astray by the Sages. Much less are they aware that it has always been the custom of the philosophers to conceal the fundamental facts of this Art, and to reveal them to their own sons and disciples only in sententious allegorical sayings. It is impossible to read through all that the Sages have ever written on this subject; but it is a still more hopeless undertaking to gather from their books a full and sufficient knowledge of our Art, unless, indeed, God opens your understanding, and gives you a real insight into the natural properties of things, and thereby into the sayings of those who speak of them. For it is Nature alone that accomplishes the various processes of our Art, and a right understanding of Nature will furnish you with eyes wherewith to perceive the secrets thereof. Thus Bason says: "Take care not to add anything else; for it is the property of our substance to overcome all other things." And Bondinus tells us that the whole process is accomplished by means of the water which issues from the Stone. Alphidius declares that the Philosopher's Stone contains four different natures, and thereby possesses a virtue and efficacy such as are found in no other stone. Therefore, the question of the Royal Sage Haly, whether there is another stone upon earth which may be compared with our Stone, and possesses the same wonderful properties, is answered by Morienus in the following words: "I am aware of no other stone of equal excellence, potency, and virtue; for it contains the four elements in a visible form, and is singular of its kind among all the created things of the world. If, therefore, any person should take any [other] Stone but the one demanded by this Magistery, his labours must result in failure." Moreover, the ancient Sage Arros says: "Our Stone is useless for our purpose, until it be purged of its gross earth." In like manner we are informed by Morienus that "unless the body be purged of its grossness, it cannot be united to its spirit; but when it has put off its gross nature, the spirit joins itself to it, and delights in it, because both have been freed from all impurity." The truth of his words is attested by Ascanius in "The Crowd," who says: "Spirits cannot join themselves to impure bodies; but when the body has been well purged, and digested by coction, the spirit becomes united to it, amidst a phenomenal exhibition of all the colours in the world, and the imperfect body is tinged with the indestructible colour of the ferment; this ferment is the soul, in and through which the spirit is joined to the body, and transmuted with the body into the colour of the ferment, whereupon all three become one thing." Hence it is well, though somewhat enigmatically said by the Sages, that there takes place a conjugal union of husband and wife, and that of the two a child is born after their likeness, just as men generate men, metals metals, and all other things that which is like them.

Hence all that would exercise this Art must know the properties of the most noble substance thereof, and follow the guidance of Nature. But many enquirers conduct their operations at haphazard, they grope in the dark, and do not know whether their art be an imitation of Nature, or not. Yet they undertake to correct, and intensify, the

operation of Nature. Of such persons Arnold says that they approach our Art as the ass goes up to the crib, not knowing for what it opens its mouth. For they do not know what they would do, nor are they aware that they must listen to the teaching of Nature. They seek to do the works of Nature, but they will not watch the hand of her whom they pretend to imitate. Yet our Art has a true foundation in natural fact. For Nature prepares the metals in the earth, some perfect, like gold and silver; others imperfect, like Venus, Mars, Saturn, and Jupiter, according to the labour and influence of the planets. He, then, who would accomplish our Magistry, and desires to participate in this most noble Art, must know the seed from which the metals are naturally generated in the earth, which seed we remove by Nature, and purify and prepare it by Art, making it so glorious, and full of wonderful potency, that with it we can impart instant purity and perfection to the imperfect bodies of men and metals. This seed we must extract from perfect, pure, and mature bodies, if we would attain the desired end. Now, in order that you may the more readily attain this knowledge, I have composed the following Tract concerning the first principle of Nature, and the creation and generation of man—which the student of our Magistry should diligently peruse, consider, and digest. Then he will not so easily miss the right path.

*The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom.*

All true Sages and philosophers have earnestly sought to obtain a knowledge of Almighty God as He is revealed in His marvellous works; this knowledge they attained, in so far as it can be attained by the human mind, by diligently considering the origin and first principles of all things. For they were enabled to realize the omnipotence of the Creator by the contemplation of the secret powers, and miraculous virtues, which He has infused into natural things. They were led to consider how they might employ their knowledge for the good of the human race, and how they might reveal it to others, and they received wisdom to expound the first principles of natural things, but more especially the birth and death of man, in something like the following way: In the beginning God created all things out of a subtle liquid, or impalpable vapour which was neither moist, nor dry, nor cold, nor hot, nor light, nor dark, but a confused chaos. This subtle vapour God first changed into water, which He then separated into a hard and a liquid part, or into earth and water. Out of elementary water He further evolved air, and out of elementary earth He brought forth fire, that is, elementary fire. And it may still be seen that the two first elements contain the two last; for daily experience teaches us that in water there is air, and that in earth there is fire. Out of these God created the firmament, the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars, and all other natural objects. At last He created a being in His own image, which He formed out of moist earth—*i.e.*, for the most part out of earth (which encloses fire) moistened with water (containing air). Hence it is said that man was created out of the four elements, and he is called a "small world." But man lay like one dead upon the ground, until God breathed into his nostrils the spirit of life, and Adam became a living soul. In like manner God created all other animals, and all plants and minerals, out of the four elements. Then God set Adam in the Garden of Eden, in Paradise, which He had planted with His own hands, and in which flourished all manner of flowers, fruit, roots, herbs, leaves, and grass. Then Adam's heart was filled with joy, and he understood the great power of his Creator, and praised and magnified Him with his lips; at that time he suffered no lack of any thing, having all that his heart desired, and he was appointed lord of all other creatures. Therefore, the eternal Creator bade the holy angels bring every other living being to Adam, that all might

acknowledge him as their lord, and that Adam might give to each one its own name, and distinguish one from the other.

Now when God beheld the animals walking about in Paradise, each with its own mate (except Adam, for whom no mate was found); when God saw them approaching him, and yet eager to flee from him, because of the reverence and awe with which he inspired them—God said: "It is not good for man to be alone"; therefore He caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and taking one of his ribs, not far from his heart, He formed it into a beautiful woman. This woman God brought unto the man, calling her Eve, and gave her to him for a wife, that he might protect her, that she might obey him, and that they might be fruitful and multiply.

### *The Glory and Excellence of Adam.*

God had appointed that Adam and Eve should spend a thousand years in Paradise, and then be translated, body and soul, to the Eternal Life of Heaven; the same glorious destiny was in reserve for their posterity. For as yet man was pure, good, and sinless, and not subject or liable to any kind of distemper, or sickness. He was acceptable and perfect in the sight of His Creator, who had made him in His own image, and given him all the produce of Paradise to eat, except the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, from which he was to abstain on pain of eternal punishment, both bodily and spiritual. But when he gave ear to the seducing words of the Evil One, and ate the forbidden fruit, he straightway became poor and wretched, perceived his own nakedness, and concealed himself amongst the trees of the garden. He had deserved eternal death, and it would have fallen upon him, if the Son of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, had not promised to give satisfaction for him. Yet in this world God punished Adam with a heavy yoke of wretchedness, tribulation, poverty, and disease, followed by the bitter agony of death. He also drove him forth from Paradise, and laid a heavy curse upon the ground, that thenceforward it should not bring forth fruit of its own accord, but that it should bear thorns and thistles. Now, when Adam found himself in the midst of a wild and uncultivated earth, compelled to gain his bread by tilling the field in the sweat of his brow, and to endure much suffering, care, and anxiety, he began to think seriously of what he had done to provoke the wrath of God, to experience deep sorrow for his grievous sin, and to implore God's gracious mercy and forgiveness. His prayers appeased the paternal heart of God, and induced Him to ease the grievous yoke laid upon Adam. The central fact of his punishment, however, remained, and death, though deferred, at length overtook him.

But, as I say, God mitigated the punishment of Adam, and took away from his neck the grievous yoke of suffering, by shewing him the means of warding off the strokes of impending calamity. For this purpose the natural properties of things were revealed to Adam by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; and he was taught to prepare medicines out of herbs, stones, and metals, wherewith he might alleviate his hard lot, ward off disease, and keep his body in good health until the end of his days, which, however, was known to God alone. For, although from the very beginning Adam had a clear insight into the working of the natural world, the greatest of all secrets was still hidden from him, till God one day called him into Paradise, and set forth to him this marvellous mystery—the mystery of our Stone—in the following words:

"Behold, Adam, here are two things, the one fixed and immutable, the other volatile and inconstant. The great virtue and potency that slumber in them you must not reveal to all your sons. For I created them for a special purpose, which I will now no longer conceal from you." Now, when Adam had learned the mystery out of God's own mouth, he kept it a strict secret from all his sons, until at length, towards the close of his life, he obtained leave from God to make the preparation of the Stone known to his son Seth. Unless Adam had possessed the knowledge of this great mystery he would not have been able to prolong his life to the age of 300 (let alone 900) years. For he was never for a [moment](#) free from an agonizing sense of his guilt, and of the terrible evils which he had, by his disobedience, brought upon himself and his posterity, who, through his fault, were one and all involved in the condemnation of eternal death. If we consider this, it must appear amazing that Adam could keep alive even so long as a single year after his fall; and we thereby clearly perceive (from the fact that he attained to so great a length of days) that the goodness of God must have furnished him with some life-preserving remedy. If Adam had not possessed our Medicine, or Tincture, he could not have borne up under so much tribulation, anxiety, wretchedness, grief, sorrow, and disease. But against all these ills he used our Medicine, which preserved his limbs and his strength from decay, braced his faculties, comforted his heart, refreshed his spirit, relieved his anxiety, fortified his mortal body against all manner of disease, and, in short, guarded him from all evil until the last hour of his life.

At length, however, Adam found that the Remedy had no longer any power to strengthen him, or to prolong his life. So he began to consider his end, refrained from applying the Medicine any more, threw himself upon the mercy of God, and sent his son Seth (to whom he had confided the secret), to the gate of Paradise, to demand some of the fruit of the Tree of Life. His request was denied him, whereupon he returned, and carried back to his father the answer of the Angel. It was heavy news for Adam, who now felt that his end was approaching, and therefore sent Seth a second time to fetch the oil of mercy. Before he could return, Adam died; but, at the bidding of God, Seth obtained from the Angel some olive-stones from the Tree of the Oil of Mercy, and planted them on his father's grave, where they grew into the tree from which the Cross of our Blessed Redeemer was made. Thus, though in a carnal sense the Oil was denied to Adam, and brought him no surcease from temporal death; yet, in a spiritual sense, it was freely given to him and obtained for him and all his offspring eternal life, and free, gracious, and merciful forgiveness of all their sins, concerning which God promised that He would remember them no more.

Thus, through the Heavenly Tree of Life, God fulfilled the prayer of our first parent Adam, and granted his request in a way which he had not looked for; and he now tastes the joy which is at the right hand of God, and is for ever removed from the hostile power of hunger, thirst, heat, cold, death, and all the other evils which flesh is heir to. Let us then diligently strive to realize that the Mystery of the Redemption is the most precious, the most excellent, and the most awful of the mysteries revealed by God to man, a mystery which no human thought can sound, and which no human lips can ever fully utter. But of this Awful Mystery, or Medicine of the Soul, God has also bestowed upon us an earthly antitype, or Medicine of the Body, by means of which wretched man may, even in this world, secure himself against all bodily distempers, put to flight anxiety and care, and refresh and comfort his heart in the hour of trouble—namely, the Mystery of the Sages, or the Medicine of the Philosophers. If,

therefore, a man would be perfectly happy in this world, and in the world to come, he should earnestly and devoutly strive to become possessed of these two Remedies; and for this purpose, he should turn to God with his whole heart, and ask for His gracious help, without which neither can be obtained; and, above all, he should be most eager to receive that Remedy by which the soul is healed of the mortal disease of sin.

This is the true fountain of the Sages; and there is nothing like it upon earth, but one eternal thing, by which the mortal body may, in this vale of tears, be fortified against all accidental disease, shielded from the pangs of poverty, and rendered sound, healthy, and strong, being protected against all mischances to the very end; and by which also metallic bodies may be changed into gold through a quickening of the process which Nature uses in the heart of the earth. The preparation and effects of this Stone are not unjustly considered to bear a close analogy to the creation of the world; therefore, I thought well to give an account of it from the very beginning.

I will now proceed briefly to expound my view of this Art, which, as all Sages testify, corresponds most closely to the creation and generation of man. I will attempt to make my meaning as plain as I dare, for the glory of the Holy Trinity, and the good of all Christian believers. When God had created the world, and adorned it with all manner of green things, herbs, roots, leaves, flowers, grass, and also with animals and minerals, he blessed them, and appointed that everything should bring forth fruit and seed after its kind. Only Adam (who is our Matter) was not yet in a position to produce any fruit out of himself. Before he could propagate his species, it was necessary that a part of him should be taken away, and again joined to him, *i.e.*, his wife Eve. Hereunto we must understand that so long as our substance is still gross and undivided, it can produce no fruit. It must first be divided, the subtle from the gross, or the water from the earth. The water is Eve, or the spirit; the earth Adam, or the body. And as the male is useless for purposes of generation until it be united to the female, so our earth is dead till it is quickened by the union with water. This is what that ancient Sage, Hermes, means when he says that the dead must be raised to life, and the feeble made strong.

It is necessary, then, to unite body and soul, and to change that which is below into that which is above, *i.e.*, body into spirit, and spirit into body. By this expression you are to understand not that the spirit by itself is changed into a body, or that the body by itself is changed into a spirit, but that both are united, and that the spirit, or water, dissolves, or resuscitates the body, or earth, while the body attracts the spirit, or water; and that they are thus joined into one substance, the earth being softened by the water, and the water hardened by the earth—as the boys in the street pour water on dry dust, and knead the whole into one mass. For this reason the Sages call our process child's play, in which the death of one is the life of the other, *i.e.*, in which the hardness of the one is softened by the other, and *vice versa*, seeing that the two are nothing but body and spirit originally belonging together. When contemplating this union, the Sage, Hermes, bursts forth into the following exclamation: "Oh, how strong, victorious, and precious is this nature that so unspeakably comforts its supplementary nature!" This nature is water, which stirs up and quickens the nature of the body. Hence it is said that Adam, or the body, would be dead without Eve, the spirit; for when the water has been distilled from our substance, the body lies dead and barren at the bottom of the alembic, and is described by the Sages as being, after the loss of its spirit, black, poisonous, and deadly. If the body is to be resuscitated, it must be

rendered fit for generation by being purged of its blackness and fetid smell, and then its sweat or spirit must be restored to it; the spirit cannot conceive unless the body be allowed to embrace its Eve, or spirit. Senior says that the higher vapour must be brought back to the lower vapour; the Divine water is the King that descends from heaven, and leads the soul back to its body which is thereby quickened from the dead. Observe that in the body there is hidden fixed *salt*, which slumbers there just as the male seed slumbered in Adam. This the spirit, or Eve, attracts, and thus becomes pregnant; that is to say: The seed of the body, which we call fixed salt, is extracted from the body by its own water (which has before been separated from it), and is rendered so subtle and volatile that it ascends with the spirit to heaven. Then we say that the fixed has become volatile, that the dead has been revived, and that the body has received life from its spirit. On this account the water is called by some Sages the living water of the man, since it is extracted from the body, or man; and Lucas enjoins us to take it, and heat it after the fashion of Nature. Other Sages call the body the "black soil," because in it the fixed salt is concealed from view, like the seed in the ground. Others, again, call it the "black raven," which has in its maw the "white dove"; and the water which is distilled from the body they call the "virgin's milk," by which the white dove must be brought forth from the black raven. In short, these things are described by the Sages under a great variety of names; but the meaning of those names is the same. In this fashion the water is embraced by the body, and the seed of the body, or the fixed salt, makes the water pregnant. For the water dissolves the body, and bears upward with it some particles of the fixed salt; and the oftener this process is repeated, the thicker does the water become. Hence the repetition of the process is a most important point. Hermes says that when he saw the water gradually grow thicker and harder, he rejoiced, for thereby he knew that he should find what he sought. The water, then, must be poured upon the body, and heated with it, till the body is dissolved, and then again extracted till the body is coagulated. Thus the body must be well broken up, and purified by washing. This process of affusion and extraction must be repeated until all the salt, or potency and efficacy, has been extracted from the body. This is the case when the water becomes white and thick, and, in the cold, hard and solid like ice, while in the heat it melts like butter. Now, when nothing more can be extracted from the body, the residuum must be removed; for it is the superfluous part of the substance. This is what the Sages mean when they say: In the preparation we remove that which is superfluous; but otherwise our whole Magistry is accomplished with one single substance, nothing being added, and nothing taken away, except that which is really superfluous; for it possesses in abundance all that is needed, namely, the water, or "white, flaky earth," which must be injected into "living mercury," that so the transmutation into good and fixed silver may take place. But something much more noble and precious is concealed in this water (fixed salt), which grows and grows like the infant in the mother's womb. For as the embryo in the matrix, which is first a mere seed, grows, and is gradually transmuted into flesh and blood, *i.e.*, into a thicker substance, till at length the limbs are formed; so this water grows from the white colour which distinguishes it at first, till it is changed to another colour. (For the embryo, too, is transmuted from the natural colour of the embryo into flesh and blood.) The substance at length assuming a red colour, may be compared to the forming of the infant's limbs; it is then that we first see what is to become of it. When you perceive this final transmutation—the germ of which lay in the substance all along—you may well rejoice; for you have attained the object of your desire.



Thus I have described the union of the man and woman, that is to say, of the body and spirit, by means of which the child is conceived in the water, and the whiteness extracted from the black body. Nor do we need anything else, except, as Morienus says, time and patience. This coagulated water is the "white, flaky earth," in which the Sage bids us sow our gold and silver that they may bear fruit a hundred-thousand-fold. This is the "clear spring" of the Count of Trevisa, in which the King bathes, though not assisted by any of his ministers, who only watch his clothes until he has dried up the whole spring, when he makes all his ministers lords and kings such as he was at the time of his entering the bath. But now the King's dignity is three times as great as it was before; he wears a three-fold diadem on his head, and is arrayed in garments that shine like carbuncles and amethysts, and beneath them he wears the tunic of purity, and is bound with the girdle of righteousness. He is the most glorious King of life, whose power transcends all human thought. At his side is seated his pure and chaste queen, sprung of his own seed; and of these two are born many royal children. The redness is concealed and preserved in the whiteness, which must not be extracted, but subjected to gentle coction until its full crimson glory flames forth. This whiteness is thus referred to in "The Crowd": "If you see that after the blackness there follows a whiteness, be sure that after the whiteness will come a redness: for the redness slumbers in the whiteness, and should not be extracted, but gently heated, until the whole turns red." Let what I have now said suffice you.

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HERMES [says]:

You must have a good knowledge of the True Principle of both Natural and Artificial Substances. For he who knows not the true First Principle will never attain to the end.

THE LOVE OF GOD AND  
OF YOUR NEIGHBOUR

IS THE PERFECTION OF ALL WISDOM.

—————

TO LOVE GOD IS THE HIGHEST WISDOM,

AND

TIME IS OUR POSSESSION.

—————

UNTO HIM BE ALL HONOUR, PRAISE, AND

GLORY

—————

# THE GOLDEN AGE

## RESTORED:

HAVING NOW APPEARED A SECOND TIME, FLOURISHED  
BEAUTIFULLY, AND BROUGHT FORTH FRAGRANT AND  
GOLDEN SEED. THIS RARE AND PRECIOUS  
SEED IS SHEWN AND IMPARTED TO ALL  
THE SONS OF TRUE WISDOM AND  
THE DOCTRINE,

BY

HENRY MADATHANAS.



*"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives simply, and without  
upbraiding, and it shall be given to him."—JAMES i., 5.*

MOTTO OF THE AUTHOR:

*"The Centre of the World—a Grain of Sand."*

## PREFACE.

*To the Worthy and Christian Reader.*

BELOVED and pious reader, above all, ye who are Sons of Wisdom and the Doctrine, some years ago Almighty God, in answer to my daily prayers, opened my eyes by the light of His Holy Spirit (Who was sent us through Christ by the Father, and from Whom we receive all wisdom), and enabled me to discover the True Centre in the Centre of the Triangle and the one true Matter of the precious Philosopher's Stone, so that I now hold it in my hands; but it took me five years longer to discover how the blood of the Red Lion and the glue of the White Eagle were to be extracted, and how these were to be mixed in their natural proportions, enclosed, sealed, and committed to the secret fire. Nor did I even then find the arcanum without constant and untiring application. I have, indeed, studied the writings, parables, and various figures of the philosophers with singular industry, and laboured hard to solve their manifold wonderful enigmas, most of which are simply the vain products of their imaginations. It was long before experience taught me that all their obscure verbiage and high pretensions are mere folly and empty phantasms (as is amply testified by our leading Sages). Then I understood that their preparations (of which we read in Geber, Albertus Magnus, and others), their purgations, sublimations, cementations, distillations, rectifications, circulations, putrefactions, conjunctions, solutions, coagulations, calcinations, incinerations, mortifications, revivifications, &c., as also their tripods, athanors (furnaces), reverberatory alembics, excrements of horses, ashes, sand, stills, pelican-violas, retorts, fixatories, &c., are mere plausible impostures and frauds. This must be apparent to any one who considers the truth of the matter. Nature, who, in her noble simplicity, delights in her own proper substance, knows nothing of these futilities. Hence Theophrastus (Sec. Mag. de Phil. Lap.) rightly says of those who seek the substance of the Stone in wine, imperfect bodies, blood, bismuth, mercury, sulphur, wine, dung, orpiment, and in plants, as chelidonia, hyssop, ivy, &c., that they are full of lies and thievery—deceiving the credulous, milking their purses dry, and, as to the rest, following their own foolish fancies, that are quite unable to realise the requirements of Nature. (Tell me now who will help me with the minerals of the earth, distillations of water, &c.?) Some of them take new wine and urine for the purpose of changing them into metals. To hear them talk, you might suppose all that is sold at the apothecaries to be good for metals. Thou foolish man, dost thou not perceive that none of these things have anything to do with them?

You might as well try to sever Nature, as endeavour to make metals out of blood. Make a man out of a horse, or a milch cow out of a mouse: this would be according to the same method of multiplication. Art cannot change or overstep the natural order of the universe. If a woman bring forth a male child, you cannot change him into a little girl. From this rule, which evidently obtains throughout Nature, any sane person may gather where, and how, we must look for, and find, our Blessed Matter. But let no one imagine, or suffer any quack to delude him into the belief, that he has all that he requires when the substance has been made known to him either by God, or by one of the initiated. Let him not suppose that the solution and purification are a very simple matter. He could fall into no more serious mistake. He has scarcely got beyond the most elementary stage of his task. Let me once more tell him that I spent five entire years, after discovering the true Matter of the Stone, in the search after the right method of manipulating it, until at length, in the sixth year, the key of power was

entrusted to me by the secret revelation of the most High God. That same key the ancient Patriarchs, Prophets, and Sages have always kept secret. "For if," says Monarcha, in a certain passage, "they had described it in an universally intelligible manner, and placed it within the reach of every labourer and porter, it would have been a great theft, and no true mystery; moreover, many evils would arise from such a profanation of the arcanum, which would also be manifestly contrary to God's will." For these and other reasons (which I have stated in the Epilogue), lest I should seem to be hiding the talent committed to me by God, I have in this my "Golden Age Come Back" (as far as Nature and God allow) revealed the Great Mystery of the Sages, which, through the grace of God, I have seen with these eyes, and handled with these hands. The just and pious reader will regard my undertaking with a kindly eye, and not suffer seeming contradictions to mislead him: the theory of and practice of this Art, and the laws which obtain in the Republic of the Chemists, forbade me to write more openly or plainly. I hope and trust that, nevertheless, all who look upon this book with the eyes of the mind, pore over it by day and by night, and pray to God from the bottom of their hearts, will, together with me, enjoy the wonderful hidden fruits of philosophy. In this way the Brethren of the true Golden Cross, and the elect members of the philosophic communion, are and remain joined together in a great confederation.

In conclusion, that the learned and worthy Christian reader may know my Christian name and my surname, I will remove every cause of complaint by making it known in the following manner. Let all and sundry be certified that the number of my name is 1613: by this number my whole name is written in the book of Nature with two dead ones, and seven living ones. After that, the letter 5 is the fifth part of B, and 15 the fifth part of 12. With this information you must be satisfied. Written at Tannenberg, March 23rd, 1622.

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*Epigram* to the Sons of Wisdom and the Doctrine.

I have sought; I have found; I have often purified; and I have joined together; I have matured it: Then the golden tincture has followed, which is called the Centre of Nature (hence so many opinions, so many books, so many parables). It is the Remedy, I openly declare it, for all metals, and for all sick persons. The solution is of God.

HERMAN DATICHUS,  
The Author's Famulus.

## THE GOLDEN AGE RESTORED.

AS I pondered in my mind the marvels of the Most High, and the duty of fervent love to our neighbours, which He laid upon us; I remembered the wheat harvest, when Reuben, the son of Leah, found Dudaim in the field, which Leah gave to Rachel for the love of the Patriarch Jacob. Then I was carried forward, being plunged in profound thought, to the time of Moses, who rendered potable the golden calf (which Aaron had formed) by reducing it to powder in the fire, throwing it into the water, and giving it the children of Israel to drink; and I marvelled greatly at the wonderful and masterly destruction of the metal by the man of God. But when I reflected upon the matter, the truth was borne in upon my mind, and my eyes were opened like those of the disciples at Emmaus, who knew their Master in the breaking of bread; and my heart burned within me. Then I retired to rest, that I might consider the matter further (on the morrow), and fell into a deep slumber; when, behold, Solomon appeared to me in all his power, wealth, and glory, and with him came his whole harem: sixty were queens, eight hundred concubines, and of virgins there was a countless number. One of them was his most beautiful dove, and was dearest to his heart. They formed a procession according to the Catholic rite, in the centre of which was one greatly praised and beloved, whose name was like ointment poured out, and whose fragrance was sweeter than that of spices; the fiery spirit of this person was the Key for the opening of the Temple, for entering the Holy of Holies, and taking hold on the horns of the Altar.

When the procession had been performed in the manner aforesaid, Solomon shewed me the One Centre in the Triangle of the Centre, and opened my understanding. Then I observed that a woman stood behind me, who had bared her breast, from a deep wound in which blood and water gushed forth. Her thighs were like two half-moons, made by the Master; her navel was like a round goblet; her belly like a heap of wheat, set about with roses; her breasts like two young roes that are twins; her neck like a tower of ivory; her eyes like the fish-pools in Heshbon, by the Gate of Bathrabbim; her nose like the Tower of Lebanon, which looketh towards Damascus; her head like Carmel, and the hair of her head like royal purple. Her garments, which were rancid, ill-savoured, and full of venom, lay at her feet, whither she had cast them; and at length she broke forth into these words: "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them? The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me; they took away my veil from me." Thereupon I fell to the ground with great and ignorant terror. But Solomon bade me rise, and said: "Fear not; for you see Nature bared, and the most secret of all secrets that is found beneath the sky and earth: She is beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, terrible as an army with banners—and nevertheless the pure and chaste virgin of whom Adam was formed and created. The entrance of her tabernacle is sealed. She lives in gardens, sleeps in the double cave of Abraham, in the field of Hebron, and her palace is in the depths of the Red Sea, and in transparent caverns. The air bare her, the fire nourished her: therefore she is the Queen of the earth, and has honey and milk in her breasts; her lips are as a dropping honeycomb; honey and milk are under her tongue; and the smell of her garments is to the wise like the smell of Lebanon—but to the ignorant an abomination." And Solomon said further: "Awake, and see my whole harem, and say what it is like." And straightway his whole harem was stripped naked. Yet could I not find or judge, and my eyes were sealed lest I should know the secret. When Solomon saw my infirmity, he set that naked woman

apart from the rest of the harem, and said: "Thy thoughts are vain, and thy mind is sunburnt; thy memory is shrouded in a thick mist, so that thou canst judge nothing rightly. But if thou art on the watch, and makest good use of thy present opportunity, the bloody sweat and snowy tears of this virgin will have power to restore thee, and to strengthen and clarify thy intellect and memory that thy eyes may see the secret wonders of the Most High, the height of the things above, the depth of the things beneath, and that thou mayst clearly understand the powers and operation of all Nature, and of the elements. Thy intellect shall be silver, and thy memory golden. The colour of all precious stones shall appear before thy eyes; thou shalt know their birth, and separate the good from the bad, the sheep from the goats. Thy life shall be peace, but the bells of Aaron shall rouse thee from sleep, and the lyre of David, my father, from drowsiness." These words of Solomon awed and terrified me still more; in part I was adread at such emphatic speech, and in part also at the splendour and glory of the King's harem. But King Solomon seized my right hand, and led me through a wine cellar into a most splendid secret palace, where he refreshed me with flowers and apples. The windows were of transparent crystal, and I gazed through them. And he said: "What do you see?" I said: "I see the former chamber whence we came, and on the left stands thy royal harem, and on the right naked virgins. Their eyes are redder than wine, and their teeth whiter than milk. But the garments that lie at their feet are fouler, blacker, and more unsightly than the river Kidron." "Choose out one of these," said Solomon, "to be your love. I esteem the virgins even as my own harem. And the more their loveliness delights me, the less am I deterred by their foul garments." With this, the King turned himself and spoke most kindly to one of his queens. There was in the chamber a mistress of about a hundred years of age. She was arrayed in a grey robe, and had a black fillet on her head, that was embroidered with many brilliant jewels, and lined within with red, yellow, and blue silk; her mantle was heavily ornamented with all kinds of Turkish and Indian colours and figures. This ancient woman nodded to me, and swore piously that she was the mother of that naked virgin, and that she was a pure, chaste, and sealed virgin, who had never before suffered the eye of man to dwell upon her, nor had any one ever touched her. She was the virgin of whom the Prophet had spoken: "Behold, we have a secret son, who with others has been changed. Behold, a virgin has conceived, the virgin that is called Apdorossa, that is, the sealed one, who suffers not others." Because her daughter was still unmarried, she had concealed her dowry beneath her feet, lest in the present war she should be deprived of her wealth by soldiers. But I was not to be deterred by her foul garments, but to choose her daughter from among all the rest for my beloved one, and the pleasure of my life. If I did so she would give me a lye with which I could cleanse her garments. Moreover, with her hand I should receive the flowing salt, the incombustible oil, and an inestimable treasure. She was about to declare this to me more in detail, when Solomon turned round, looked askance at me, and said: "I am the wisest of men, and my pleasant harem and the glory and the beauty of my queens excel the gold of Ophir. The ornaments of my concubines shame the rays of the sun, and the beauty of my virgins the light of the moon. My virgins are heavenly, my wisdom inscrutable, my mind past finding out."

Then I answered, while I bowed down to the ground with awe: "Behold, if I have found grace in your eyes—for I am lowly—give me that naked virgin whom I have chosen from among all, to preserve my life. Her garments are old, defiled, and foul, but I will purge them, and love her with all my heart. Let her be my sister, my spouse, since one glance of her eyes has stolen away my heart, and I am sick with love for

her." On hearing this Solomon straightway gave her to me. With that there arose a tumult in the harem, which roused me from my sleep. Now I knew not what had happened to me; but I took it for some dream, and thereupon until the light dawned I was full of subtle thoughts. But when I had risen, and poured forth my prayers, behold, I saw the garments of the naked virgin lying by my bedside, and when I saw not her, my hair stood on end, and I was covered with a cold perspiration. But I took heart and recalled my dream, and endeavoured to remember whether it had been real or not. But seeing that my pondering could explain nothing, I would by no means look again upon the garments, much less did I dare to touch them. So I changed my chamber, and, out of sheer ignorance, left those garments lying there a long time. For I feared that if I touched them or turned them over, something remarkable would happen to me. Now the poisonous odour of the garments which I had inhaled in my sleep was so sickening that my eyes could not see the time of grace, or my heart understand the great wisdom of Solomon.

After the garments had lain five years in the chamber, I at length determined to throw them into the fire, and change my dwelling. In the night after I had formed this resolution, that ancient woman appeared to me in a dream, and rebuked with the following angry words: "Most ungrateful of mortals, the garments of my daughter, beneath which lie concealed those priceless jewels, have now been committed to thee for more than five years. Yet in all that time thou hast not cleansed or purified them, and now thou thinkest to burn them; is it not enough that thou art the cause of my daughter's death?" Then I answered, wrathfully: "How am I to understand thy words? Wouldst thou make me out to be a robber, though during those five years I have never seen thy daughter, or heard a syllable about her? How can I possibly be the cause of her death?" Here she took me up: "All this is true. Nevertheless thou hast sinned grievously against God, and on that account hast not received from me my daughter, or the lye of the Sages wherewith to cleanse her garments. For since thou wert from the very first horrified at the sight of my daughter's garments, the planet Saturn, her grandfather, was wroth, and changed her into what she was before her birth. Moreover, thou hast offended him by despising her, and being the cause of her death, corruption, and final destruction. She it is of whom Senior thus speaks: 'Woe, woe unto me! Bring me a naked woman, while my body was yet invisible, and I had not yet become a mother, till I should be born a second time; then I brought forth all the strength of the vegetable roots, and carried off the victory in my essence.'" These words sounded strange and mysterious to me, yet I manfully repressed my wrath, and solemnly protested that I knew nothing of her daughter's decease, and certainly had not been the cause of her death, corruption, and destruction; that I had kept her garments five years in my chamber, but had been prevented by my great blindness from understanding their use; and that I felt innocent before God and men. My excuse satisfied the ancient woman; she looked kindly at me, and said: "I see that thy conscience is pure from guilt, and for thy innocence thou shalt receive a great reward. Therefore, I will reveal to thee this matter faithfully, but secretly. My daughter, for the great love she bare thee, has left thee under her garments a grey box wrapped in a thick, black, mouldy cloth." With this she gave me a glass bottle full of lye, and continued: "Purge that box well of the dirt and bad smell with which the garments have infected it, and then thou shalt want no key, but the box will open of its own accord, and in it thou shalt find two things, viz., a white silver casket full of polished diamonds, and a rich robe intertissued with precious solar jasper stones. All these treasures belonged to my dear daughter, and she left them all to thee before she was

transformed and perished. If thou wilt skilfully transpose this treasure, carefully purify it, and silently and patiently place it in some warm, moist, vaporous, and transparent chamber, and guard it there from cold, wind, hail, swift lightning, and all outward injury, till the season of the wheat harvest, thou shalt perceive and behold the great glory and beauty of thine heritage."

When she had thus spoken, I awoke, and devoutly prayed that God might grant me wisdom to find the box which had been described to me in my dream. Then I instituted a careful search among the garments, and was soon rewarded with success; but the cloth in which the box was wrapped was so hard and so firmly glued to it that I could not tear it off; moreover, I could not cleanse it with lye, or cut it with iron, steel, or any other metal. So I did not know what in all the world I should do, and began to think that it was a poisoned cloth, and to call to mind the saying of the Prophet: "Though thou wash thee with nitre and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me saith the Lord God."

So another year passed away, and still all my patient toil and thought had met with no success. At last, to drive away melancholy, I took a walk in a certain garden; and, after some time, I sat down upon a stone and fell into a deep sleep. I slept, but my heart waked. Then the ancient woman appeared to me once more, and said: "Have you entered upon the heritage of my daughter?" I sorrowfully replied, "I did indeed find the box, but I cannot remove the cloth, nor will the lye that thou gavest me avail to soften it." Then she laughed at my simplicity, and said: "Dost thou try to eat oysters or crabs in their shells? Must they not first be prepared by the ancient cook of the planets? I told thee to purify the grey box with the lye I gave thee, but not the cloth which is wrapped round it. The latter thou shouldest first have burned with the fire of the Sages." For this purpose she gave me some glowing coals, wrapped in a silk cloth, from which I was to obtain the subtle fire of the Sages, and told me that if with this fire I burned away the cloth I should get at the box. When she had ended, straightway there arose a north and south wind, and blew through the garden. Then I awoke again, shook off sleep, and beheld the glowing coals lying at my feet. I took them up with a grateful heart, and began to work day and night, remembering the saying of the Sages: "Fire and Azoth are sufficient for thee"; and the passage in Esdras (Bk. iv.): "And he gave me a goblet filled with fire, and when I had drunk it wisdom grew in me; and God granted me understanding, and my spirit was preserved, and my mouth opened, but nothing else was added." After forty nights I had finished 204 books, of which seventy were worthy to be read by the most wise, and were written upon box tablets. I thus continued in silence and hope, as that ancient woman had bidden me do, until at last, after a long time, my understanding, in fulfilment of Solomon's prophecy, became silver, and my memory gold.

When, in obedience to the directions of the ancient lady, I had skilfully placed the treasure of her daughter in a chamber by itself, and closed it up, I gazed upon those brilliant lunar diamonds, and solar rubies, and understood the meaning of Solomon when he says: "My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven; his eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set; his cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers; his lips like roses dropping fragrant myrrh; his hands are as gold rings set with the beryl; his belly is as bright ivory overlaid with sapphires; his legs are as pillars of marble set upon sockets of fine gold; his



countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars; his mouth is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem. Hold him, and suffer him not to go, till I have brought him into my mother's house, into my mother's chamber."

To these words of Solomon I could find no answer, and had already determined to take the treasure out of the chamber that I might at length enjoy quietness and peace, when I happened upon this other passage: "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up nor awake my love till he please. She is a garden enclosed; a spring shut up; a fountain sealed; a vineyard at Baal-hamon; a vineyard at Engedi; an orchard; a spice garden; a hill of myrrh; a mountain of incense; a bed; a crown; a palm tree; a rose of Sharon; a sapphire; a beryl stone; a wall; a tower, and battlement; a garden of herbs; a fountain in a garden; a spring of living waters; a daughter of princes, and the pleasant love of Solomon; she dearly loves her mother, and is her mother's chosen one; her head is full of dew, and her locks wet with the drops of night."

These words enlightened me, and shewed unto me the aim of the wise: wherefore I patiently left the treasure in the chamber, and waited till through God's mercy all should have been happily perfected by the operation of Nature, and the labour of my hands.

Shortly afterwards, on the day Of the new moon, an eclipse of the sun was seen, which was terrible to behold, for it began with a misty greenness, somewhat shot over with other colours, but it was followed by entire blackness; all heaven and earth were shrouded in thick darkness, and men were full of fear, but I rejoiced. For I remembered God's great mercy, and the Mystery of Regeneration, as Christ Himself told us that unless a grain of wheat was cast into the earth, and decomposed, it could bring forth no fruit. Now it happened that the eclipse was covered by clouds, and the sun began to shine, but as yet three-fourths of it were darkened. And, behold, an arm held out from the clouds a letter sealed at the four corners, on which was written: "I am black, but comely, O daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I am black, and burnt by the sun." Then there was seen a rainbow, and I remembered the Covenant of the Most High, and the faithfulness of my Teacher, and, behold, by the help of the planets and the fixed stars, the sun at last overcame the eclipse, and shone out once more in perfect brightness upon the mountains and valleys. Then all fear and terror were at an end, and all that had seen that day rejoiced in the Lord, and said: "Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines, that we may gather the ripe grapes and drink wine, and be satisfied in due season with milk and the honeycomb." At the approach of evening the sky changed its aspect, and the Seven Stars rose with a lurid light, till, having completed their natural course, they paled and vanished before the Redness of the Sun. And, behold, the wise that dwelt upon earth awoke from their sleep, and gazed up to heaven, and said: "Who is it that bursts forth like the Dawn, beautiful like the Moon, mighty like the Sun, in whom there appears no spot? his fervour is kindled, and the flame of the Lord: Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. Therefore, we will not forsake her; she is our sister, though she be small,

and have no breasts. We will take her back to the house of her mother, into the transparent palace where she was before, that by sucking the breasts of her mother, she may become great like the tower of David, strengthened with battlements, on which hang a thousand shields and all the weapons of the strong. When she went forth the daughters called her blessed, the Queen and the concubines praised her." But I knelt down, and returned thanks to God, and glorified His Holy Name.

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## EPILOGUE.

And now, my beloved Sons of Wisdom and the Doctrine, herein is the great Mystery of the Sages, in all the power and glory thereof, and the Revelation of the Spirit, concerning Whom the prince and monarch Theophrastus has these words, in his Apocalypse of Hermes: "He is the only God, and holds the whole world together; through Him alone can we be true, and truly vanquish the Elements, and, obtain the Quintessence. No eye has seen, no ear has heard, neither has it entered into the heart of any man to conceive that which is in thy mind of this Spirit of Truth. In Him alone is truth, and through Him alone Adam and the other patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were enabled to secure constant health, and a long life, and to provide for themselves great wealth. Through this Spirit the Seven Sages invented the Arts, and gained riches. With His aid Noah built the Ark, Solomon the Temple, and Moses the Tabernacle; through Him vessels of pure gold were borne into the Temple; through Him Solomon gained his excellent knowledge, and performed mighty deeds. He enabled Ezra to restore the Law; Miriam, sister of Moses, to exercise liberality; and the Prophets of the Old Covenant to predict the future. He is the Sanctification and Healing of all things, the highest knowledge, the ultimate Mystery of Nature, that is to say, the Spirit of the Lord, Who fills the whole universe, and Who brooded over the waters in the beginning—without Whose secret teaching the world cannot be understood, and Whom the whole world desires on account of His power, while the Saints have sought and longed ardently to see Him from the beginning of the world. For He dwells in the seven Planets, raises the clouds, dispels the mist, gives light to all things, changes everything into gold and silver, imparts all health, abundance, and treasure, heals the leper, cures dropsy and gout, prolongs life, comforts the sorrowful, restores health to the sick, removes all defects, and, in short, is the Mystery of all mysteries, the Arcanum of all arcana, the true healing and Medicine of all things. He gives the desired knowledge, and is the best of all sublunar things, by which Nature is strengthened, and the heart with all the members renewed, the flower of youth kept fresh, old age driven away, diseases destroyed, and the whole earth renewed. His Nature is unsearchable, His power infinite, His excellence and glory unapproachable.

"Moreover, this Spirit presides over all heavenly things, gives health, fortune, joy, peace, love, destroys every evil after its kind, puts an end to poverty and misery, renders men incapable of doing, saying, or thinking any evil, and gives to the godly temporal felicity, but to the wicked who abuse it, eternal punishment."

And thus, in the Name of the Holy Trinity, we will, in these few words, conclude our exposition of the Great Mystery of the Most Precious Philosophical Stone, and of the Arcanum of the Sages. To the Most High and Almighty God, the Creator of this Art, Whom it hath pleased to reveal to me, wretched, sinful man (in answer to my prayer), this most precious knowledge, be eternal praise, glory, honour, and thanksgiving; and to Him be addressed a most humble and fervent prayer that He may so direct my heart and mind, that I may not speak of this Mystery, or make it known to the wicked, lest I be found unmindful of my Vow, a Breaker of the Heavenly Seal, a perjured Brother of the Golden Cross, and guilty of the Sin against the Holy Ghost. From this may God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, the Blessed and Indivisible Trinity, in mercy PRESERVE ME. Amen, Amen, Amen.

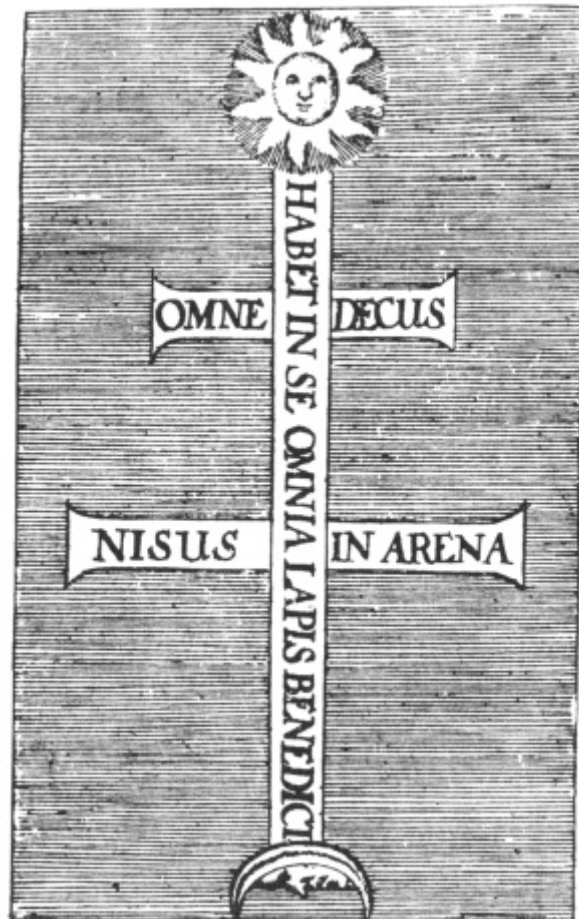
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# THE GOLDEN TRACT

CONCERNING

THE STONE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.

BY AN ANONYMOUS GERMAN PHILOSOPHER.



# THE GOLDEN TRACT

## CONCERNING THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE.

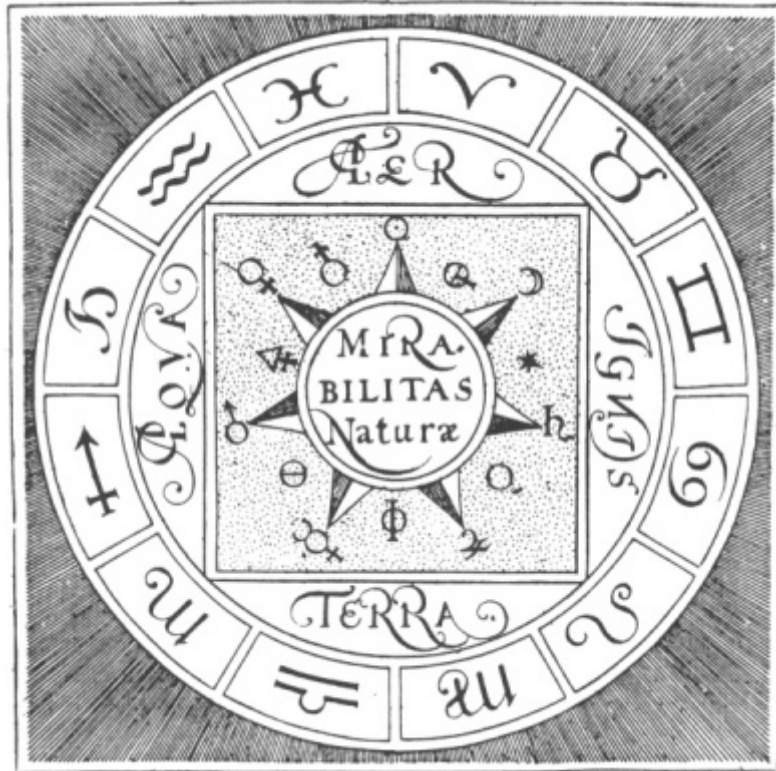
### *The Author's Preface to the Art-loving Reader.*

WORTHY reader, and true enquirer into the secrets of nature, marvel not that in the old age of this world, when it seems to have one foot already in the grave, I have determined to write this tract, although all libraries are already full of books on this subject—of which, however, the greater part are false, and wear merely the rouge and powder of philosophy. I have written it not for my own pleasure, but for your advantage, that, by pointing to the foundation of truth, I might lead you back from the pathless wilderness into the right way—which is certainly for your own interest. As far as I am concerned, I have long known all that I seek to know in regard to this matter, and have no need of many books, seeing that during the last twenty-two years I have read and re-read all the works that fell into my hands—including numerous manuscripts, as well as many printed volumes.

In this my tract you will find the subject set forth, and the true solution given, not only theoretically, but also from a practical and allegorical point of view, with a clearness and lucidity such as I believe to be almost unparalleled in any previous philosophical treatise. In quoting, I have always been careful to give the exact reference, so that you may look out the passage for yourself, and by diligently considering it, sharpen your understanding. I could more easily have composed this treatise, and made myself known to the Brethren of the Golden Cross, if I had left out those references; but for your sake I decided otherwise. Do not wonder that I conceal my name, and refuse to appear to you face to face. I have come forward, not for the sake of any paltry glory, or of worldly praise, but to do you good. Moreover, my teachers, even the true philosophers, advised me not thus to risk my life for the sake of obtaining a high place in the world's esteem, to expose myself to greedy robbers or to give occasion for many crimes by the prostitution of this profound secret. No doubt the gentle reader has learned by the works of Sendivogius that whenever he sheaved himself openly to the powerful, he went in constant fear of his life. Experience teaches that many philosophers who gave no thought to their personal safety, have been killed and deprived of their tincture by greedy and powerful robbers; and it stands to reason that any one going about with a great treasure in his hand, must fall a prey to brigands. Sendivogius concealed his name by an anagram. Thus also a short time ago another philosopher and Brother of the Golden Cross, whose real name has long been familiar to me, concealed it beneath an anagram, and made himself known to his friends by an enigmatical designation. Why then should I place myself at the mercy of this impure world? Permit me rather, dear friend; to follow the example of the sages, and leave the rest to the thrice good and great God, who will make my true self known to you in good time, if it be for the glory of His name, and for your and my good. Do not be eager to enquire after my name. For even if you should get to know it, or become personally acquainted with me, you would have to rest satisfied with the contents of this tract. For I have solemnly promised two philosophers—Bernard, Count of Trevisan, and Neigens—that I will not betray to any one more than has been revealed in this book. Neither be anxious to ask whether I actually possess this precious treasure. Ask rather whether I have seen how the world was created; whether I am

acquainted with the nature of the Egyptian darkness; what is the cause of the rainbow; what will be the appearance of the glorified bodies at the general resurrection; what is the most indelible colour. Of you that rightly understand this little book, I will enquire whether you have seen that great salt sea, without any corrosion, raise a sufficiency of the moisture of all nature to the summits of the highest mountains. Tell me where there is sulphur out of sulphur, and mercury out of mercury—or where sulphur springs from mercury, and again mercury from sulphur. When was there placed before your eyes the idea of most fervent love, the male and the female embracing each other so closely that they could no more be torn asunder, but through unsearchable love became one? If you understand what I am alluding to, and have performed the experiment with your own hands, and seen it with your own eyes, I welcome you as fellow partakers of the mystery, and have no dearer wish than to enjoy your familiar intercourse—for which reason I have also sent forth into the world this little tract.

If any one complain of the difficulty of our Art, let him know that in itself it is perfectly simple, and can present no obstacle to those who love God, and are held worthy by Him of this knowledge. If any one blame me for setting forth the truths of this Art too plainly and clearly, so as to render it possible for any one to gain a knowledge thereof, I answer that I have indeed explained them with sufficient lucidity for those who are worthy and foreordained of God, but that the unworthy can derive no profit from them. To some foolish and shallow persons I have several times expounded this Art in the simplest manner, and even word for word, but they despised it only, and would not believe me that there is exhibited in our work a twofold resurrection of the dead. Our Art, its theory as well as its practice, is altogether a gift of God, Who gives it when and to whom He elects: it is not of him that wills, or of him that runs, but simply through the mercy of God. Though I had diligently studied this Art for 17 or 18 years, yet I had, after all, to wait for God's own time, and accept it as a free gift. No one need doubt the truth or certainty of this Art. It is as true and certain, and as surely ordained by God in nature, as it is that the sun shines at noontide, and the moon shews her soft splendour at night. But I must conclude this preface, and gird myself for writing the tract itself. But ye, beloved Brethren of the Golden Cross, who are about to learn how to enjoy and use this most precious gift of God in secret, do not remain unknown to me, and if ye know me not, be sure that the faithful will be approved and their faith become known through the Cross, while security and pleasure overshadow it. God be with us, Amen!



## THE GOLDEN TRACT

### CONCERNING THE STONE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.

ANCIENT as well as modern philosophers, most beloved reader, and devoted seeker after true wisdom, when through the grace of God they had reached the goal of their desires, have endeavoured to make their discovery known to their fellow inquirers in all parts of the world—not only because they wished to inform them that the thrice great and good God had enlightened their minds, blessed the labours of their hands, and shewn to them the greatest and most profound secret of earthly wisdom (for which benefit all praise, honour, and glory are justly due to Him)—but also that they might afford assistance to beginners in the Art, by which, with God's permission, they too might attain to the knowledge of this most holy mystery. Such men there have been in all countries. Amongst the Egyptians Hermes Trismegistus holds the highest place; then come Chaldæans, Greeks, Arabs, Italians, Gauls, Englishmen, Dutchmen, Spaniards, Germans, Poles, Hungarians, Hebrews, and many others. Though the aforementioned Sages wrote at different times, and in different languages, yet their works exhibit so marvellous an agreement, that any true philosopher may easily see that all their hearts had been gladdened by God in the discovery of this stone, and that they all had performed this work with their own hands. Now, as the truth of their views is perceived by their agreement, so the disagreement of certain others marks them as false philosophers. For, not knowing the foundation of this glorious Art, and making up fanciful theories out of their own heads, they exhibit their ignorance to all.

The aforesaid agreement exists in regard to the Matter, its solution, its weight, and the regulation and increase of the fire.

As concerns the Matter, it is *one*, and contains within itself all that is needed. Out of it the artist prepares whatever he wants. Its "Birth is in the sand," as the philosopher Anastratus says in "The Crowd": "Nothing is more precious than the red sand of the sea; it is the distilled moisture of the Moon joined to the light of the Sun, and congealed." That only this one substance is required is attested by Agadmon in the same book. He says: "Know that unless you take my body [sulphur] without the spirit [mercury] ye will not obtain what ye desire. Cease to think of many things. Nature is satisfied with one thing, and he who does not know it is lost."

In the same way Arnold, of Villa Nova, writes in his "Flower of Flowers"; "Our stone is made out of one thing, and with one thing." To the same effect he says to the King of Naples: "All that is in our stone is essential to it, nor does it need any foreign ingredient. Its nature is one, and it is *one* thing." And Rosinus says: "Know that the object of your desire is one thing, out of which all things are made." Lilius: "You have need only of one thing, which at any stage of our experiment can be changed into another nature." So Geber says in his "Summary": "Our stone is one, one medicine, to which we add nothing, from which we take nothing away, only removing that which is superfluous." Again, Scites in "The Crowd" says: "The essence of this Art is in like manner a certain one thing which is stronger and more exalted than all other things, and is called the most powerful acid, because it changes gold into a clear spirit, without which there is neither whiteness, nor blackness, nor redness. When the spirit is joined to the body it becomes one with it; and yet again becomes a spirit, and is saturated with the spiritual and unchangeable tincture, and thus again by



combination receives a bodily tincture which cannot be annihilated. If you place the body without the acid over the fire, it will be burnt and destroyed." From these words of Scites the reader might conclude, that not one but two things, namely a body and an acid (as he calls it) are required, and that a liquid must be combined with a dry thing lest the dry thing should be consumed by the fire, in order that by the moist thing it may be preserved from such combustion. To such a conclusion, if rightly accepted, I gladly subscribe. But from the above mentioned philosophical dicta (however obscurely worded they may be) it is clearer than day that the substance of our Blessed Stone is one (although different sages call it by different names), and that Nature has made it ready to the hand of the adept, having willed this one thing, and no other thing in all the world, to be the material of the Stone. This Matter lies before the eyes of all; everybody sees it, touches it, loves it, but knows it not. It is glorious and vile, precious and of small account, and is found everywhere. Theophrastus Paracelsus, in his book concerning "The Tincture of Physical Things," calls it the Red Lion, which is named by many, but known by few. Hermes, in the first chapter of his Treatise, calls it "Quick Silver coagulated in its innermost chambers." In the "Rosary of the Philosophers" it goes by the name of Salt. But, to be brief, our Matter has as many names as there are things in the world; that is why the foolish know it not. Foolish I call those who, without any previous knowledge of Nature and her properties, undertake to learn this Art, and come to it (as Arnold says) like the ass to the crib, not knowing for what they open their mouths. Hence it is well said by Geber, in the "Sum of Perfection": "He who has no elementary knowledge of Nature is far from a proper appreciation of this Art." And Rosarius says: "I advise no one to approach this Art unless he knows the principle and the regimen of Nature: if he be acquainted with these, little is wanting to him except one thing, nor need he put himself to a great expense, since the stone is one, the medicine is one, the vessel one, the rule one, the disposition one." Yet this one substance is so divided by the operation of Nature, and the skill of the Artist, that it is transmuted into our White Eagle, nor does the splendour of the sun illuminate more abundantly the spagyric matter with its beams; or, as Basilus Valentinus hath it, that, "thence is born a spirit white as scow, and another spirit red as blood, which two spirits are contained in a third hidden thing." Hence King Aros well says: "Our medicine is composed out of two things having one essence, namely, through the mercurial union of a solid and a liquid, a spiritual and a corporeal, a cold and a moist, a warm and a dry, and in no other way can it be made." And Richard the Englishman says: "The stone is one, the medicine one, which, however, according to the philosophers, is called Rebis (Two-thing), being composed of two things, namely, a body and spirit [red or white]. But over this many foolish persons have gone astray, explaining it in divers ways." Rebis is two things, and these two things are one thing, namely, water joined to a body, by which the body is dissolved into a spirit, that is, mineral water, out of which it was first made; and this body and spirit make up one mineral water, which is called Elixir, that is to say, ferment; for then water and spirit are one thing, of which is composed a tincture and medicine for purging all bodies. And thus, according to the philosophers, we have the nature of sulphur and mercury above ground, while underground they become gold and silver. Bernard, Count of Trevisan and the March, says: Our work is performed by means of one root, and two crude mercurial substances, drawn and extracted from a mineral, pure and clear, being conjoined by the heat of friendship, as this matter requires, and carefully cooked until the two things become one thing," &c. Basilus Valentinus (*Lib. Nat. et Supernal.*, c. 4) says: "I will make this known to thee in all truth [for the love of God], that the root of philosophic sulphur, which is a heavenly

spirit, is united in the same material with the root of the spiritual and supernatural mercury, and the principle of spiritual salt—out of which is made the Stone, and not out of several things. That universal thing, the greatest treasure of earthly wisdom, is one thing, and the principles of three things are found in one, which has power to change all metals into one. The three things are the true spirit of mercury, and the soul of sulphur, united to spiritual salt, and dwelling in one body; they are dragon and eagle, king and lion, spirit and body, etc."

In this way our prepared material is also called male and female, active and passive. So Zimon says, in "The Crowd": "Know that the secret of the work consists in male and female, *i.e.*, an active and a passive principle. In lead is found the male, in orpiment the female. The male rejoices when the female is brought to it, and the female receives from the male a tinging seed, and is coloured thereby." And Diomedes says: "Join the male child of the 'red servant' to the fragrant spouse, and they will produce the object of our Art. But you must not introduce any foreign matter, neither dust, nor any other thing. The conception will then be perfect, and a true son will be born. Oh, how precious is the nature of the 'red servant,' without whom nothing can be effected!" Others call it quicksilver, or mercury, and sulphur, or fire, as Roger Bacon says, in the third chapter of his "Mirror": "Out of sulphur and mercury are all metals, and nothing adheres to them, neither is joined to them, or transmutes them, but what is of them. And thus we must accept mercury and sulphur as the matter of the stone." So also Menabodus says: "He who joins quicksilver to the body of magnesia, and the woman to the man, extracts the secret essence by which bodies are coloured." Lullius in his "Codicil" says: "The property of our mercury is to be coagulated by its sulphur" And, in the Practice of his Testament: "The silver is a flowing moisture, floating above and preserving the whole from combustion."

Others use the names, body, spirit, and soul. Thus Arnold, in his Flower of Flowers," says: "The Sages have affirmed that our Stone is composed of body, soul, and spirit, and they have spoken truly. For the imperfect part they have compared to a body, because it is weak. The water they have called spirit, and truly, because it is spirit. The ferment they have termed soul, because it gives life to the imperfect body (which before was dead), and makes its form more beautiful."

Again, he says: "A spirit is never joined to a body but by the interposition of a soul. For the soul is the medium between body and spirit, joining them together." Morienus says: "The soul quickly enters its own body—but if you tried to join it to a foreign body, you would labour in vain." And Lilius says: "Body, soul, and spirit make up one thing, which has all in itself, and to which nothing is added."

But why should we mention and explain all the names by which our Matter is designated? We will be content with the foregoing, seeing that they are the most common and the most germane to our purpose. In the following pages, after endeavouring to find where our substance lies hid, and where it may be obtained, we will say some words about the mode of its dissolution, that being after all the principal object of our inquiry. And first, as concerns the search after our Matter, we should remember that in the beginning, when there was nothing but Himself, God, who is infinite in wisdom, created two classes of things, namely, those that are in heaven, and those that are under heaven. The heavenly things (about which we need not here speak at length) are the heavens themselves, and the dwellers in heaven. The things that are

under the heavens were created out of four elements, and are commonly divided into three classes. Those that live and feel hold the first place, and are called animals. The second class are the plants, that grow out of the earth, but do not feel. The third class, that of the minerals, has its origin underground. These three classes include all that (beneath the moon) has been created out of the elements. They can never become more or less, and God has bound each thing to its own genus and species, so that it cannot change from one genus to another. If any one tried to make a man or a tree out of a stone, or a monkey or lead out of a plant, or an animal or a plant out of lead, he would be prevented from doing so by the eternal order of the Great King. If such a thing were possible, all classes of natural objects could be changed into one. But, because such a change would put an end to the world, the Ruler of the Universe does not permit it. Nay, what is more, He not only restricted everything to its own kind, but gave each created thing its own seed, by which it might be propagated after its own manner—always remaining in its own class, and not overstepping the bounds of some other species. If any one wished to change a man into a horse, an apple into a lettuce, a diamond or any other jewel into gold, he would make an enormous mistake. For such an attempt would be against the nature of sublunar things. And as it was in the beginning so it shall be in the end, when the Almighty, who in the beginning said "Let it be," shall say "Let it perish." But among those things which have a common substance, seed, and elementary composition, it is not difficult to accomplish an amelioration and improvement, by the purification of their matter. So we may see a man of a clear and subtle mind attain to a higher degree of human excellence than others who are less gifted. This difference arises from the superior purity and subtlety of his spiritual substance, which again has its origin in a rectified and well constituted body. Thus also we see one horse excel the strength and speed of another; and it is the same with all kinds of living beings. A like rule holds good to an even greater degree in regard to plants and trees—with trees, by transplanting, grafting, and kindred methods well familiar to gardeners; while as to other vegetable natures, we are taught by daily experience how plants and flowers of the same kind differ from each other in glory, in beauty, in fragrance, and savour. Of this cloves and tulips afford a striking instance. Into how many different species have these flowers been developed; and even these. new developments are being made more beautiful from day to day, and it is universally admitted that never were there such fine and fragrant flowers before. What am I to say about metals which have a common substance, namely, quicksilver, digested and consolidated by the power of sulphur? Concerning this common substance, Richard the Englishman has the following words: "Nature has elaborated all kinds of fusible things by a natural process out of mercury, and the substance of its sulphur, because it is the property of quicksilver to be consolidated by steam, as by the heat of white and red sulphur which does not burn."

The same view is expressed by Arnold (pt. 1., cp. ii.): "Quicksilver is the elementary form of all things fusible; for all things fusible, when melted, are changed into it, and it mingles with them because it is of the same substance with them. Such bodies differ from quicksilver in their composition only so far as itself is or is not free from the foreign matter of impure sulphur." Similarly Rosinus (*Ad Saratantam*) says: "The substance of all metals in the heart of the earth is solidified and imperfect quicksilver; for by the quickening heat of sulphur different metals (according to the different varieties of sulphur) are generated in the earth; their original substance is one and the same, and is modified only by a greater or smaller external influence." Hence we see daily how busily Nature is occupied in bringing them to mortification and perfection.

Now the perfection of metals, and the final intention of Nature in regard to them, is gold. For all metals shew that Nature has done something for them towards ultimate perfection; no metal is so base as not to contain a single grain of gold or silver Nature would always change quicksilver that has within itself its own sulphur into gold, if she were not often hindered by some outward impediment, viz., impure, foetid, and combustibile sulphur. In most cases gold is dug out pure, clear, free from dross, and unmixed with any other metals. But most frequently a large quantity of foreign sulphur mingles with the quicksilver, and thus prevents its perfect development; and, according to the variety of that sulphur, different kinds of metals are generated, as Aristotle says (4. Meteor.): "If the quicksilver be of a good substance but the sulphur impure and combustibile, it changes the quicksilver into brass. If the quicksilver be stony, impure, and earthy, and the sulphur not pure, it becomes iron. Tin seems to have good and pure quicksilver; but the sulphur is bad and not well mixed. Lead has gross, bad, and ill-smelling quicksilver, and is thus not properly coagulated."

That retarding, combustibile, and foetid sulphur is not the true fire that fashions metals; but quicksilver has its own sulphur in itself, which is sufficient for the purpose of fashioning it, as Bernard, Count of Trevisan, says: "Some believe that in the generation of metals, a sulphuric substance is introduced from without; but, on the contrary, it is clear that in the working of Nature sulphur is already enclosed in the mercury. Yet it has no power in it except through the moving heat, by which the said sulphur is changed, and with it two other qualities of the mercury. In this way, then, Nature generates by means of this sulphur the different kinds of metals in the veins of the earth, according to the diversity of degrees and alterations." For in metals, according to Arnold (pt. i., cp. iii.), "there is a two-fold superfluity: one that is enclosed in the innermost nature of the quicksilver, and got there at the first mingling of the metal; the other does not belong to the essence of it, is external to it, and corruptible. To remove the former is a difficult task; the latter may be removed without any difficulty. The combustibile sulphur is taken away by being subjected to the action of fire, or is destroyed by foreign bodies; but the other, which is in the quicksilver, is preserved by it from combustion." But again, that inward sulphur which fashions the quicksilver belonging to it, and matures it towards perfection, is either pure or impure, combustibile or incombustibile. Impure sulphur hinders the digestion of the quicksilver, which cannot be transformed into gold until that which does not belong to it has been entirely separated from it; but the pure, incombustibile, fixed sulphur remains with it, and then at length it passes either into gold or silver, according as the sulphur is either white or red. This internal sulphur is nothing but mature mercury, and the most advanced part of the quicksilver, and for this reason the quicksilver receives it so kindly, as being of its own essence, while it rejects the other which is foreign to it. So Richard the Englishman says, in his ninth chapter: The more simple the sulphur is, the more readily does it combine with simple and pure mercury, and the more intimately they combine the more precious is the metal which is produced." But such sulphur, says Avicenna, "is not found on earth, except in so far as it exists in metallic bodies through the action of the sun and moon. In the sun it exists in a perfect state, because there it is better digested and decocted." According to Richard, in his twelfth chapter, the red sulphur of the philosophers exists in the sun on account of its greater digestion, and the white sulphur in the moon on account of its inferior digestion."

Since, then, the substance of the metals is one, and common to all, and since this substance is (either at once, or after laying aside in course of time the foreign and evil sulphur of the baser metals by a process of gradual digestion) changed by the virtue of its own indwelling sulphur into GOLD, which is the goal of all the metals, and the true intention of Nature—we are obliged to admit, and freely confess that in the mineral kingdom, as well as in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, Nature seeks and demands a gradual attainment of perfection, and a gradual approximation to the highest standard of purity and excellence.

I thought it would be best, O friendly searcher of Nature, to discuss the matter more in detail, in order that you might the more readily know and make use of the substance of our Stone! For if you attempted to produce our Stone out of an animal substance you would fail, because the two things belong to different natural orders. For the Stone is a mineral, but you would be trying to fashion it out of an animal substance. "But nothing," says our Richard, in his first chapter, "can be got out of a thing which is not in it. Therefore every species, every genus, every natural order, is naturally developed within its own limits, bearing fruit after its own kind, and not within some other essentially different order: everything in which seed is sown must correspond to its own seed." And Basil. Valentinus says: "Consider and know, my friend, that you must not select an animal soul for this your purpose. For flesh and blood were given by the Creator to animals, and are proper to animals, and from them animals are formed and brought forth." For this reason I wonder at those who wish to be regarded as great adepts, and yet look for the substance of the stone in female menstruums, the seminal fluid, eggs, hairs, urine, and similar things, and are not ashamed to fill so many volumes with their vain and worthless recipes, and to deceive the ignorant with such foolish, futile, and useless speculations. Roger, in his "Mirror" (cp. iii.), expresses his amazement at the folly of these men when he exclaims: "How strange that any sane person should look for what he wants in the animal and vegetable worlds, which have nothing whatever to do with the object of his search, while the mineral world is quite as ready to his hand. It is incredible that any philosopher should establish his art on such a remote foundation, except indeed by way of allegory." "For our Stone (says Basil.) is not made of combustible things. Verily that Stone and the matter thereof are safe from all such violence, therefore cease to seek it in the animal kingdom; for Nature herself could not find it there." Again, whoever hopes to find it in the vegetable world, as, for instance, in trees, herbs, flowers, is quite as much mistaken as he who would change an animal into a stone. Plants and trees, with all that they produce, may be consumed by fire, and leave nothing behind but the dust out of which they are made, and the salt which at the first creation of their species they received from Nature. Let no one be misled by the confident assertions of those who pretend that they can produce the Philosopher's Stone out of wheat, or out of wine. These persons fancy they understand the meaning of a certain passage in the writings of Raymond Lullius, but they exhibit the depth of their folly by the assumption of profound wisdom, and thus only deceive themselves and others. I do not deny that some excellent solvents, indispensable both to the physician and to the chemist, are obtained from these sources; but I do most positively deny that the Philosopher's Stone can be prepared, or its seed elicited, from them, since the Creator has ordained that nothing should overstep the bounds of the natural order to which it was originally assigned. Hence every true disciple of wisdom may gather that the substance of the Stone is to be obtained neither in the animal nor in the vegetable world, seeing that both are combustible. We must therefore look for it among incombustible things, that

is to say, in the mineral world, and thence only can we prepare it. Since, then, the Stone of the Wise is mineral, and there are different kinds of minerals, as stones (including clay and the different varieties of earth), salts, general minerals, and metals, we must further ask, in which of all these it is contained. We may at once eliminate stones, because they contain no fusible mercury, and cannot be incited, dissolved, or divided into their component parts on account of the large quantity of foreign sulphur and earthly substance which cleave to them.

Nor will the wise investigator of Nature's secrets expect to find the substance of the Blessed Stone in salts, alums, or similar minerals. [In them he meets with a sharp, corroding, destructive spirit, but mercury and sulphur, as understood by philosophers, he would vainly look for. General minerals, like magnesia, bismuth, antimony, etc., can never under any circumstances become metals; how, then, can the substance of this Stone, which is the essential perfection of all metals and minerals, be obtained from them? Moreover, they have nothing in common with metals, but do burn, corrode, and destroy them:—how then can they be the means of their improvement?

Hear what Richard the Englishman has to say on this head (cp. x.): "The lesser minerals cannot become metals—First, because they were not generated out of the elementary substance of metals, which is quicksilver. But seeing that their generation differs from the generation of metals in form, and substance, and composition, they can never become metals, because things belonging to the same species have the same elementary substance, and spring from the same seed. But the lesser minerals are not generated from mercury, as we learn from Aristotle and Avicenna. If they were to become metals, they would have to change into the elementary substance of metals. And, since such a transformation is beyond the power of chemistry, they can never become metals; that is to say, they can never be the substance of the Stone. Second, since the lesser minerals cannot become the elementary substance of metals, which is mercury, they can never reach the middle and the end of the same development, namely, metals and the tincture. But because the properties of the lesser minerals are foreign to those of the metals, although they may have some of the virtues of minerals, yet on the whole they are less excellent and are liable to be injured by fire. Therefore the nature of metals delights not in them, but repels them, while it receives that which is suited to it. For this reason they are foolish who bring in so many foreign speculations for the purpose of imposing upon their hearers; for the things they put forward are altogether unlike metals and can never receive nor impart their nature."

The student must not suffer himself to be misled by the language occasionally employed with regard to salts by the philosophers whom we have quoted, as, for instance, when it is said, in the mystic language of our Sages, "He who works without salt will never raise dead bodies"; or, again, when he reads in the book of Soliloquies, "He who works without salt draws a bow without a string." For you must know that these sayings refer to a very different kind of salt from the common mineral. This you may see from the following passage of the "Rosary of the Philosophers": "The salt of metals is the Philosopher's Stone; for our Stone is water congealed in gold and silver; it is hostile to fire and may be dissolved into the water of which it is composed after its kind." And that the "congealed water" of the Sages does not mean ordinary water may be gathered from the following words of Geber (lib. forn., cp. xix.): "Seek to resolve the sun and the moon into their dry water, which the vulgar call mercury." The Sages have also described their earth under the name of

salt—*e.g.*, in the "Sounding of the Trumpet," where it is said: "That which is left at the bottom of the distilling vessel is our salt—that is to say, our earth." And in the "Allegories of the Wise" one bursts forth into these words: "Mark well that those bodies which flow forth from our bodies are salts and alums." At times they call the medicine itself "Salt," as in the following passage of the "Scale": "The virtue of the second water is to exalt earth into its own mineral salt, as though assimilating it by its own strength." And Arnold, in his work concerning the "Preservation of Youth," (lib. iii.) says: "This prepared salt has great virtue in preserving youth. The Sages have compared it to the natural heat of healthy youth. The Stone itself has sometimes been called by the wise the Animal Stone, sometimes the Mineral Secret, on account, of this similitude; sometimes the Everlasting Remedy, or the Water of Life. The whole preparation may be reduced to the purest drinking water, like other things that have the same properties." From the aforesaid it clearly appears that we are forbidden both by the teaching of the Sages and by the nature of the thing to suppose that the Stone can be made out of the lesser minerals.

We should next enquire more carefully whether the matter of our Stone may be obtained from the intermediate minerals—like bismuth, antimony, magnesia, and so on. They are certainly often mentioned in this connection by the Sages. Thus Senior says, in a certain passage: "If yellow orpiment has not the power of coagulating mercury our Magistry can never attain its goal." Thomas de Aquinas recommends us to take "our antimony, or black earth," while Parmenides, in "The Crowd," says: "Take quicksilver and coagulate it in the body of magnesia, or corruptible sulphur." But in all such passages these terms are used metaphorically; it is not meant that the Great Stone can ever be made out of such substances. The orpiment and magnesia of the Sages are not the common minerals, but the substance which in other passages is called the Agent, the Lion, the King, Sulphur, and by many other names. They call it orpiment because it gives a deeper and more brilliant colouring to gold; magnesia because of the excellence and greatness of that which is gained from it; antimony, with Thomas Aquinas, on account of the brilliant blackness which it assumes after solution. As a matter of fact, when the Stone has assumed its ebony colour they are in the habit of comparing it to all black things.

But it may be said that some of these intermediate minerals are, as a matter of fact, composed of mercury and sulphur, and may become metals, *e.g.*, magnesia unites with lead and tin, and antimony not only mingles with metals, but also produces a lead not very different from natural lead. Moreover, it is asserted that many persons of high and low degree have actually seen gold made of these minerals. It is further said that as these minerals are composed of mercury and sulphur (and can by chemical means be reduced to them), and are therefore of a common origin with the metals, the substance of the Stone may also be elicited from them. But, in the first place, we must draw a distinction between the various minerals of this class, namely those which contain mercury, and those which hardly ever contain it. Those that are full of mercury are of greater account, since, by means of our Medicine, their mercury may be transformed into gold and silver; and, their nature being partly metallic, they may well be called half metals. But the rest, which have no mercury, are of no use for our purpose. But forasmuch as, on account of the gross and combustible sulphur which is in them, even the first are very far indeed from the metallic goal, so they cannot be taken for the substance of our Stone, which should be pure and perfect mercury combined with pure, subtle, and incombustible sulphur. That they are most impure

and deeply infected with the grossness of their sulphur, may be easily seen by the test of a chemical experiment. One of them (zinetum) might, by reason of its weight and brilliance, be taken at first sight for pure mercury by the careless; but when brought to the test of fire it is consumed with a smoke, like that of sulphur. Bismuth, on the other hand, is not even fusible by fire—such is its earthy grossness and impurity. Antimony, again, can be purged by a chemical process, and reduced to a very white and beautiful regulus. As we gaze upon it in this purified state, it seems difficult to believe that it may not be transformed into something glorious. Hence it is natural that some self-conceited people should have supposed that the Stone may be prepared from it. But however much antimony is purged of its blackness, it still retains its grossness, hardness, and sulphuric properties; it can never become malleable (like the metals), and therefore, in spite of its numerous affinities, cannot be regarded as a metal. Moreover, it has gross and impure mercury; and its sulphur is combustible. Ye, then, who would be great philosophers and do deceive many with your voluminous writings, in which you put this mineral forward as the essence of the universal remedy—I ask you again and again to reconsider your opinion, and to mark the saying of Arnold, that "it is foolish to seek in a thing that which it does not contain." He also says, in his Commentary on "The Crowd": "The philosopher's stone is a pure substance." Again, Lullius in his "Last Testament," observes: "Our tincture is nothing but pure fire." There is an expression to the same effect in his "Vade Mecum": "It is a subtle spirit which tinges bodies, and cleanses them of their leprous infirmities." But this mineral (like all the rest, without a single exception) is so gross and impure that it can only be cleansed by the mediation of our tincture. Therefore, the substance of our Great Stone cannot be elicited from it, since (Richard, cp. 1.) nothing can be obtained from a body which does not exist therein. What shall we say of vitriol, which misleads many by its wonderful qualities, especially as some part of it changes into copper, and itself has the power of transforming iron into copper? As a matter of fact, it is the elementary substance of copper, and when this mineral vapour (or aeriform mercury) finds in the mineral veins of the earth a place where its bitter, acid, salt, and venereal sulphur lies hid, it immediately amalgamates with it into a metal. But since the quantity of the aforesaid sulphur greatly exceeds that of the mercury, when the pure is separated from the impure, and the combustible from the incombustible by the segregating office of Nature, the mercury itself is changed into a greenish inferior substance. When common sulphur is added to copper, and the whole brought in contact with fire (for art can do by intense heat in a few moments what it takes the gentle heat of Nature a long time to accomplish) it corrodes the copper, and changes it into vitriol, and, in proportion to the quantity of the sulphur, the vitriol assumes a richer or fainter colour; whence it comes that some vitriol contains more copper and some less. In iron, too, there is gross sulphur; hence it is corroded by vitriol which seeks its mercury (the mercury of iron being very like that of vitriol), and (the mercury being joined to the sulphur) the iron becomes pure copper.

It should be carefully noticed that the acid spirit of vitriol is generated from sulphur; for the smell of sulphur is perceived in the spirit of vitriol, and the spirit of sulphur, like the spirit of vitriol, has power to change into vitriol. Since, then, this corrosive sulphur is hid in vitriol, and since it contains so small a quantity of impure mercury, we may be sure that it cannot be the object of our search. In this we agree with Alphidius, who says: "Take heed, my son, and eschew dead bodies, and stones; in these things there is no true way of procedure, for their life preserves not, but destroys. Such are salts, orpiments, arsenic, magnesia, bismuth, tutty, and the like."



And Arnold (Flos Flor.) says: "The reason of these mistakes is that the four spirits, viz., orpiment, salt of ammonia, mercury, and sulphur, are not the seed of perfect or imperfect metals (except, of course, mercury and sulphur by themselves)."

But from these last words of Arnold it might be inferred that common mercury and quicksilver are the substance of the stone, seeing that these are referred to the four spirits, and that sulphur is supposed to consolidate the mercury. But I answer, with Richard the Englishman, in his eleventh chapter, that it does not really do so. For every kind of common sulphur is repugnant to metals, as the Sage says: "Indeed you must know that sulphur comes forth out of the fatness of the earth, and is thickened in the minera by gentle heat; when it becomes hard it is *called* sulphur."

Now there are two kinds of sulphur, the living and the combustible. Quick sulphur is the active principle of metals, and, when purged from all foreign matter, is the Matter of our Stone. But the common combustible variety is not the Matter of metals or of our Stone; rather, it is injurious to them. Common, combustible sulphur—so we are told by Avicenna and Richard the Englishman—has nothing to do with our art. However carefully prepared, it still disintegrates and destroys metals, because it has no affinity with them. When enclosed in metals, it retards their fusion. This is clearly seen in the case of iron, which contains hard, gross, and impure sulphur. When this sulphur is burned it is nothing but a dead, earthy, powdery substance. How then can it impart life to other things? For it has two principles of decay—its inflammability and its earthy impurity. The sulphur of the Sages, on the other hand, is living fire; it is quick, and quickens and matures lifeless substances. Common sulphur, then, cannot be the substance of the Stone.

But what shall we infer concerning common mercury? The Sages tell us that the Matter of our Stone is a mercurial substance, and many of its qualities closely resemble those of vulgar mercury. For it is the elementary substance of all fusible minerals, as Arnold says (Ros., pt. I., cp. ii.): "Since all fusible substances, when melted, are changed into it, and it mingles with them because of its common nature: they can differ from it only in so far as it contains impure foreign sulphur." And, again (cp. iv.): "Living mercury is clearly most perfect, and proved in all its operations, since it saves from combustion and promotes fusion. It is the red tincture, the sum of perfection, and quick as lightning; nor is it severed from that with which it has mingled so long as it exists. The same is full of affinity, cleaving faithfully, and is the medium by which tinctures are united, for it mingles most intimately with them, penetrating naturally into their inmost part, for it is of the same nature. We imitate Nature exactly, who in her minera hath no other matter whereon she works except a pure mercurial form. It is the only thing that overcomes fire, and is not overcome by it, but delights in its amicable warmth." Again, Bernard says: "In this mercury is enclosed essential sulphur, which the fire cannot touch; and it accomplishes our object without any other substance than that of pure mercury." Seeing, then, that mercury has such excellent properties, it must surely be the substance of our Stone? True; but as there are two kinds of sulphur, so there are two kinds of mercury, the common mercury and the mercury of the Sages. Common mercury is gross and crude; nor does it stand the test of fire like our mercury, but is dissipated in the form of smoke, even by gentle heat. Hence the Sages have laid down this rule: "Our mercury is not the mercury of the vulgar herd." So Lullius says (Clav. cp. I.): "Common quicksilver, however carefully prepared, can never become the quicksilver of the Sages, for

common quicksilver can only stand the test of fire by the aid of some other dry and more highly digested quicksilver." But most students of this art have spoken largely about the sublimation of common mercury, and have persisted in seeking the treasure of earthly wisdom where it cannot be found, because Nature has not placed it there. And, truly, the working even of common mercury is so wonderful that it has misled some who supposed themselves to be adepts in this art. The following is a case in point. I knew a man who succeeded in giving to his amalgam an orange colour, but he could not get it any nearer to the colour of gold. At last this clever chemist determined to increase the heat of the furnace, thinking that this would have the desired effect of more intimately combining the various ingredients. But alas! the alembic burst, the gold was hurled into the fire, and almost changed from its nature by the still volatile mercury. Hence it appears that the mercury (which is its body) so strongly affected the gold in its minutest particles as to reduce it to a tincture, although several colours were obtained by the action of the heat on the melted mass. If that good man had taken to heart Arnold's words in the "Flower of Flowers," he would never have made that experiment. For the said Arnold makes reference to those who adopt this method in the following terms: "They knew that mercury is the elementary principle of the metals, and that they are produced through its digestion by the heat of sulphur; they therefore sublimed mercury by itself, then fixed and consolidated it, again melted it and did again coagulate it: but when they came to examine the alembic, they found no gold, etc." Therefore we cannot believe that common quicksilver is the substance of the Stone. At the same time I do not deny that it is indispensable both to the philosophical chymist and to the physician.

We have carefully sought the substance of our stone in the animal and vegetable world, among stones, lesser, intermediate, and greater minerals, but in vain. We must now see whether we can find it in the metals, and if so, whether in all or only in some. It is a well-known fact (to which Roger bears witness, *Spec.*, cp. iii.), that all metals are generated out of sulphur and quicksilver, and that nothing will become one with them, or change them, but what originates in themselves; since a thing can be developed and improved only by that which belongs to its own nature (*Richard*, cp. i.).

I need not say that the Great Artist has ordained that throughout the whole of Nature things should generate and produce only that which is like them, so that, for instance, a horse can never be the offspring of a man. "As brute animals," says Basil Valentine, "cannot multiply after their kind by way of generation except by virtue of their common nature; so you cannot expect to obtain the Blessed Stone, but out of its own seed, out of which it was made from the beginning. Now to find the seed you should diligently consider for what purpose you require the Stone. You will at once see that it can be obtained only from the metallic root from which God has ordained that the metals themselves should be generated. Moreover, there is a great conformity between the generation of the metals and the Stone. For in both sulphur and quicksilver (containing that salt which is their quickening soul) are indispensably required; nor can any useful metal be generated until these three (making up the metallic substance) have been combined; for in the composition of metals there must be nothing which has not been obtained from a metallic source." "No external thing," says Draco, "which is not derived from these two [sulphur and mercury] has power to produce or transmute metals. On this account we must select a metallic substance for the production of the Stone." We must next briefly enquire whether it is to be found in

imperfect metals. Many imagine that the substance of the white (tincture) may be elicited from tin or lead, and that of the red out of copper or iron, or both. This idea is doubtless owing to a misconception of the words of the Sages. For Geber (lib. forn. cp., ix.) says: "The mass for fermentation we generally gain from the imperfect [base] bodies." Therefore we lay it down as a general rule that the white paste may be extracted from Jupiter and Saturn, the red from Venus, Saturn, and Mars. And Basil. Valentinus says (Lib. de phys. et hyperphys.), that the tincture is prepared out of a conjunction of Mars and Venus. Again (Triumph. Antimon.), he uses these words: "After this tincture of the Sun and Moon comes the tincture of Venus and Mars, which two make up the tincture of the Sun, when they have been thoroughly perfected and condensed. After these come the tinctures of Jupiter and of Saturn (for the coagulation of mercury), and at last the tincture of mercury itself." But the searcher of Nature must know that there can be no contradiction of opinion between Geber or Basil, for it is impossible that the true philosophers should ever lie, and so these words should be parabolically understood. For no perfection can be obtained from imperfect metals, either by themselves or mixed, nor can that which is itself imperfect bring other things to perfection. For the purest substance of mercury is required for our purpose, as is testified in the "Sounding of the Trumpet," and by Avicenna, Lullius, and almost all the Sages, who unanimously affirm that "the purest substance of mercury is selected by us for our work." Now this highly refined substance of mercury is not found in the base metals, since they are rendered so gross by their impure and unessential sulphur, that, like leprous bodies, they can never be thoroughly purged and cleansed, in which process is the essence of our artifice. Nor do they well stand the test of fire, which is one of the properties required in our Matter. Let us hear what Geber has to tell us (Summa, cp. lxiii.) concerning the impurity of imperfect metals, and the properties of perfect mercury: "Thus," he says, "we happen upon two most wonderful secrets. The one is that there exists a twofold cause for the destruction of every [imperfect] metal by fire: namely, (1), the combustible sulphur enclosed in their interior substance is kindled by fierce heat, and (unimpeded by any excellence in their mercury) annihilates, and converts into smoke their entire substance; (2), the outward flame is fed by them, penetrates into their interior, and dissolves them into smoke, even though they be very solid; (3), their interior is laid bare by calcination. Now when all these conditions of destruction are found together, bodies must needs be destroyed; if they are not found together, they are destroyed somewhat more slowly. The second secret is the excellence which quicksilver imparts to bodies. For quicksilver (no other condition of decay being present) does not permit itself to be separated into its elements, but proves its perfection by preserving its substance intact in the fire. Blessed be God who created it, and gave it such a substance and such properties as are not found in all Nature besides. This is that which overcomes fire, and delights in its amicable heat." Here Geber clearly shews that the substance of our Stone cannot exist in imperfect metals; because things that are impure in themselves do not abide the fire which might purify them, while our mercury (on account of its purity) is not in the slightest degree injured by the fire. Thus we perceive that no one imperfect metal can contain the substance of our Stone. But neither is it to be found in a mixture of impure metals—for by mixing they become less pure than they were before. Moreover we said above that the substance we required was *one*. This fact is clearly set forth by Halys (lib. secret., cp. vi.), when he says: "The Stone is One; nothing else must be added to it: out of one substance the Sages obtain our remedy. Nothing else must mingle with the Stone itself, or with its substance." And Morienus says: "This

Magistry grows from one original root, which branches out into several parts, and from which springs one thing."

But if base metals cannot be the substance of the Stone, why do the Sages bid us employ them? I will tell you. When they speak of impure bodies, they do not mean copper, iron, lead, tin, &c., but its own *body*, or its earth—as Arnold (Flos Flor.) says: "Mercury is united to earth, *i.e.*, to an imperfect substance [or body]." "For though this earth" is so perfect and pure that in these respects it would seem to attain the utmost possibility of Nature, yet in regard to the Stone it is still imperfect and impure. In this point art leaves Nature behind, since it accomplishes what Nature could not perform. That this earth before its plenary purgation and regeneration is imperfect, may be seen from the fact that it cannot yet accomplish more in the matter of tinging than Nature has given to it, while after its regeneration it is most powerful. Its grossness is clearly perceived in an actual experiment: for first it is black and looks like lead or antimony; then it is of a whitish colour, and is called Jupiter (or tin, or magnesia), and this also before it has attained true whiteness, but when it has passed the white stage, it is called Mars and Venus; after that it becomes perfect and red. That Basil. Valentinus agrees with me, and did not really hold the opinion which he expressed in some of his writings, is clear from his tract concerning the Great Stone, where (speaking of the Matter of the Stone) he says that in the Sun all three perfections are found together, whence it derives its power of resisting the fire, and that the Moon, on account of its fixed mercury, does not easily yield to the fire, but endures the trial. "That noble paramour Venus," he continues, "is furnished with an abundance of colour, and the greater and richer part of her body is full of tincture. The colour is the same which dwells in the most precious of metals, and on account of its abundance has a reddish appearance. But its body is leprous, for which reason the tincture cannot remain fixed in it, but evaporates when the former is destroyed. For when the body decays the soul cannot remain, but is dissipated and driven off. Its habitation is destroyed and burnt with fire, and its place knows it no more. In a fixed body it would without difficulty remain. The fixed 'salt' gives to brave Mars a hard, strong, and heavy body; whence the strength of his soul is perceived: for this warrior is not easily overcome. For his body is hard and difficult to wound."

But let no one conclude from these words of Basilus that that fixed sulphur of Venus, when united to the spirit of perfect mercury, will become the tincture. We must again repeat that our substance is not collected from many sources; but, as Basilus says, it is one universal thing, and is found in, and obtained from one thing, being the spirit of mercury, the soul of sulphur, and a spiritual salt, united under one heaven and dwelling in one body. Therefore let us turn our backs upon the base metals, and turn our minds to the precious metals, taking to heart those words of Plato (qu. ii.): "Why do you melt and dissolve other bodies with great labour, when in these [the precious metals] you have what you seek? If you wish to use the base metals, you must first change them into the substance of perfect bodies." Therefore, beloved inquirer into the secrets of Nature, leave on one side all things animal and vegetable, all salts, alums, vitriols, bismuths, magnesias, antimonies, and all base and impure metals, and seek thy Stone with Arnold de Vill. nov. (Pt. I., cp. vii.): "in Mercury and the Sun for the Sun, and in Mercury and the Moon for the Moon; since the whole virtue of this art consists in them alone." "For as the source of ignition is fire, so gold is the principle of gold making," says Ripley, in his "First Gate." If, therefore, thou wouldest make gold and silver by the philosopher's art, take for this purpose neither eggs, nor blood,

but gold and silver, which, being subjected to the action of fire naturally, prudently, and not manually, generate new substances after their own kind, like all things in Nature. Richard (cp. x.) tells us "to sow gold and silver, that aided by our labour they may bring forth fruit, through the mediation of Nature: for these two have [and are] what you seek and nothing else in all the world." And why should I not fix on them since they contain pure and perfect mercury, with red and white sulphur. (Richard, cp. xvii.) So Avicenna teaches that, "in all silver is white, as in all gold there is red, sulphur. No other sulphur like that which exists in these bodies is found on all the earth. Therefore we cunningly prepare these two bodies, that we may have sulphur and quicksilver of the same substance as that which generates gold and silver under the earth. For they are shining bodies, whose rays tinge other bodies with true whiteness and redness, according to the manner of their own preparation." "For our Magistry," says, Arnold (Rosar., pt. I., cp. v.) "aids perfect bodies, and works upon the imperfect without the admixture of anything else. Gold, then, being the most precious of all the metals, is the red tincture, tinging and transforming every body. Silver is the white tincture, tinging other bodies with its perfect whiteness." Let me tell the gentle reader that the metals, that is to say, gold and silver in their metallic form, are not the Matter of our Stone—being in the middle between them and the base metals, as our Matter is in the middle between the former and our Great Stone. So Bernard says, (pt. ii.): "Let them be silent who affirm that there is any tincture but our own, or any other sulphur than that which lies hid in magnesia; also those who would extract the quicksilver from any but the red slave, and who speak of some other water but our own which is incorruptible and combines with nothing except that which belongs to its own nature, and moistens [tinges] nothing except that which is one with its own nature. There is no acid but our own, no other regimen, no other colours. In the same way, there is no other true solution, sublimation, consolidation, putrefaction. I therefore advise you to have done with alums, vitriols, salts, black bodies, borax, aqua fortis, herbs, animals, beasts, and all that proceeds from them, hairs, blood, urine, human seed, flesh, eggs, and all minerals, and to keep to the metals. But though the quicksilver required for our Stone is found in metals only, and in these is the beginning of the work, they are not therefore our Stone, so long as they retain their metallic form. For one and the same substance cannot have two forms. How can they be the Stone which holds an intermediate form between metals and mercury, unless their present form is first destroyed and removed?" Therefore, also, Raymond Lully says in his "Testament" (cp. vi.): "On this account a good artist takes metals for his media in the work of the magistry, and especially the Sun and Moon, because in them the substance of the Mercury and Sulphur is ripened, pure, and well-digested by Nature's own artifice. The artist would vainly endeavour to produce this exact proportion out of the natural elements, if he did not find it ready to his hand in these bodies." And in the "Codicil" he says: "Without these two, viz., gold and silver, our art would have no existence since the sulphur they contain has been purified by nature with a thoroughness such as art would vainly strive to imitate. From these two bodies, with their prepared sulphur [or prepared arsenic] our Medicine may be elicited, but without them we can never obtain it." In the preface to his "Key" he says: "I advise you, my friends, to operate on nothing but the Sun and Moon; but these you should resolve into their elementary [substances](#), viz., our quicksilver and our sulphur." In like manner Arnoldus assures us that "from these bodies there is extracted an exceedingly white and red sulphur; for in these there is a most pure substance of sulphur, cleansed to the highest degree by Nature's own artifice." Nicarus, in "The Crowd," says: "I bid you take gold, which you desire to multiply and renew, and to divide its water into

two parts; for that metal falling into that water will be called the fermenting matter of gold." How can this Sage call his "water" gold? To assist the student in solving this enigma I must tell him that the gold of the Sages is not common gold, as also Senior tells us. In "The Crowd" it is said: "As mercury is the element of all metals, so gold is their ultimate goal; hence in all metals, pure and impure, there are gold, silver, and mercury. But there is one true gold which is the essence of all." Thus you see that there is a gold of the Sages, which, though derived from common gold, is yet very different from it. The following words occur in the "Rising Dawn" (cp. xvi.) "The philosopher's gold resembles common gold neither in colour nor in substance. That which is extracted from it is the red and white tincture." "The philosopher's gold may be bought at a low price" (Aphidius). "All that is bought at a high price is false. With little gold we buy much" (Morienus). Moreover, our gold is living gold, and our silver is living silver, so that they can cause nothing but life and growth. Common gold and silver are dead, They can effect nothing until they are raised from the dead and quickened by the Sage. Then they live, and possess in a high degree the power of propagating and multiplying their race. Concerning the life of our metals that great philosopher, Sendivogius (who is still living), has the following words: "Let me advise you not to receive the gold and silver of the vulgar herd, for they are dead. Take our living metals. Place them in our fire, and there will result a dry liquid. First, earth will be resolved into water [for thus the Mercury of the Sages is called]. That water will solve gold and silver, and consume them until only the tenth part with one part is left. This will be the humid radical of the metals."

It is to be noted that Sages sometimes call their water, as well as their earth, gold. Hereunto we have already heard the words of Nicarus, and after a like manner we are told in the "Rosary of the Philosophers: "Our gold and silver are not the gold and silver of the vulgar. We call gold the water which rises into the air when exposed to fire. Verily, this gold is not the gold of the vulgar. The vulgar would not believe of their gold that it could be volatilised on account of its solid nature."

The philosopher's "earth," then, is sometimes designated their gold, as the same author testifies: "Know that our ore, which is the gold of the philosophers, is their earth." This "earth" is also called ore, ferment, or tincture; just as the "water" is called white and flaky "earth." So we read in the "Sounding of the Trumpet": "Wherefore Hermes says, 'Sow your gold in white, flaky earth which by calcination has been made glowing, subtle, and volatile.' That is to say: Sow gold, *i.e.*, the soul and quickening virtue, into the white earth, which by preparation has been made white and pure and freed from all its grossness. Thus natural gold is not the fermenting matter, but the philosopher's gold is the quickening ferment itself." Again, in the Seventh Step of the "Ladder of the Philosophers": "Their earth is white in which their gold [which is the soul] is sown, and this body is the centre of knowledge, the concentration thereof, and the habitation of tinctures." Once more: "Therefore Hercules says; 'Solve the body of magnesia which has become white and like the leaves of the bramble.' This is the body; the soul is the [essence](#) which is called the philosopher's gold." (For with water the spirit ascends into the upper air.) "Mix," says Senior, "gold with gold, that is water [mercury] and ashes." Again, Hermes says: "Sow gold into the white flaky earth." From these expressions, however obscurely worded, it is clear that our gold is not common gold.

But why do the philosophers call their gold now "water," and now "earth"? Do they not contradict themselves, or each other? No; our Sages, in expounding the truth, veil it under obscure and allegorical expressions, but nevertheless agree with each other so marvellously that they all seem to speak, as it were, with one mouth. They do not confound one thing with another, nor do they wish to lead the earnest enquirer astray. They express themselves in mystic phrases to hide the truth from the unworthy and impious, lest they should seem to be casting pearls before swine, and giving the holy thing to be trodden underfoot by these who think only of indulging their lustful desires. But the noble student of our art has been told more than once, not only from what quarter our Stone may be obtained, but also that its substance must be *one*, which by the artist's skill may be resolved into two, viz., earth and fire, or mercury and sulphur.

The Sages, then, do well to call their gold earth or water; for they have a perfect right to term it whatever they like. So they have frequently called their Stone their gold, their super-perfect gold, their regenerate gold, and by many other names besides. If any one does not perceive their meaning at the first glance, he must blame his own ignorance, not their jealousy.

The reader now knows that the substance of our Stone is neither animal nor vegetable, and that it does not belong to the minerals or the base metals, but that it must be extracted from gold and silver, and that our gold and silver are not the vulgar, dead gold and silver, but the living gold and silver of the Sages. We must now say something about the mode of solution, as the greatest arcanum of all, and the root of the matter. A solution takes place when we transform a dry thing into a liquid, a hard thing into a soft, a hidden thing into one that is manifest, *i.e.*, when a solid is changed into water; not, however, the vulgar water (as Parmenides and Agadmon in "The Crowd" teach us: "When some persons hear of the liquefaction, they think a change takes place into the water of the clouds. But if they had read and understood our books, they would know that our water is permanent), but into the water of the Sages, *i.e.*, the elementary substance, as Arnold (Ros. I., cp. ix.) says: "The object of the Sages is to dissolve the Stone into its mercury, or elementary matter" And Avicenna says: "Thou who wouldst attain our object must first endeavour to dissolve and sublime the two luminaries, which is the first stage of the experiment, that they may become quicksilver." Therefore Arnold (Ros. II., cp. ii.) describes the solution as a resolving of bodies, and a preparation of the first Matter or Nature. And Richard the Englishman (cp. xviii.) writes thus: "First the Stone must be resolved into its elementary substance [seeing that it is an union of body and spirit], that the two may become one mercurial water." But even as this first solution is the most vital part of our process, so is it also the most difficult, as Eobold Vogelius testifies when he says: "How hard this achievement is can be affirmed by those who have performed it." Bernard of Trevisan, in his book addressed to Thomas of Bononia, says: "He who knows the secret of the solution is acquainted with the arcanum of the Art, which is, to mingle kinds, and effectually to extract elements from elements which lie hid in them." The solution must not be made with aqua fortis; for aqua fortis corrodes and destroys the body which should be only liquefied and improved. The solution does not take place into any water that wets the hands, but into a dry water, which is called both sulphur and mercury, as Zneumo says (Turba): "Unless by resolving it into its elements you extract from the body its marrow, and make it an impalpable spirit, you labour in vain." And Richard the Englishman, following Avicenna, affirms (cp. xi.):

"The Sages have striven to discover how those sulphurs may be extracted from those more perfect bodies, and how their qualities may be so refined by Art, that that which was not manifest before (although it always lay hid in them) may appear by the mediation of the said Art with Nature." And this they confess cannot be done unless the body be resolved into its First Matter, which is quicksilver, out of which it was made in the beginning, without admixture of any outward things; since foreign matter cannot improve the nature of our Stone. "For no water," says Bernard, "dissolves our bodies, but that which is of their kind, and may be inspissated by them." (Ep. to Thom. of Bonon.) And in the same Epistle he writes: "The solution should be permanent, so that from both elements, viz., the male and female seed, a new species may result. Amen, I say unto you that no natural water can dissolve metals, except that which is always in them substantially and formally, and which the metals themselves, being dissolved, may again consolidate." Thus Morfoleus, in "The Crowd" says: "Every body is dissolved with the spirit that is joined to it, and doubtless also becomes spiritual. And every spirit is modified and coloured by bodies, to which spirit is thus added a tinging colour which stands the test of fire."

Hence the student of our art must diligently enquire what that water is. "For the knowledge of the menstruum," says Raymond (Comp. An., p. i.) "is a thing without which nothing can be done in the magistry of this Art. Nothing preserves the metals while it dissolves them, but our menstruum," which, as he further states in his 'Codicil,' is "the water by which the metals are solved, while all their essential properties are conserved." Though this is the Great Arcanum which our Sages have always kept secret, and have forbidden us to reveal, yet, as far as we may, we will put you on the right track by two quotations. The first is found in the abridged Rosary, and runs as follows: "The first preparation and foundation of this Art, is the solution [*i.e.*, reduction] of the body into water, *i.e.*, into quicksilver, and this they call the solution, when they say: Let the gold be dissolved, which is hid in the body of magnesia, that it may be reduced to its First Matter, that thence it may become sulphur and quicksilver, and not be again liquefied into water. The object of our solution is to make it liquid, and resolve it into the substance of quicksilver that the saltness of its sulphur may be diminished, which divine sulphur is prepared by extraction from two sulphurs, when the spirit meets the body." The second quotation is from the "Prooemium of the Twelve Gates," by Ripley: "I will straightway teach thee that thou mayest know that there are three mercuries, which are the keys of knowledge [which Raymond calls his menstrua], without which nothing is properly done. But two of them are superficial. The third is of the essence of the Sun and Moon, the properties of which I will describe to thee. For mercury, the essence of other metals, is the principal substance of our Stone. In Gold and Silver our menstrua are not visible to the eye, and are only perceived by their effect. This is the Stone of which we speak, if anyone understand our books aright. It is the soul and shining substance of the Sun and Moon, that subtile influence from which the earth derives its splendour. For what are gold and silver (says Avicenna) but pure red and white earth? Take away from it the aforesaid splendour, and it will be nothing but worthless earth. The whole compound we call our lead. The quality of splendour comes from the Sun and Moon. And, in brief, these are our solvents. Perfect bodies we naturally calcine with the first, without adding any impure body but *one*, commonly called by philosophers the green lion, and this is the medium for perfectly combining the tinctures of the Sun and Moon. With the second, which is a vegetable liquid, reviving what before was dead, the two principles [both material and formal] must be solved; else they would be of



little value. With the third, which is a permanent, incombustible liquid, of unctuous quality, the tree of Hermes is burnt to ashes. This is our natural, most sure fire, our mercury, our sulphur, our pure tincture, our soul, our Stone raised with the wind, born in the earth. These things take to heart. This Stone, I dare to tell thee, is the powerful essence of the metal, and thou must be careful how thou dost obtain it. For this solvent is invisible, although with the secondary philosophic water it may, by the separation of elements, become visible in the form of pure water. Out of this solvent, and with it, thou mayst obtain the sulphur of Nature, if it be naturally turned into a pure spirit. Then thou mayst with it dissolve thy fundamental mass [*i.e.* gold and silver]."

In these two quotations the whole mystery of the solution is revealed. If you will consider the properties and powers of Nature, and compare them with these words, and annihilate all the workings of Nature (*i.e.* reduce them, and unroll them like the thread of a skein), you will find in them all truth plainly and fundamentally. But if you cannot gather from them where are the bolted gates, and do not know the substance and the powers of Nature, you shall be conducted to them, not by contemptuous self-conceit, but by ardent prayer and indefatigable study.

For (by the revelation of the great and good God) I have attained this Art only by persevering application, vigils, and repeated reading of authentic books. I do not speak of the matter—that was made known to me by the revelation of God alone; but I have by study discovered the secret of its solution, which is the same with ancient and modern Sages, and the true arcanum of the Art, in the absence of which neither past nor present Philosophers could have performed anything, whence it is a secret of Art and an arcanum of wisdom which no one but God must reveal, for which benefit I give undying thanks with heart and lips to the Creator of all things, world without end, Amen.

That you may have no cause to complain of me, gentle [reader](#), I will, however, for the love of God, expound to you another mystery. You are to know that, although the solution is *one*, yet in it there may be distinguished a first, and a second, as they say in the schools. The *first* solution is that of which Arnold speaks in the above quotation, *viz.*, the reduction of it to its First Matter; the *second* is that perfect solution of body and spirit at the same time, in which the solvent and the thing solved always abide together, and with this solution of the body there takes place simultaneously a consolidation of the spirit.

Here you may clearly and plainly see with your eyes what you have long desired to see. If you understand it, it is mere child's play; therefore, I will forbear to speak any further about it. If you know the beginning, the end will duly follow by the help of God, from whom alone we may obtain all glory, the corruptible glory of this world, and that eternal glory in which with glorified bodies we shall see God face to face—despising all mundane pleasure that we may behold with our own eyes that eternal, infinite, and unspeakable joy of heaven.

With these words I will conclude my little tract. Everything else that remains to be said I will set forth in the following parable, where you will find the entire system and practice clearly expounded. If you duly follow it, you will doubtless attain to the true

wisdom. May it be shewn to you, and to all good men, by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, Blessed for evermore!

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M.S.

The thing is one in number, and one essence, which Nature strives to transform, but with the help of Art, into two, and twice two: mercury and sulphur impart nourishment to themselves. Spirit, and soul, and body, and four elements: the fifth which they furnish is the Philosopher's Stone. Select your substance without guile, let it be double, and let its splendour be of pure mercury. Take sulphur free from every foreign substance, and consume it in a fiery furnace. But when you put it together again, let it still be of the same weight. Then I will believe that you are upon the road of the mystery. When you have dissolved, quickly sublime it. Pound what you obtain, and ceaselessly distil it. Then endeavour to condense it, and continue to expose it to heat. After this begin to "tinge" largely. You have the panacea of men, and the sum of the metals, and you shall be able to cure whomsoever and whatsoever you please.

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*Here follows a Parable in which the Mystery of the whole Matter is Declared.*

Once upon a time, when I was walking abroad in a wood, and considering the wretchedness of this life, and deploring that through the lamentable fall of our first parents we had been reduced to this pitiable state, I suddenly found myself upon a rough, untrodden, and impracticable path, which was beset with briars. Then I was afraid, and strove to retrace my steps. But it was not in my power to do so; for so violent a tempest blew upon me from behind that it was easier to take ten steps forward than to take one backward. So I had to hurry forward, and follow the rugged path up and down hill. After a while, I reached a beautiful meadow, surrounded with heavy-laden fruit trees, which the inhabitants of the place called the Meadow of Happiness. There I met a crowd of decrepit men with grey beards, one of whom, an elderly personage, had a long darkish beard, whom also I knew by name, but whose face I had never seen. These men were discussing various subjects, *e.g.*, the goodness and wisdom of God, all natural objects, and especially the great mystery which lies hid in Nature, which—they said—God conceals from the whole world, and makes known only to a few who truly love Him. I listened to them for a long time (for I was pleased with their discourse) till I thought that some were talking rather wildly, not in regard to the substance and the method, but as concerns parables, similitudes, etc., which were the figments of Aristotle, Pliny, and others. When I heard these things, I could no longer contain myself, and, like Saul among the prophets, I began to give my opinion, and to refute those futile assertions by arguments drawn from experience and reason. Some of them agreed with me, and began to test my knowledge with many questions. But I was so well grounded that I stood the test to the admiration of all. They all marvelled at the soundness of my knowledge, and affirmed with one voice that I should be received into their fellowship. These words filled me with great joy. But they said I could not be their Brother until I knew their Lion, and his internal and external properties. They told me I must summon up my whole strength to subdue him. I confidently replied that I would leave no stone unturned to attain this object.

For their kindness affected me so that I would not have left them for all the wealth of this world. Therefore they conducted me to the Lion, and were at great pains to declare to me his nature. But no one would tell me how I must treat him at first. Some of them did indeed mutter a few words on this point, but so confusedly and obscurely, that scarce one in a thousand would have understood their meaning. However, they said that when I had bound him without being harmed by his sharp claws and terrible teeth, I should know all the rest. This Lion was old, fierce, great, and terrible to behold with his flowing yellow mane. Then I repented of my temerity, and would gladly have retreated if I had not been held to my purpose by my vow, and the old men that surrounded me. So I carefully descended into the Lion's den, and strove to pacify him; but he glared upon me with red eyes, and affrighted me so that I could hardly stand upon my feet, and thought that my last hour had come. But calling to mind what one of the old men had said to me when I entered the den, namely, that many had undertaken to tame the Lion, but that only few had accomplished it, I summoned up courage, and tried several artifices, which I had learned by diligent training. Moreover, I had some knowledge of natural magic. I therefore relinquished my blandishments, and seized him so gently, skilfully, and subtly, that almost before he knew what I was about I had drawn all the blood from his body, and from his very heart and bowels. This blood was red indeed, but choleric. Then I proceeded to dissect him, and made a most marvellous discovery:—his bones were as white as snow, and their quantity more considerable than that of the blood. When the old men who stood round the den, and had watched our struggle, saw this, they began to converse with great eagerness, as I could see from their gestures—for, being in the den, I could not hear their words. But anon their dispute began to run high, and I could distinguish these words: "He must bring him to life again if he wishes to be our brother." Therefore, without further delay, I stepped out of the den into a large open space, and then suddenly (I know not how) found myself upon a very high wall, which rose more than 100 yards into the air, but at the top was not more than a foot in width, and along the middle of it ran an iron battlement of great strength. Now as I passed along I thought I saw one walking before me on the right side of the battlement. When I had followed him a short distance I became aware of another person following me on the other side; but, whether it was a man or a woman I cannot undertake to say. This person hailed me, and said that there was more convenient footing on his side than on mine. This I was quite ready to believe; for the battlement, which was on the middle of the wall, made the path so narrow as to render progress extremely difficult at such a great height, indeed, I noticed that some of those who followed me actually fell. Therefore I got over the battlement on to the other side, and proceeded to the end of the wall, which presented a most difficult and dangerous descent. Then I was sorry that I had deserted my own side, as I could neither advance nor retreat. But, remembering that fortune befriends the bold, I attempted the descent, and by using my hands and feet, I got down safely. Now when I had advanced a little further, I put away all thought of danger, and forgot all about the wall and the battlement. Then lighting upon a certain place, I found white and red roses, but the latter were more abundant; so I gathered some of them and stuck them in my cap. In that place were some most beautiful women, and in the neighbouring garden a number of young men were to be seen. But a wall which surrounded the garden prevented the latter from joining the women. They were eager to do so, but were not allowed to go round the garden and find the gate. The sight moved me to pity, and therefore I hastily went back by the smooth path along which I had come, and soon reached some houses, among which I expected to find the gardener's cottage. But I found there many men,

of whom each had his own cell (in very few there were two living together). They were all busily at work, each labouring by himself. Their work was of a kind long and familiarly known to me—indeed, far too well known. So I said to myself: "Behold, here are many persons at work upon vain and foolish experiments, which have a certain specious plausibility (according to each man's idiosyncrasy), but no, real foundation in Nature. Surely you, too, will obtain forgiveness." At least, I would not suffer myself to be detained with these barren futilities, but went on my way. When I reached the gate of the garden some looked askance at me, and I was afraid they would prevent me from carrying out my purpose. Others murmured, and said: "Look, this fellow presumes to approach the gate of the garden, and we who have spent so many years in these horticultural labours, have never gained admittance! How we will jeer at him if he meets with a repulse." But I paid no attention to their talk (for I knew the interior of that garden better than they, although I had never been in it), and approached the gate, which was double-locked, and in which there appeared to be no keyhole, but soon I perceived a keyhole which would have escaped any common observer. So I inserted my master key (called by some "the adulteress"), which I had diligently fashioned for the purpose, pushed back the bolt, and entered. After passing this gate, I came upon other bolted gates, which, however, I opened without any difficulty. So I entered the garden, and found in the middle of it a small square garden, which was surrounded with a rose hedge covered with beautiful roses, and as a little rain was falling, and the rays of the sun shone upon it, I beheld a rainbow. But I was hastening past the small garden, to that place where I thought I could aid the young women, when, behold, there came forward the most beautiful of all the maidens, arrayed in silk and satin, with the most beautiful of the youths, dressed in a scarlet robe. They walked arm in arm to the rose garden, and carried many fragrant roses in their hands. I greeted them, [and](#) asked how she had got over. "This my beloved bridegroom," she said, "helped me, and now we are leaving this pleasant garden, and hastening to our chamber to satisfy our love." "I am glad," I returned, "that without any trouble on my part your desires have been fulfilled. But you see how much trouble I have taken on your behalf, having traversed so great a distance in so short a time." Then I came to a water-mill, built within of stones, where there were no flour bins or other miller's requisites; yet I saw wheels driven round by the water. I asked the decrepit miller the reason, and he told me the grinding took place somewhere out of view. At the same moment I saw a miller enter that place by a small bridge, and immediately followed him. When I had passed the bridge, which was on the right side of the wheels, I paused and beheld a wonderful sight. In a moment the wheels were above the bridge; I saw very black water, with white drops; the bridge was only about three inches wide; but by clinging to the rails I got safely back, without being wetted at all, and asked the old man how many wheels he had. He answered, "Ten." I was troubled by the marvellous incident, and would gladly have known its meaning, but felt that it was labour lost to ask the old man any questions, and so departed. Before the mill was a raised platform on which some of the aforesaid old men were walking to and fro in the warm sunshine, discussing a letter which they had received from the Faculty of the University. I guessed the tenor of the letter, and, feeling sure that it concerned me, I addressed to them a question to that effect. "It *does* concern you," they said, "the wife whom you married a long time ago, you must keep for ever, or else we must tell our chief." "You need not trouble yourselves about this matter," I said, "for we were born together, and brought up together as children, and now that I have married her, I will never forsake her, but cherish her till her last breath; nay, even death itself shall not sever us." "It is well," they said, "your wife is satisfied, too;

you must be joined together." "I am content," I said. "It is well," they repeated. "For thus the Lion will be restored to life, and be more powerful and more active than he was before." Then I remembered my labours, and knew by certain signs that this matter concerned not myself, but a very good friend of mine. As these thoughts crossed my mind, I saw our bridegroom and his beloved bride—both clothed in the aforesaid garments—come forward, eager to be joined together. This sight gladdened me; for I had been afraid that the whole matter concerned me. Now when the bridegroom, in his bright scarlet robe, with his bride, whose silk dress gave out shining rays, reached the old men, they were straightway joined together. And I marvelled that the maiden, who was said to be the mother of her bridegroom, was of so youthful an appearance, that she might have seemed his daughter. But I know not what sin they had committed, except that brother and sister had been drawn to each other by such passionate love that they could no more be separated; and, being charged with incest, they were shut up for ever in a close prison, which, however, was as pellucid and transparent as glass, and arched like the heavenly vault, so that all that they did could be seen from without. Here they were to do penance for their sins with ever-flowing tears, and true sorrow. All their clothes and outward ornaments were taken away. None of their servants and friends were allowed to be with them, but after they had received sufficient meat and drink (the latter taken from the aforesaid water), the door was shut and locked, and the seal of the Faculty was affixed to it. I was entrusted with the charge of heating their chamber in the winter, so that they might be neither too hot nor too cold, and I was further to see that they did not escape. If any accident of any kind happened, I was to be severely punished. I did not like this charge; and, as I remembered that the matter was most important, and that the College of Sages were not wont to say what they did not mean, I was filled with fear. But since I had to bear that which I could not alter, and since the chamber was situated in a strong tower, and surrounded with battlements and lofty walls, and, moreover, could be easily heated with a gentle and continuous fire, I called upon God for help, and began to heat the chamber. But what happened? As soon as they felt the grateful warmth, they fell to embracing each other so passionately that the husband's heart was melted with the excessive ardour of love, and he fell down broken in many pieces. When she who loved him no less than he loved her, saw this, she wept for him, and, as it were, covered him with overflowing tears, until he was quite flooded and concealed from view. But those complaints and tears did not last long, for being weary with exceeding sorrow, she at length destroyed herself. Alas! what fear and anguish fell upon me, when I saw those who had been so straitly committed to my charge, lying, as it were, melted and dead before me. I felt sure that I should be put to death for it; but the jeers, the derision, and the contempt which I would have to undergo seemed more grievous even than death. In this anxious state of mind I spent several days, until the thought occurred to me that, if Medea had restored a dead body to life, I might perhaps be able to do the same. But I could think of no better plan than to keep up the warmth of the chamber until the water should have evaporated, and the dead bodies of the lovers could again be seen. I doubted not that then I should most honourably escape from all danger. So I kept up the fire forty days, the water diminishing from day to day, and the dead bodies beginning to reappear. Now, however, they looked as black as coals. This effect would have been produced sooner if the chamber had not been so closely shut and sealed so that I could in no wise open it. For I noticed that the water rose to the roof of the chamber, and then came down again like rain; but it could find no exit from the chamber, until the dead bodies had putrefied and began to give out a grievous smell. In the meantime the rays of the sun,

shining upon the moisture of the chamber, produced a most beautiful rainbow; and, after all my sorrow, the sight of its gay colours filled me with great delight; and I was particularly pleased to see my lovers lying before me. But as there is no joy without a drop of bitterness, so I was still disturbed by the thought that those who had been committed to my care were still lying lifeless. Nevertheless, I comforted myself with the reflection that the chamber (being so tightly closed) must still contain their souls and spirits. Therefore I continued diligently to perform my office of warming them, being assured that they would not return to their bodies while they could enjoy that moist atmosphere. This conjecture was justified by the event. For towards evening I noticed that many vapours rose from the earth through the heat of the sun, and were lifted up as water is attracted by the sun; afterwards when night fell, they watered the earth as fertilising dew, and washed our bodies, which became more beautiful and white the oftener this sprinkling took place. And the whiter they became, the more the quantity of moisture in the air diminished, until at last the atmosphere was too thin for the spirit and soul to remain therein any longer; so they were at length compelled to return to the clarified body of the Queen, which (to my great joy) was straightway restored to life. My joy was all the greater, because now she was arrayed in a beautiful and magnificent garment such as is rarely seen by mortal eye, and had a glorious crown, all made of diamonds, upon her head. Thus attired, she stood upon her feet and cried: "Know this, ye mortals, and let it enter your hearts, that the most High God is one God, who has power to set up and pull down kings. He makes rich and poor as He wills. He has killed, and raised again. I was great, and was brought low; but now, having been humbled, I have been made Queen of many more kingdoms. After death life has been restored to me. When I was poor, the treasures of the wise and mighty were committed to me. Therefore I, too, can make the poor rich, give grace to the humble, and restore the health of the sick. But I am not yet able to raise my beloved brother, the most mighty King, from the dead. Nevertheless, when he comes, he will show that my words are true." When she had thus spoken the sun lighted up the world with his glorious rays, and the heat waxed great (for the dog days were approaching). Long before this, garments of rich black silk, of grey or ash-coloured damask, of rare white silk, embroidered with silver, precious pearls, and brilliant diamonds, had been got ready towards the marriage of our Queen; and now garments of many colours, of flesh colour, orange, and saffron, and of red and scarlet silk, richly embroidered with rubies and carbuncles, were being prepared for the adornment of our new King. But there was no one to be seen working at those garments; yet one after another was got ready, insomuch that I greatly marvelled, because I knew that none but the bride and the bridegroom had entered the chamber. My wonder increased when I observed that as each dress was finished, those that had been there before straightway vanished, though I could see no one put them away. Now when that most precious scarlet garment had been finished, the great and mighty King appeared in great splendour and indescribable magnificence, and when he saw that he was shut in, he besought me, in the most persuasive accents, to open the door, as it would be to my advantage to let him out of the chamber. Now, though I had been most strictly enjoined not to open the chamber, I was filled with awe by the majesty and persuasive speech of the King, and acceded to his request. When he left the chamber, he bore himself so kindly, so gently, and so humbly, that I could not help reflecting that these virtues are the most glorious ornaments of the great. As he had passed the dog days in great heat he was extremely thirsty, spent, and weary; wherefore he humbly requested me to bring him some water from the river where it raged and foamed under the wheels. I gladly acceded to his request, and, after slaking his thirst with a deep draught, he returned to

the chamber, requesting me to shut the door carefully so that no one might disturb him or rouse him from his sleep. So he slept a few days, and then called me back to open the door again. He looked much more beautiful, ruddier, and more royal, and said that this water was very precious and full of virtue. When at his request I had fetched him some more, he took a deeper draught than before, insomuch that the size of the chamber seemed to become enlarged. After drinking of this water (which is lightly esteemed by the ignorant) as much as he desired, he became so beautiful and glorious that in all my life I do not remember to have seen a more glorious man, or more glorious deeds. For he took me into his kingdom and showed me all the treasures and riches of the whole world, till I was obliged to confess, that so far from exaggerating his power, the Queen had not told me the half of it. Of gold and precious carbuncles there was no end. There was also to be found renewal and restoration of youth, and of the natural faculties, and recovery of lost health, with a never failing panacea for all diseases. What pleased me most of all, was that the people of that kingdom knew, feared, and honoured their Creator, and asked and obtained of him wisdom, understanding, and, after this life, eternal glory and beatitude. May this latter be given to us also by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, the Blessed Trinity, to Whom belong praise, glory, and honour, world without end, Amen.

# The Mirror of Alchemy

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The Mirror of Alchemy, composed by the famous Friar, Roger Bacon, sometime fellow of Martin College and Brasen-nase College in Oxenforde.

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CHAPTER I.  
Of the Definitions of Alchemy.

In many ancient Books there are found many definitions of this Art, the intentions whereof we must consider in this Chapter. For Hermes said of this Science: Alchemy is a Corporal Science simply composed of one and by one, naturally conjoining things more precious, by knowledge and effect, and converting them by a natural commixtion into a better kind. A certain other said: Alchemy is a Science, teaching how to transform any kind of metal into another: and that by a proper medicine, as it appeared by many Philosophers' Books. Alchemy therefore is a science teaching how to make and compound a certain medicine, which is called Elixir, the which when it is cast upon metals or imperfect bodies, does fully perfect them in the very projection.

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## CHAPTER II.

### Of the natural principles, and procreation of Minerals.

Secondly, I will perfectly declare the natural principles and procreations of Minerals: where first it is to be noted, that the natural principles in the mines, are Argent-vive, and Sulphur. All metals and minerals, whereof there be sundry and diverse kinds, are begotten of these two: but: I must tell you, that nature always intends and strives to the perfection of Gold: but many accidents coming between, change the metals, as it is evidently to be seen in diverse of the Philosophers books. For according to the purity and impurity of the two aforesaid principles, Argent-vive, and Sulphur, pure, and impure metals are engendered: to wit, Gold, Silver, Steel, Lead, Copper, and Iron: of whose nature, that is to say, purity, and impurity, or unclean superfluity and defect, give ear to that which follows.

#### Of the nature of Gold.

Gold is a perfect body, engendered of Argent-vive pure, fixed, clear, red, and of Sulphur clean, fixed, red, not burning, and it wants nothing.

#### Of the nature of silver.

Silver is a body, clean, pure, and almost perfect, begotten of Argent-vive, pure, almost fixed, clear, and white, and of such a like Sulphur: It wants nothing, save a little fixation, color, and weight.

#### Of the nature of Steel.

Steel is a body clean, imperfect, engendered of Argent-vive pure, fixed & not fixed clear, white outwardly, but red inwardly, and of the like Sulphur. It wants only decoction or digestion,

#### Of the nature of Lead.

Lead is an unclean and imperfect body, engendered of Argent-vive impure, not fixed, earthy, dressy, somewhat white outwardly, and red inwardly, and of such a Sulphur in part burning, It wants purity, fixation, color, and firing.

#### Of the nature of Copper.

Copper is an unclean and imperfect body, engendered of Argent-vive, impure, not fixed, earthy, burning, red not clear, and of the like Sulphur. It wants purity, fixation, and weight: and has too much of an impure color, and earthiness not burning.

#### Of the nature Iron.

Iron is an unclean and imperfect body, engendered of Argent-vive impure, too much fixed, earthy, burning, white and red not clear, and of the like Sulphur: It wants fusion, purity, and weight: It has too much fixed unclean Sulphur, and burning earthiness. That which has been spoken, every Alchemist must diligently observe.

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### CHAPTER III.

Out of what things the matter of Elixir must be more nearly extracted.

The generation of metals, as well perfect, as imperfect, is sufficiently declared by that which has been already spoken, Now let us return to the imperfect matter that must be chosen and made perfect. Seeing that by the former Chapters we have been taught, that all metals are engendered of Argent-vive and Sulphur, and how that their impurity and uncleanness does corrupt, and that nothing may be mingled with metals which have not been made or sprung from them, it: remains clean enough, that no strange thing which has not his original from these two, is able to perfect them, or to make a Change and new transmutation of them: so that it is to be wondered at, that any wise man should set his mind upon living creatures, or vegetables which are far off, when there be minerals to be found near enough: neither may we in any way think, that any of the Philosophers placed the Art in the said remote things, except it were by way of comparison: but of the aforesaid two, all metals are made, neither does any thing cleave unto them or is joined with them, not yet changes them, but that which is of them, and so of right we must take Argent-vive and Sulphur for the matter of our stone: Neither does Argent-vive by itself alone, nor Sulphur by itself alone, beget any metal, but of the commixtion of them both, diverse metals and minerals are diversely brought forth. Our matter therefore must be chosen of the commixtion of them both: but our final secret is most excellent, and most hidden, to wit, of what mineral thing that is more near than others, it should be made: and in making choice hereof, we must be very wary. I put the case then, if our matter were first of all drawn out of vegetables, (of which sort are herbs, trees, and whatsoever springs out of the earth) here we must first make Argent-vive & Sulphur, by a long decoction, from which things, and their operation we are excused: for nature herself offers unto us Argent-vive and Sulphur. And if we should draw it from living creatures (of which sort is man's blood, hair, urine, excrements, hens' eggs, and what else proceed from living creatures) we must likewise out of them extract Argent-vive and Sulphur by decoction, from which we are freed, as we were before. Or if we should choose it out of middle minerals (of which sort are all kinds of Magnesia, Marchasites, of Tutia, Coppers, Allums, Baurach, Salts, and many other) we should likewise, as afore, extract Argent-vive and Sulphur by decoction: from which as from the former, we are also excused. And if we should take one of the seven spirits by itself, as Argent-vive, or Sulphur alone, or Argent-vive and one of the two Sulphurs, or Sulphur-vive, or Auripigment, or Citrine Arsenicum, or red alone, or the like: we should never effect it, because since nature does never perfect anything without equal commixtion of both, neither can we: from these therefore, as from the foresaid Argent-vive and Sulphur in their nature we are excused. Finally, if we should choose them, we should mix everything as it is, according to a due proportion, which no man knows, and afterward decoct it to coagulation, into a solid lump: and therefore we are excused from receiving both of them in their proper nature: to wit, Argent-vive and Sulphur, seeing we know not their proportion, and that we may meet with bodies, wherein we shall find the said things proportioned, coagulated and gathered together, after a due manner. Keep this secret more secretly. Gold is a perfect masculine body, without any superfluity or diminution: and if it: should perfect imperfect bodies mingled with it by melting only, it should be Elixir to red. Silver is also a body almost perfect, and feminine, which if it should almost perfect imperfect bodies by his common melting only, it should be Elixir to white which it is not, nor cannot be, because they only are

perfect. And if this perfection might be mixed with the imperfect, the imperfect should not be perfected with the perfect, but rather their perfection's should be diminished by the imperfect, and become imperfect. But if they were more than perfect, either in a two-fold, four-fold, hundred-fold, or larger proportion, they might then well perfect the imperfect. And forasmuch as nature does always work simply, the perfection which is in them is simple, inseparable, and incommiscible, neither may they by art be put in the stone, for ferment to shorten the work, and so brought to their former state, because the most volatile does overcome the most fixed. And for that gold is a perfect body, consisting of Argent-vive, red and clear, and of such a Sulphur, therefore we choose it not for the matter of our stone to the red Elixir, because it is so simply perfect, without artificial mundification, and so strongly digested and fed with a natural heat, that with our artificial fire, we are scarcely able to work on gold or silver, And though nature does perfect anything, yet she cannot thoroughly mundify, or perfect and purify it, because she simply works on that which she has. If therefore we should choose gold or silver for the matter of the stone, we should hard and scanty find fire working in them. And although we are not ignorant of the fire, yet could we not come to the thorough mundification and perfection of it, by reason of his most firm knitting together, and natural composition: we are therefore excused for taking the first too red, or the second too white, seeing we may find out a thing or some body of as clean, or rather more clean Sulphur and Argent-vive, on which nature has wrought little or nothing at all, which with our artificial fire, and experience of our art, we are able to bring unto his due concoction, mundification, color and fixation, continuing our ingenious labor upon it. There must therefore be such a matter chosen, where in there is Argent-vive, clean, pure, clear, white and red, not fully complete, but equally and proportionably commixt after a due manner with the like Sulphur, and congealed into a solid mass, that by our wisdom and discretion, and by our artificial fire, we may attain unto the uttermost cleanness of it, and the purity of the same, and bring it to that pass, that after the work ended, it might be a thousand thousand times more strong and perfect, then the simple bodies themselves, decoct by their natural heat. Be therefore wise: for if you shall be subtle and witty in my Chapters (wherein by manifest prose I have laid open the matter of the stone easy to be known) you shall taste of that delightful thing, wherein the whole intention of the Philosophers is placed.

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### CHAPTER III.

Of the manner of working, and of moderating, and continuing the fire.

I hope ere this time you have already found out by the words already spoken (if you are not most dull, ignorant, and foolish) the certain matter of the learned Philosophers blessed stone, whereon Alchemy works, while we endeavor to perfect the imperfect, and that with things more then perfect. And for that nature has delivered us the imperfect only with the perfect, it is our part to make the matter (in the former Chapters declared unto us) more then perfect by our artificial labor. And if we know not the manner of working, what is the cause that we do not see how nature (which of long time has perfected metals) does continually work! Do we not see, that in the Mines through the continual heat that is in the mountains thereof, the grossness of water is so decocted and thickened, that in continuance of time it becomes Argent-vive? And that of the fatness of the earth through the same heat and decoction, Sulphur is engendered! And that through the same heat without intermission continued in them, all metals are engendered of them according to their purity and impurity? and that nature does by decoction alone perfect or make all metals, as well perfect as imperfect? O extreme madness! what, I pray you, constrains you to seek to perfect the foresaid things by strange melancholical and fantastical regiments! as one says: Woe to you that will overcome nature, and make metals more then perfect by a new regiment, or work sprung from your own senseless brains. God has given to nature a straight way, to wit, continual concoction, and you like fools despise it, or else know it not. Again, fire and Azot, are sufficient for you. And in another place, Heat perfects all things. And elsewhere, see, see, see, and be not weary. And in another place, let your fire be gentle, and easy, which being always equal, may continue burning: and let it not increase, for if it does, you shall suffer great loss. And in another place, Know you that in one thing, to wit, the stone, by one way, to wit, decoction, and in one vessel the whole mastery is performed. And in another place, patiently, and continually, and in another place, grind it seven times. And in another place, It is ground with fire, And in another place, this work is very like to the creation of man: for as the Infant in the beginning is nourished with light meats, but the bones being strengthened with stronger: so this mastery also, first it must have an easy fire, whereby we must always work in every essence of decoction. And though we always speak of a gentle fire, yet in truth, we think that in governing the work, the fire must always by little and little be increased and augmented unto the end.

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## CHAPTER V.

### Of the quality of the Vessel and Furnace.

The means and manner of working, we have already determined: now we are to speak of the Vessel and Furnace, in what sort, and of what things they must be made. Whereas nature by a natural fire decocts the metals in the Mines, she denies the like decoction to be made without a vessel fit for it. And if we propose to imitate nature in concocting, wherefore do we reject her vessel! Let us first of all therefore, see in what place the generation of metals is made. It does evidently appear in the places of Minerals, that in the bottom of the mountain there is heat continually alike, the nature whereof is always to ascend, and in the ascension it always dries up, and coagulates the thicker or grosser water hidden in the belly, or veins of the earth, or mountain, into Argent-vive. And if the mineral fatness of the same place arising out of the earth, be gathered warm together in the veins of the earth, it runs through the mountain, and becomes Sulphur. And as a man may see in the foresaid veins of that place, that Sulphur engendered of the fatness of the earth (as is before touched) meets with the Argent-vive (as it is also written) in the veins of the earth, and begets the thickness of the mineral water. There, through the continual equal heat in the mountain, in long process of time diverse metals are engendered, according to the diversity of the place. And in these Mineral places, you shall find a continual heat. For this cause we are of right to note, that the external mineral mountain is everywhere shut up within itself, and stony: for if the heat might issue out, there should never be engendered any metal. If therefore we intend to immitate nature, we must needs have such a furnace like unto the Mountains, not in greatness, but in continual heat, so that the fire put in, when it ascends, may find no vent: but that the heat may beat upon the vessel being close shut, containing in it the matter of the stone: which vessel must be round, with a small neck, made of glass or some earth, representing the nature or close knitting together of glass: the mouth whereof must be signed or sealed with a covering of the same matter, or with lute. And as in the mines, the heat does not immediately touch the matter of Sulphur and Argent-vive, because the earth of the mountain comes everywhere between: So this fire must not immediately touch the vessel, containing the matter of the aforesaid things in it, but it must be put into another vessel, shut closed in the like manner, that so the temperate heat may touch the matter above and beneath, and where ever it be, more aptly and fitly: whereupon Aristotle says, in the light of lights, that Mercury is to be concocted in a three-fold vessel, and that the vessel must be of most hard Glass, or (which is better) of Earth possessing the nature of Glass.

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## CHAPTER VI.

Of the accidental and essential colours appearing in the work.

The matter of the stone thus ended, you shall know the certain manner of working, by what manner and regiment, the stone is often changed in decoction into diverse colors. Whereupon one says, So many colors, so many names. According to the diverse colors appearing in the work, the names likewise were varied by the Philosophers: whereon, in the first operation of our stone, it is called putrifaction, and our stone is made black: whereof one says, When you find it black, know that in that blackness whiteness is hidden, and you must extract the same from his most subtle blackness. But after putrifaction it waxes red, not with a true redness, of which one says: It is often red, and often of a citrine color, it often melts, and is often coagulated, before true whiteness. And it dissolves itself, it coagulates itself, it putrifies itself, it colors itself, it mortifies itself, it quickens itself it makes itself black, it makes itself white, it makes itself red. It is also green: whereon another says, Concoct it, till it appears green unto you, and that is the soul. And another, Know, that in that: green his soul bears dominion. There appears also before whiteness the peacocks color, whereon one says thus, Know you that all the colors in the world, or that may be imagined, appear before whiteness, and afterward true whiteness follows. Whereof one says: When it has been decocted pure and clean, that it shines like the eyes of fishes, then are we to expect his utility, and by that time the stone is congealed round, And another says: When you shall find whiteness atop in the glass, be assured that in that whiteness, redness is hidden: and this you must extract: but concoct it while it becomes all red: for between true whiteness and true redness, there is a certain ash-color: of which it is said, After whiteness, you cannot err, for increasing the fire, you shall come to an ash-color: of which another says: Do not set light by the ashes, for God shall give it to you molten: and then at the last the King is invested with a red crown the by will of God.

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## CHAPTER VII.

How to make projection of the medicine upon any imperfect body.

I have largely accomplished my promise of that great mastery, for making the most excellent Elixir, red and white. For conclusion, we are to treat of the manner of projection, which is the accomplishment of the work, the desired and expected joy. The red Elixir turns into a citrine color infinitely, and changes all metals into pure gold. And the white Elixir does infinitely whiten, and brings every metal to perfect whiteness. But we know that one metal is farther off from perfection than another, and one more near than another. And although every metal may by Elixir be reduced to perfection, nevertheless the nearest are more easily, speedily, and perfectly reduced, then those which are far distant, And when we meet with a metal that is near to perfection, we are thereby excused from many that are far off. And as for the metals which of them be near, and which far off, which of them I say be nearest to perfection, if you are wise and discrete, you shall find to be plainly and truly set out in my Chapters. And without doubt, he that is so quick sighted in this my Mirror, that by his own industry he can find out the true matter, he does full well know upon what body the medicine is to be projected to bring it to perfection. For the forerunners of this Art, who have found it out by their philosophy, do point out with their finger the direct and plain way, when they say: Nature, contains nature: Nature overcomes nature: and Nature meeting with her nature, exceedingly rejoices, and is changed into other natures, And in another place, Every like rejoices in his like: for likeness is said to be the cause of friendship, whereof many Philosophers have left a notable secret, Know you that the sour does quickly enter into his body, which may by no means be joined to another body, And in another place, The soul does quickly enter into his own body, which if you go about to join with another body, you shall loose your labor: for the nearness itself is more clear. And because corporeal things in this regiment are made incorporeal, and contrariwise things incorporeal corporeal, and in the shutting up of the work, the whole body is made a spiritual fixed thing: and because also that spiritual Elixir evidently, whether white or red, is so greatly prepared and decocted beyond his nature, it is no marvel that it cannot be mixed with a body, on which it is projected, being only melted. It is also a hard matter to Project it on a thousand thousand and more, and incontinently to penetrate and transmute them. I will therefore now deliver unto you a great and hidden secret. one part is to be mixed with a thousand of the next body, and let: all this be surely put into a fit vessel, and set it in a furnace of fixation, first with a lent fire, and afterwards increasing the fire for three days, till they be inseparably joined together, and this is a work of three days: then again and finally every part hereof by itself, must be projected upon another thousand parts of any near body: and this is a work of one day, Or one hour, or a moment, for which our wonderful God is eternally to be praised.

Here ends the Mirror of Alchemy, composed by the most learned Philosopher, Roger Bacon.

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**Michael SENDIVOGIUS // Alexander SETON [Tr.]**

***The New Chemical Light***

**Drawn from the Fountain of Nature and from Manual Experience  
to which is added**

**A Treatise Concerning Sulphur**

**[The Author's Anagram]: "Divi Leschi genus amo"**

**In this sentence: "I love the Divine Race of Leschi," all the letters of the Author's  
name are found transposed, --- to wit: Michael Sendivogius.**

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## Preface

### **Upon all genuine Seekers of the great Chemical Art, or Sons of Hermes, the Author implores the Divine Blessing and Salvations.**

When I considered in my mind the great number of deceitful books and forged Alchemistic "receipts", which have been put in circulation by heartless impostors, though they do not contain even a spark of truth --- and how many persons have been and are still daily led astray by them? -- it occurred to me that I could not do better than communicate the Talent committed to me by the Father of Lights to the Sons and Heirs of Knowledge. I also wish to let posterity see that in our own age, as well as in ancient times, this singularly gracious philosophical Blessing has not been denied to a few favoured men. For certain reasons I do not think it advisable to publish my name; chiefly, because I do not seek for praise for myself, but am only anxious to assist the lovers of philosophy. The vainglorious desire for fame I leave to those who are content to seem what they, in reality, are not. The facts and deductions which I have here briefly set down are transcribed from that manual --- experience, graciously bestowed upon me by the Most High; and my object is to enable those who have laid a sound foundation in the elementary part of this most noble Art, to advance to a more satisfying fullness of knowledge, and to put them on their guard against those depraved "vendors of smoke," who delight in fraud and imposition. Our science is not a dream, as the vulgar crowd imagines, or the empty invention of idle men, as the foolish suppose. It is the very truth of philosophy itself, which the voice of conscience and of love bid me conceal no longer. In these wicked days, indeed, when virtue and vice are accounted alike, the ingratitude and unbelief of men keep our Art from appearing openly before the public gaze. Yet this glorious truth is even now capable of being apprehended by learned and unlearned persons of virtuous lives, and there are many persons of all nations now living who have beheld Diana unveiled. But as many, either from ignorance or from a desire to conceal their knowledge, are daily teaching and inducing others to believe that the soul of gold can be extracted, and then imparted to other substances; and thereby entice numbers to incur great waste of time, labour, and money: let the sons of Hermes know for certain that the extracting of the essence of gold is a mere fond delusion, as those who persist in it will be taught to their cost by experience, the only arbitress from whose judgment seat there is no appeal. If, on the other hand, a person is able to transmute the smallest piece of metal (with or without gain) into genuine gold or silver which abides all the usual tests, he may justly be said to have opened the gates of Nature, and cleared the way for profounder and more advanced study. It is with this object that I dedicate the following pages, which embody the results of my experience, to the sons of knowledge, that by a careful study of the working of Nature they may be enabled to lift the veil, and enter her inmost sanctuary. To this final goal of our sacred philosophy they must travel by the royal road which Nature herself has marked out for them. Let me therefore admonish the gentle reader that my meaning is to be apprehended not so much from the outward husk of my words, as from the inward spirit of Nature. If this warning is neglected, he may spend his time, labour, and money in vain. Let him consider that this mystery is for wise men, and not for fools. The inward meaning of our philosophy will be unintelligible to vainglorious boasters, to conceited mockers, and to men who smother the clamorous voice of conscience with the insolence of a wicked life; as also to those ignorant persons who have fondly staked their happiness on albefactions and rubrefactions and other equally senseless

methods. The right understanding of our Art is by the gift of God, or by the ocular demonstration of a teacher, and can be attained only by diligent, humble search, and prayerful dependence on the Giver of all good things; now, God rejects those who hate Him and scorn knowledge. In conclusion, I would earnestly ask the sons of knowledge to accept this Book in the spirit in which it was written; and when the HIDDEN has become MANIFEST to them and the inner gates of secret knowledge are flung open not to reveal this mastery to any unworthy person; also to remember their duty towards their suffering and distressed neighbours to avoid any ostentatious display of their power; and above all, to render to God, the Three in One, sincere and grateful thanks with their lips, in the silence of their hearts, and by refraining from any abuse of the Gift.

### **Simplicity is the Seal of Truth**

As after the completion of the preface it was found that it did not cover the whole of the space allotted to it, I have, at the publisher's request, there set down the "last will and testament of Arnold Villanovanus" which I once turned into Latin verse. I am conscious that the style of my versification is wanting in neatness and elegance; but this defect was partly caused by the necessity of adhering strictly and faithfully to the Author's meaning. Testament of Arnold de Villanova

It is said that Arnold de Villanova a man who was as a credit to his race, signified his last will in the following words:

"It has its birth in the earth, its strength it doth acquire in the fire, and there becomes the true Stone of the ancient Sages. Let it be nourished for twice six hours with a clear liquid until its limbs begin to expand and grow apace. Then let it be placed in a dry and moderately warm spot for another period of twelve hours, until it has purged itself by giving out a thick steam or vapour, and becomes solid and hard within. The 'virgin's milk' that is expressed from the better part of the Stone is then preserved in a carefully closed oval-shaped distilling vessel of glass, and is day by day wondrously changed by the quickening fire, until all the different colours resolve themselves into a fixed gentle splendour of a white radiance, which soon, under the continued genial influence of the fire, changes to a glorious purple, the outward and visible sign of the final perfection of your work."

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## **The First Treatise**

### **Of Nature, What She Is, and What Manner of Men Her Disciples Ought to Be**

Many Sages, Scholars, and learned men have in all ages, and (according to Hermes) even so early as the days before the Flood, written much concerning the preparation of the Philosopher's Stone; and if their books could be understood without a knowledge of the living processes of Nature, one might almost say that they are calculated to supersede the study of the real world around us. But though they never departed from the simple ways of Nature they have something to teach us, which, in these more sophisticated times, still need to learn, because we have applied ourselves to what are regarded as the more advanced branches of knowledge, and despise the study of so "simple" a thing as natural Generation. Hence we pay more heed to impossible things than to those objects which are broadly exhibited before our very eyes, we excel more in subtle speculations than in a sober study of Nature, and of the meaning of the Sages. It is one of the most remarkable features of human nature that we neglect those things which seem familiar, and are eager for new and strange information. The workman who has attained the highest degree of excellence in his Art, neglects it, and applies himself to something else, or else abuses his knowledge. Our longing for an increase of knowledge urges us ever onward towards some final goal, in which we imagine that we shall find full rest and satisfaction, like the ant which is not endowed with wings till the last days of its life. In our time, the Philosophical Art has become a very subtle matter; it is the craft of the goldsmith compared with that of the humble workman who exercises his calling at the forge. We have made such mighty strides in advance that if the ancient Masters of our science, Hermes and Geber and Raymond Lullius, were to rise from the dead, they would be treated by our modern Alchemists not as Sages but as only humble learners. They would seem very poor scholars in our modern lore of futile distillations, circulations, calcinations and in all the other countless operations wherewith modern research has so famously enriched our Art though without understanding the sense of the ancient writings. In all these respects, our learning is vastly superior to theirs. Only one thing is unfortunately wanting to us which they possessed, namely, the knack they had of actually preparing the Philosopher's Stone. Perhaps, then, their simple methods were after all the best; and it is on this supposition that I desire, in this volume, to teach you to understand Nature so that our vain imaginations may not misdirect us in the true and simple way. Nature then, is one, true, simple, self-contained, created by God and informed with a certain universal spirit. Its end and origin are God. Its unity is also found in God, because God made all things. Nature is the one source of all things: nor is anything in the world outside Nature, or contrary to Nature. Nature is divided into four "places" in which she brings forth all things that appear and that are in the shade; and according to the good or bad quality of the "place" she brings forth good or bad things. There are only four qualities which are in all things and yet do not agree among themselves, as one is always striving to obtain the mastery over the rest. Nature is not visible, though she acts visibly; she is a volatile spirit who manifests herself in material shapes, and her existence is in the Will of God. Students of Nature should be such as is Nature herself --- true, simple, patient, constant, and so on; above all, they should fear God, and love their neighbors. They should always be ready to learn from Nature and to be guided by her methods, ascertaining by visible and sensible examples whether that

which they propose to perform is in accordance with her possibilities. If we would reproduce something already accomplished by Nature, we follow her, but if we would improve on her performance, we must know in and by what it is ameliorated. For instance, if we desire to impart to a metal greater excellence than Nature has given to it, we must take the metallic substance both in its male and its female varieties, else all our efforts will be in vain. It is as impossible to produce a metal out of a plant, It is most important for us to know her "places" and those which are most in harmony and most closely allied, in order that we may join things together according to Nature, and not attempt to confound vegetables with animals, or animals with metals. Everything should be made to act on that which is like to it --- and then Nature will perform her duty. as to make a tree out of a dog or any other animal.

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## Second Treatise

### Concerning the Operation of Nature in our Substance, and its Seed

I have already said that Nature is one, true, and consistent, and that she is known by her products, such as trees, herbs, &c. I have also described the qualifications of a student of Nature. Now I will say a few words about the operation of Nature. As Nature has her being in the Will of God, so her will, or seed is in the Elements. She is one, and produces different things but only through the mediate instrumentality of seed. For Nature performs whatsoever the sperm requires of her, and is, as it were only the instrument of some artisan. The seed if anything is more useful to the artist than Nature herself; for Nature without seed is, what a goldsmith is without silver and gold, or a husbandman without seed corn. Wherever there is seed, Nature will work through it, whether it be good or bad. Nature works on "seed" as God works on the free will of man. Truly it is a great marvel to behold Nature obeying the seed not because she is forced to do so but of her own will. In like manner, God permits man to do what he pleases not because He is constrained but of His good and free bounty. The seed, then, is the elixir or of anything, or its quintessence, or its most perfect digestion and decoction, or, again, the Balm of Sulphur, which is the same as the radical moisture in metals. We might say much more about this seed, but can only mention those facts which are of importance in our Art. The four elements produce seed, through the will of God and the imagination of Nature; and as the seed of the male animal has its centre or storing place in the kidneys, so the four elements by their continual action project a constant supply of seed to the centre of the earth, where it is digested, and whence it proceeds again in generative motions. Now the centre of the earth is a certain void place wherein nothing is at rest; and upon the margin or circumference of this centre the four elements project their qualities. As the male seed is emitted into the womb of the female, where only so much as is needed is retained while the rest is driven out again, so the magnetic force of our earth-centre attracts to itself as much as is needed of the cognate seminal substance, while that which cannot be used for vital generation is thrust forth in the shape of stones and other rubbish. This is the fountain-head of all things terrestrial. Let us illustrate the matter by supposing a glass of water to be set in the middle of a table, round the margin of which are placed little heaps of salt, and of powders of different colours. If the water be poured out, it will run all over the table in divergent rivulets, and will become salt where it touches the salt, red where it dissolves the red powder, and so on. The water does not change the "places," but the several places differentiate the water. In the same way, the seed which is the product of the four elements is projected in all directions from the earth-centre, and produces different things, according to the quality of the different places. Thus, while the seed of all things is one, it is made to generate a great variety of things, just as the seed of a man might produce a man if projected into the womb of a female of his own species, or a monstrous variety of abortions, if projected into the wombs of different female animals. So long as Nature's seed remains in the centre it can indifferently produce a tree or a metal, a herb or a stone, and in like manner according to the purity of the place, it will produce what is less or more pure. But how do the elements generate the sperm or seed? There are four elements, two heavy and two light, two dry and two moist, but one driest and one moistest of all; and these are male and female. By God's will each of these is constantly striving to produce things like to itself in its own

sphere. Moreover they are constantly acting on one another, and the subtle essences of all are combined in the centre, where they are well mixed and sent forth again by Archeus, the servant of Nature, as is more fully set forth in the Epilogue of these twelve Treatises.

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## Third Treatise

### Concerning the True and First Matter of Metals

The first matter of metals is twofold, and one without the other cannot create a metal. The first and principal substance is the moisture of air mingled with warmth. This substance the Sages have called Mercury, and in the philosophical sea it is governed by the rays of the Sun and the Moon. The second substance is the dry heat of the earth, which is called Sulphur. But as this substance has always been kept a great mystery, let us declare it more fully, and especially its weight, ignorance of which mars the whole work. The right substance, if the quantity of it which is taken be wrong, can produce nothing but an abortion. There are some who take the entire body for their matter, that is, for their seed or sperm; others take only a part of it: both are on the wrong track. If any one, for instance, were to attempt the creation of a man out of a man's hand and a woman's foot, he would fail. For there is in every body a central atom, or vital point of the seed (its  $\frac{1}{8200}$  part), even in a grain of wheat. Neither the body nor the grain is all seed, but every body has a small seminal spark, which the other parts protect from all excess of heat and cold. If you have ears and eyes treasure up this fact, and be on your guard against those who would use the whole grain as seed, and those who strive to produce a highly rarefied metallic substance by the vain solution and mixture of different metals. For even the purest metals contain a certain element of impurity, while in the inferior the proportion is greater. You will have all you want if you find the point of Nature, which you must not, however, look for in the vulgar metals; it is not to be found therein, for all these, and common gold more especially, are dead. But the metals which we advise you to take are living and have vital spirits. Fire is the life of metals while they are still in their ore, and the fire of smelting is their death. But the first matter of metals as a certain moisture mixed with warm air. Its appearance is that of oily water adhering to all pure and impure things; yet in some places it is found more abundantly than in others because the earth is more open and porous in one place than in another, and has a greater magnetic force. When it becomes manifest, it is clothed in a certain vesture, especially in places where it has nothing to cling to. It is known by the fact that it is composed of three principles; but, as a metallic substance it is only one without any visible sign of conjunction, except that which may be called its vesture or shadow namely, sulphur, &c.

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## Fourth Treatise

### How Metals are Produced in the Bowels in the Earth

The metals are produced in this way: after the four elements have projected their power and virtues to the centre of the earth, they are, in the hands of the Archeus of Nature distilled and sublimed by the heat of perpetual motion towards the surface of the earth. For the earth is porous, and the air by distillation through the pores of the earth is resolved into a water out of which all things are generated. You should know that the seed of metals is the same, in the first instance, as the sperm of all other things, viz., a vaporous moisture. Hence it is foolish to seek the dissolution of metals in the first matter, which is nothing but a vapour, and in so doing philosophers have not comprehended the first matter, but only the second, as Bernard Trevisan well argues, though in a somewhat obscure manner, for he addressed himself to the Sons of the Doctrine. For my part before openly explaining this theory, I would warn all men not to seek that which exists everywhere by itself in a soft volatile form by so many circulations, calcinations, and reiterations of hard gold and silver, which can never be changed back into their original substance. Let us follow the real meaning of the writers of Alchemy whose works we read, and remember that if Art would produce any solid and permanent effect, it must follow in the footsteps of Nature, and be guided by her methods. It must trust itself to the guidance of Nature as far as Nature will lead, and go beyond her by still adhering to her rules. Now I said that all things are produced of a liquid air or a vapour which the elements distil into the centre of the earth by a continual motion, and that as soon as the Archeus has received it, his wisdom sublimes it through the pores, and distributes it to each place, producing different things according to the diverse places in which it is deposited. Some think that each metal has its own seed. But this is a great mistake for there is only one Seed. The sperm which appears in Saturn is the same as that which is found in gold, silver, copper, &c.; their difference is caused by the place, and by the time during which Nature was at work upon them, the procreation of silver being achieved sooner than that of gold, and so with the other metals. The vapour which is sublimed by heat from the centre of the earth, passes either through cold or warm places. If the place be warm and pure, and contain adhering to it a certain fatness of sulphur, the vapour (or Mercury of the Sages) joins itself to its fatness, and sublimes it together with itself. If in the course of its further sublimation this unctuous vapour reaches other places where the earth has already been subtilized, purified, and rendered moist by previous ascending vapours, it fills the pores of this earth, and with it becomes gold. But if this unctuous moisture be carried to impure and cold places, it becomes lead; if the earth be pure and mingled with sulphur, it becomes copper. For the purer the place is, the more beautiful and perfect will the metal be. We must also note that the vapour is constantly ascending, and in its ascent from the earth's centre to its superficies, it purifies the places through which it passes. Hence precious metals are found now where none existed a thousand years ago, for this vapour, by its continual progress, ever subtilizes the crude and impure, and as continually carries away the pure with itself. This is the circulation and reiteration of Nature. All places are being more and more purified: and the purer they become the nobler are their products. In the winter this unctuous vapor is congealed by the frost. At the return of spring it is set free, and is the Magnesia which attracts to itself the kindred Mercury of the air, and gives life to all things through the rays of the Sun, the Moon and the Stars, thus bringing forth

grass, flowers, and the like, for Nature is never idle Even during a single moment. This then, is the only true account of the generation of Metals. The earth is purged by a long distillation, and when the unctuous or fatty vapour approaches, the same are procreated, nor are they ever otherwise begotten notwithstanding the imaginations of those who misinterpret on this point the writings of the philosophers.

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## **Fifth Treatise**

### **On the Generation of All Kinds of Stones**

The substance of stones is the same as that of all other things; and their quality is determined by the purity of the places in which they arise when the four elements distil their vapour to the centre of the earth, the Archeus of Nature expels and sublimates it in such a manner that it carries with it in its passage through the pores of the earth, all the impurities of these places up to the surface, where they are congealed by the air, all that pure air engenders being congealed by crude air, their ingression being mutual, so that they join one with another, since Nature rejoices in Nature. Thus rocks and stones are gradually built up and generated. Now the larger the pores of the earth, the greater is the quantity of impurities carried upward; and thus the earth is most completely purified under those places where there is a great accumulation of stones or rocks at the surface, and in this manner the procreation of metals becomes easier in these places. This explains the fact that metals are scarcely ever found in plains, but nearly always in the bowels of rocky hills. The plains are often moist with elemental water which attracts to itself the rising vapour, and with it is digested by the rays of the Sun into the rich clay which potters use. In places where the soil is gross, and the vapour contains neither unctuousness nor sulphur, it produces herbs and grass in the meadows. The precious stones, such as diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, chrysoptas, onyx, and carbuncle, are all generated in the same manner as ordinary stones. When the natural vapour is sublimed by itself without sulphur or the unctuousness of which we have spoken and reaches a place where there is pure salt water (i.e., in very cold places, where our sulphur cannot exist, for could it exist, this effect would be hindered), diamonds are formed. The unctuous sulphur which rises with the vapour cannot move without warmth and is instantly congealed. When it reaches a slightly cold place, leaving the vapour to continue its upward movement without it. Colours are imparted to precious stones in this way. When the unctuous sulphur is congealed by the perpetual motion, the spirit of the water digests it in passing and purifies it by the water of the salt, until it assumes a red or white colour. This colour is volatilized by so many repeated distillations, and at length is borne upward with the purifying vapour, which by its aid is able to enter imperfect bodies, and thus to pervade them with colour; the colour is united to the partly congealed water and fills all its pores so that the two are absolutely one. For water which has no spirit is congealed by heat, and water which has a spirit is congealed by cold; but he who knows how to congeal water by means of heat, and to join to it a spirit, is like to discover something a thousand times more precious than gold, or anything which is in the world. Let him separate the spirit from the waters in order that it may putrefy, and that the grain may appear. Then let him purge off the dross, and reduce the spirit to water. This union will produce a branch which bears little resemblance to the parent stem.

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## Sixth Treatise

### Concerning the Second Matter and Putrefaction

We have spoken of the first matter of all things, and after what manner they are born by Nature without seed, that is, after what manner Nature receives the matter from the elements whereof she engenders seed. We will now consider this seed and the things evolved from it. Everything that has seed is multiplied thereby, but not without the aid of Nature for seed is nothing but congealed air, or a vaporous humour enclosed in a body; and unless it be dissolved by a warm vapour, it cannot work. Now, the nature of this seed which is produced out of the four elements, is threefold: it is either Mineral, or Vegetable, or Animal. Mineral seed is known only to the Sages. Vegetable seed is common and vulgar, as we see in fruits. Animal seed is known by imagination. But vegetable seed exhibits most clearly the process by which Nature evolves natural objects out of the four elements. Winter is the cause of putrefaction: it congeals the vital spirit in trees, and when the heat of the Sun, which magnetically attracts moisture, sets it free, the natural heat (of the tree) which is thereby stirred up, drives a subtle vapour of water towards the surface, and makes the sap to flow, always separating the pure from the impure, though the impure may sometimes precede the pure. That which is pure is congealed into flowers, the impure becomes leaves, the gross and thick hardens into bark. The bark of the tree remains fixed; the leaves fall when the pores are obstructed by heat or cold; the flowers receive a colour according to the quality of the natural heat, and bear fruit or seed. We may instance the apple, wherein is the sperm, whence the tree does not spring; but in this sperm is the seed or grain interiorly, whence the tree is born even without sperm, for multiplication is not of the sperm but of the seed. Thus we see how Nature, without our help, creates vegetable seed out of the four elements. But how about Minerals? Nature brings forth Mineral or Metallic seed in the bowels of the earth. This is the reason why so many will not believe in its existence -- because it is invisible. And on this account the vulgar unbelief is not so greatly to be wondered at: for if they hardly understand that which is openly before their eyes, how should they know anything about that which they cannot see. Yet, whether they believe it or not, the fact remains the same, and it is most true that which is above is as that which is below, and that which is born above has origin from the same source which is at work down below, even in the bowels of the earth. What prerogative have vegetables above metals that God should give seed to the one and withhold it from the other? Are not metals as much in His sight as trees? It is certain that nothing can grow without seed; for that which has no seed, is dead. The four elements must either bring forth metallic seed or produce metals without seed. In the latter case, they cannot be perfect: for nothing is complete without seed. He who can bring himself to believe that metals are destitute of seed, is unworthy to understand the mysteries of our Art. The metals then really contain their own proper seed; and it is generated in the following way. The vapour which (in the manner repeatedly described rises from the earth's centre, and is called Mercury not on account of its essence but on account of its fluidity, and the facility with which it adheres to anything, is assimilated to the sulphur on account of its internal heat; and, after congelation, is the radical humour. Thus metals are indeed generated out of mercury; but those ignorant persons who say that this first substance of metals is ordinary mercury, confound the whole hole body with the seed that is in it, seeing that common mercury, too, contains metallic seed, as well as the other metals. Let us

illustrate the matter by the analogy of the human body. Therein it is certain that there is a seed whereby the species of mankind is propagated. That body (which may be likened to common mercury) contains seed, which is not seen, and of which the quantity is very small in proportion to the size of the whole body: the process of generation is performed not by the whole body, but by this seminal "congealed watery vapour." But as no vital generation could take place if the body were dissected in order to get at the seed, as the murdering of the body would kill the seed -- so ignorant Alchemists may be said to murder the body and kill the seed of metals, when they dissolve their bodies, whether of gold, silver, or lead, and corrode them with aqua fortis, in order to obtain the metallic seed. All multiplication is performed by means of male and female seed; and the two (which by themselves are barren) must be conjoined in order to bring forth fruit, i.e., a new form. Whosoever, therefore, would bring forth any good thing must take the sperm or the seed, and not the entire body. Take, then, the living male and the living female, and join them in order that they may project a sperm for the procreation of a fruit according to their kind, for let no one presume to suppose that he can make the first matter. The first matter of man is earth, and there is no one so bold as to dream that he can create a man. God alone can perform this artifice. But if the second substance (or seed) which is already created, be put in the proper place, Nature will produce a new form of the same species. The Artist only separates what is subtle from its grosser elements, and puts it into the proper "vessel." Nature does the rest. As a thing begins, so it ends. Out of one arise two, and out of two one -- as of God the Father there was begotten God the Son, and from the two proceeded God the Holy Ghost. Thus was the world made, and so also shall it end. Consider carefully these few points, and you will find, firstly the Father, then the Father and the Son, lastly, the Holy Spirit. You will find the four elements, the four luminaries, the two celestials, the two centrics. In a word there is nothing, has been, and shall be nothing in the World which is otherwise than it appears in this symbol, and a volume might be filled with its mysteries. I say, therefore, it is the attribute of God alone to make one out of one, you must produce one thing out of two by natural generation. Know, then, that the multiplying sperm is the second substance, and not the first. For the first substance of things is not seen, but is hidden in Nature or the elements: the second substance is occasionally seen by the children of knowledge.

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## Seventh Treatise

### Concerning the Virtue of the Second Matter

But in order that you may the better know this second matter, I will describe to you its virtues. Nature is divided into three kingdoms, the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal. It is manifest that the mineral kingdom could subsist of itself were there no vegetables or animals in the world; the vegetable in like manner, is independent of the animal and mineral. These two kingdoms were created in independence. The animal kingdom alone depends for its subsistence on the two others, and is the most noble and excellent of all; and seeing that it is the last of the three, it governs the two others, because virtue expends itself at the third, even as it is multiplied in the second. In the vegetable kingdom the first substance is the herb or the tree, which you cannot create, but which is produced by Nature alone. The second substance is the seed which you see, by which herbs and trees are propagated. In the animal kingdom the first substance is the beast or man, whom you cannot create; but the seed, or second substance, by which they are propagated, you know. In the mineral kingdom, too, you are unable to create a metal, and if you boast that you can do so, Nature will laugh at your pretensions; given even the possession of that first matter which is vaunted by the philosophers, namely, the centric salt, you cannot multiple it without gold; but the vegetable seed of metals is known only to the Sons of Science. In the case of plants, the seed is seen outwardly, and is digested by warm air. In animals the seed appears inwardly and outwardly, and is prepared in the kidneys of the male. Water is the seed of minerals, in the very centre of their heart and life; and the "kidneys of its digestion" are fire. The receptacle of vegetable seed is the earth; the receptacle of animal seed the womb of the female; and air is the receptacle of water -- the mineral seed. The receptacles of seed are the same as congelations of bodies; digestion is the same as solution, and putrefaction the same as destruction. The specific property of seed is to enter into union with other substances belonging to the same kingdom, because it is subtle, and, in fact, air congealed by fatness into water. It is recognizable by the fact that it does not become naturally united to anything outside the kingdom to which it belongs. It is not dissolved, but only congealed, as it does not need solution but only congelation. Hence it is necessary that the pores of bodies be opened to admit the sperm, in the centre of which lies the seed (which is air). When it enters its proper womb it is congealed, and congeals the pure or mixed substance which it finds. So long as there is any seed in the body the body lives; when it is all consumed the body dies; and any emission of seed weakens the body, as may be seen in the case of dissolute persons, and of trees which have been too richly laden with fruit. The seed, then, is invisible, but the sperm can be seen, and is even as a living soul, which is not found in dead things. It is extracted after two manners, of which the first is gentle and the second violent. Nothing is produced without seed, but everything comes into being by means of seed. Let all sons of knowledge remember that seed is vainly sought in dry trees, and that it is found only in those which are green.

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## **Eighth Treatise**

### **How Nature Operates Through Our Art in the Seed**

Seed in itself produces no fruit, if it be not placed by Nature or Art in its own proper womb. Though seed in itself is the most glorious of all created things, yet the womb is its life, which causes the putrefaction of the enclosing grain or sperm, brings about the congelation of the vital atom, nourishing and stimulating its growth by the warmth of its own body. All this is constantly and regularly being enacted (by months, years, and seasons) in the above said three natural kingdoms. The process can be hastened artificially in the vegetable and mineral, but not in the animal world. In the mineral kingdom, Art can do something which Nature is unable to perform, by removing the crude air which stops up the outward pores of minerals, not in the bowels of the earth but in the circumference. The elements vie in projecting their seed into the centre of the earth in order that it may there be digested. The centre, by a caloric movement, emits it into the womb; of these wombs there are an untold number -- as many as there are places, and one place always purer than another. Know that a pure womb will bring forth a pure form of its own species. For instance, as among animals there are wombs of women, cows, mares, bitches, so in the mineral world there are metals, stones, and salts. Now salts principally demand consideration, with their localities, according as they are less or more important.

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## Ninth Treatise

### On the Commixtion of Metals, and the Eliciting of the Metallic Seed

We have spoken hitherto of Nature, of Art, of bodies, sperm and seed. Let us now proceed to the practical enquiry, how metals should be mixed, and how they are mutually related. For as a woman is generated in the same womb, and out of the same seed as a man, and the only difference is in the degree of digestion, and the purity of the blood and salts, so silver is produced from the same seed, and in the same womb as gold; but the womb of the silver had more water, and, as it were less digested blood than that of gold, according to the times of the celestial moon. But if you would understand the sexual union of the metals and their manner of emitting and receiving seed look at the celestial bodies of the planets. You will see that Saturn is higher than all the rest, to whom Jupiter succeeds, then Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, while the last place is occupied by the Moon. The virtues of the planets descend, but do not ascend; and so as experiences teaches us, Mars is easily converted into Venus, but not Venus into Mars, which has an inferior sphere. Also Jupiter may be quickly transmuted into Mercury, because Jupiter has a higher place; the one is second after the firmament, the other second after the earth. Saturn is the highest, the Moon lowest; the Sun combines with all, but is never ameliorated by its inferiors. There is a great correspondence between Saturn and the Moon, the Sun being medial between them; as also between Mercury and Jupiter, Mars and Venus, which all have the Sun as their centre. Most operators know how to transmute iron into copper, or Venus, without using gold, they also know how to change Jupiter into Mercury some can prepare the Moon (silver) out of Saturn; but if they could prepare gold by these changes, their secret would be worth knowing indeed. For this reason I repeat that it is important to know the mutual correspondence of metals, and their possibilities of union. There is one metal which has power to consume all others, for it is, so to speak, their water, and almost their mother, and is resisted only by the radical humour of gold and silver, and ameliorated by it. This metal is called Chalybs (steel). If gold is united to it eleven times, and emits its seed, it is weakened even unto death; but the Chalybs (steel) conceives and brings forth a son much nobler than the father; and when the seed of the son is placed in her womb it purifies it, and renders it a thousand times better fitted to produce excellent fruit. There is another Chalybs (steel) which is like this one, and created as a thing by itself by Nature. This steel is able, with its wonderful virtue, to elicit from the rays of the "sun" that which so many have sought, and which is the chief principle of our Art.

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## Tenth Treatise

### On the Supernatural Generation of the Son of the Sun

We have treated of those things which are produced by Nature and have been created by God, so that those who are searchers of this science may comprehend more easily the possibility of Nature, and the utmost limit of her powers. I now go on to speak about the method of preparing the Philosophers Stone. The Stone or Tincture is nothing other than gold digested to the highest degree. Common gold resembles a plant without seed; but when such a plant is matured, it produces seed-and so, when gold is ripened, it produces its seed, or the Tincture. If any one asks why gold and other metals do not commonly produce seed I answer because the crudity of the ore, which has not sufficient heat, prevents it from being matured. In some places pure gold is found which Nature has been striving to mature, but which has not attained to ripeness on account of the crudity of the air. An analogous case is that of the orange tree, which bears no fruit in northern latitudes, because it has not sufficient warmth, while in warmer countries it ripens the most delicious fruit, and a like result it is possible to produce in colder countries, by means of artificial heat. The same thing happens with metallic natures, and so gold may be made to produce seed, by a wise and judicious Artist who knows how to assist Nature. Should he act independently of Nature, he would err, for in this science, as in all others, we can do nothing but supplement Nature, nor can we otherwise aid her than through the agency of heat or fire. Now, in order that Nature may be enabled to work upon a congealed metallic substance, wherein the spirit does not appear, the body must be dissolved and its pores opened. Now there are two kinds of solution, the violent and the natural; and under the former head come all those methods of solution which are in vogue among the vulgar herd of modern Alchemists, and the same are cold and useless. Natural solution takes place when the pores of the body are gently opened in our water, so that the digested seed can be emitted and placed in its womb. Our water is a water which does not wet the hands; it is a heavenly water, and yet not rain water. The "Body" is gold, which gives out the seed. Our silver (not common silver) is that which conceives the seed of the gold. There it is digested by our continual fire, for seven or even ten months, until our water consumes three, and leaves one; and this is something twofold. Then it is nourished with the milk of earth, or the fatness of that which is formed in the breasts of the earth, and is regulated and conserved by the putrefaction of the surrounding substance. In this way that infant of the second generation is born. Now us advance from theory to practice.

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## **Eleventh Treatise**

### **Concerning the Practical Preparation of Our Stone or Tincture by Means of Our Art**

Our discourse in preceding chapters has been enlarged by appropriate examples which well facilitate the understanding of the practice, which, in accordance with natural procedure, must be performed as follows: take eleven grains of our earth, by as many doses, one grain of our gold, and two grains of our silver. Here you should carefully bear in mind that common gold and silver are of no use for our purpose, as they are dead. Those which I ask you to take are the living metals. Expose them to the heat of our fire, and there will come out of them a dry liquid. The earth will first be dissolved into a water which is called Mercury of the Sages, and this water will dissolve the bodies of the gold and silver, and consume them, till only the tenth part with one part remains, which is the radical metallic humour. Then take the water of saltpetre from our earth, in which is a living river and a flowing wave. Let this water be clear, and pour on it the radical humour: expose the whole to the fire of putrefaction and generation, which is not the same as that of the first operation. Regulate the heat judiciously, until there appear colours like those of the Peacock's Tail, and then continue to apply this well-regulated heat until the colours resolve themselves into a pronounced green. Be not weary but continue till the rest of the colours have manifested. When you observe at the bottom ashes of a brown colour, while the water is almost red, you should open the vessel and dip a feather into it. With this feather smear a morsel of iron, and if it becomes tinged, pour into the vessel as much of a certain water (which we will describe hereafter) as there is of crude air which has entered in, and then again subject it to coction over the same fire, until it colours the feather again. Further than this my experience does not go. The water I have mentioned is the menstruum of the world from the sphere of the Moon and so carefully rectified that it has power to calcine the Sun. Herein have I desired to discourse everything to your understanding and if sometimes you will take my meaning rather than my words, you will find that I have revealed all, more especially as regards the first and second work. It remains for me to say a few words about the fire. In the first operation the fire should be of one degree and continuous and should pervade the whole substance with an even warmth. In the second operation we need a natural fire, which digests and fixes the substance. Behold, I say unto you the truth! I have unfolded the regimen of the fire if only you understand Nature. But it is needful also to speak a few words concerning the vessel, which ought to be such as is indicated by Nature; and two of these vessels suffice. In the first operation the vessel should be round; in the second it should be somewhat smaller; it should also be of glass in the form of a vial or egg. But, know, above all things, that fire employed by Nature is one and its differences are determined by differences of distance. The vessel of Nature is also one, but we use two in order to accelerate the development of our substance; its material is one, but consists of two substances. If you would produce anything, look at the things that are produced. If you cannot understand those which are continually before your eyes, it will go hardly with you when you seek to produce those which are as yet unseen. Remember that God alone can create; but He has permitted the Sage to make manifest things that are hidden and concealed according to the ministry of Nature. Consider I pray you the simple water of the clouds. Who would believe that it contains in itself all mundane objects, hard stones, salts, air,

earth, and fire? What shall I say of the earth, which seems simple enough and, and contains water, fire, salts, air, and much besides? O, admirable Nature, who knowest by the means of water how to produce the wonderful fruits of earth, who dost give life to them and nourish them by means of air! Everything depends upon the faculty of seeing which we bring to the study of nature. Common eyes, for instance, discern that the sun is hot; the eyes of the Sage see that the sun itself is cold and that it is only its movements which produce heat for; its effect is felt at so great a distance in space. The heat of the sun is the same as our natural fire; for as the sun is the centre of the planets and thence scatters its heat downward in all directions, so in the centre of the earth there is a sun of the earth, which by its perpetual motion drives heat or rays upward towards the surface of the earth. This inward heat is much more powerful than elemental fire but it is tempered and cooled by the water which pervades and refreshes the pores of the earth; otherwise all things would be consumed by its fierceness. In the same way, the fierce rays of the sun are tempered and assuaged by the air of the intermediate atmosphere, without which everything would be consumed, and no generation would be possible. But I must now proceed to explain after what manner the elements act upon each other. In the centre of the earth, then, there is a central sun, of which the heat pervades the whole earth to its surface by reason of the movement thereof, or by the motion of the firmament thereof. This heat changes the water of the earth into air (or vapour), which being much more subtle than water, is violently driven upward through the pores of the earth. But when it reaches the colder atmosphere it is once more condensed into water and in some places we do indeed see this water or condensed, air driven highly up into the air by the force of the central fire: just as a kettle of water when exposed to gentle heat sends upward a gentle stream of vapour and air, while the steam thickens and the upward movement becomes more intense when the fire is kindled into a blaze. By this action of the "central sun" the elements are distributed over the earth and each finds the place where in can grow. This upward current of air is not always noticeable because in many places there is not enough water to make it perceptible: an empty kettle gives out no steam I say, then, that fire or heat is the cause of the motion of the air, and the life of all things; and the earth is their nurse, or receptacle. If our earth and air were not cooled by water, the earth would be parched up, as it is even now in some places where the pores of the earth are closed up, and be obstructing the movement of the water would be placed at the mercy of the two kinds of solar heat. In this way the destruction of the world will one day be brought about. Now in our Art you should closely imitate these natural processes. There should be the Central Heat, the change of the water into air, the driving upward of the air, its diffusion through the pores of the earth, its reappearance as condensed but volatilized water. Then you must give our Ancient One gold and silver to swallow and consume, till he himself is burnt to death and his ashes are scattered into the water, which you must then subject to coction for a sufficient space of time. The result will be the Medicine which is a cure for leprosy. But be careful not to take heat for cold, or cold for heat. Mix only things which are like each other, and separate contrary elements by means of heat. If you do not follow the guidance of Nature all your efforts will be in vain. I swear by God that I have spoken to you as a father should to his son. He that hath ears, let him hear, and he that hath sense, let him understand.

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## Twelfth Treatise

### Concerning the Stone and its Virtue

We have spoken sufficiently in preceding chapters concerning the production of natural things, the elements, the first and second matters, bodies and seeds, as also of their use and virtue. I have written also of the Philosophical Stone, and shall now speak of its virtue, in so far as experience has discovered it to me. Before, however, I proceed to describe the virtues of the Stone, I will, for the better understanding of our Art, once more recapitulate what has already been said. If any one doubts the reality of our Art, he should read the books of those ancient Sages whose good faith no one ever yet called in question, and whose right to speak on this subject cannot be challenged. If you will not believe them, I am not so foolish as to enter into a controversy with one who denies first principles: the deaf and dumb cannot speak. Why minerals alone should be excluded from God's primal benediction, when He bade all things increase and multiply after their kind, I am unable to see; and if minerals have seed they have it for the purpose of generic propagation. The Art of Alchemy is true in its nature. Nature is true also, but a true Artist is rarely found. Nature is one, our Art is one but the workmen are many. Nature, then, generates things through the Will of God out of the first Matter (the product of the elements) which is known to God alone. Nature produces things, and multiplies them out of the second substance which is known to the Sages. All elements are mutually dependent, though they do not agree when joined, but the queen of all is water, because it is the mother of all things --and over it broods the spirit of fire. When fire acts on water, and strives with it, the first matter is evolved. Thus arise vapours of sufficient denseness to combine with earth, by means of that crude air which from the very beginning was separated from it. This process is going on ceaselessly, by means of perpetual motion. For motion causes heat, as you may know by continued friction of any substance. Motion causes heat, heat moves the water; the motion of water produces air, which is the life of all living things. Thus all things grow out of water, out of its more subtle vapours are produced light and subtle things; out of its "oil," things of greater weight; out of its salt things far more beautiful and precious than the rest. But as Nature is often hindered by the impurity of this vapour, fatness, and salt, from producing perfection, experience has taught us to separate the pure from the impure. Therefore, if you would ameliorate Nature, and produce a more perfect and elaborated subject, purge the body by dissolution of all that is heterogeneous, and unite the pure to the pure, the well-digested to the well-digested, and the crude to the crude, according to the natural and not the material weight. For you must know that the central saltpetre never contains more earth than is required whether it be otherwise pure or impure. But it is different with the fatness of the water, which is never found pure. Art purges it by the action of twofold heat, and then again combines its elements.

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## Epilogue

### or Conclusion of These Twelve Treatises

I have composed, O friendly reader, the preceding twelve treatises for the benefit of the students of this Art; in order that they might understand the operations of Nature, and after what manner she produces all things which are in the world, before they put their hands to any experiment. Otherwise, they might be trying to open the gate without a key, or to draw water with a sieve. For in regard to our Holy and Blessed Art, he for whom the sun shines not, walks in thick darkness, and he who does not see the light of the moon, is involved in the shades of night. Nature has her own light, which is not visible to the outward eyes. The shadow of Nature upon our eyes is the body. But where the light of Nature irradiates the mind, this mist is cleared away from the eyes, all difficulties are overcome, and things are seen in their very essence, namely, the inmost heart of our Magnesia, which corresponds to the respective centres of the Sun and Earth. The bodily nature of things is a concealing outward vesture. If you dressed a boy and a girl of twelve years of age in exactly the same way, you would be puzzled to tell which was the boy and which the girl, but when the clothes are removed they may easily be distinguished. In the same way, our understanding makes a shadow to the shadow of Nature, for our human nature is concealed by the body in the same way as the body by the clothes. I might in this place discourse fully and philosophically of the dignity of man, of his creation and generation but I will pass over these themes and touch briefly on his life alone. Man is made of earth, and lives through air; for air contains the hidden food of life, of which the invisible spirit, when congealed is better than the whole hole world. Truly wonderful and admirable are the ways of Nature, who shews to us day by day the light of truth. I have set down in these twelve Treatises that which she has revealed to me in order that the God-fearing reader may more easily understand that which I have seen with my eyes, that which my hands have performed, without any fraud or sophistication. For without the light and knowledge of Nature it is impossible to attain to the perfection of this Art, unless it be revealed to a man by the Spirit, or secretly by a loving friend. The substance is vile and yet most precious. Take ten parts of our air; one part of living gold or living silver; put all this into your vessel; subject the air to coction until it becomes first water and then something which is not water. If you do not know how to do this and how to cook air, you will go wrong, for herein is the true Matter of the Philosophers. You must take that which is, but is not seen until the operator pleases. This is the water of our dew, which is extracted from the saltpetre of the Sages, by which all things grow, exist, and are nourished, whose womb is the centre of the celestial and terrestrial sun and moon. To speak more openly, it is our Magnet, which I have already called our Chalybs, or steel. Air generates this magnet, the magnet engenders or manifests our air. Thus Hermes says that its father is the Sun, its mother the Moon, and that the winds have fostered it in their womb, that is to say, the salt Alkali (called by the Sages salt of Ammonia, or vegetable salt) is hidden in the womb of Magnesia. The operation thereof is as follows: --- You dissolve condensed air, and in it a tenth part of gold; seal it up and expose it to our fire, until the air is changed into powder and there will be seen, given the salt of the world, a great variety of colours. The rest of this process and the method of multiplication you will find fully set forth in the writings of Lullius, and other of the ancient Sages, so therefore I do not dwell on them being content to treat only of the first and second matters. This I have

done frankly, and with open heart. Think not that any man in this world has spoken more fully and clearly than I have. I have not learnt what I tell you from books, but by the experiment of my own hands. If you do not understand it at first, or are unable to accept the truth, accuse not my work, but blame rather yourself, believing that God will not reveal this secret unto you. Take it, then, in all earnestness, read and again read it, especially the Epilogue of these twelve Treatises, and diligently consider the possibilities of Nature, the action of the elements, and which is chief among them, especially in the rarefaction of air or water, by which the heavens and the whole world were created. This I admonish you to do, as a father admonishes a son. Do not wonder that I have written so many Treatises. I am not in need of books for myself but was impelled to record my experience by pity towards those who are wandering astray in the darkness of their own conceits; and though I might have set forth this secret in few words, I have written at great length in order to equip you with that knowledge of Nature, without which you could not hope to succeed in this Art. Do not be put out by the seeming contradictions with which, in accordance with the custom of the Sages, I have had to conceal my real meaning a little. There is no rose found without thorns. Revolve diligently in your mind all that I have said about the way in which the elements distil the Radical Moisture to the centre of the earth, and how the terrestrial and centric sun again raises and sublimates them, by its continual motion, to the surface of the earth. Note also the correspondence which has been affirmed between the celestial and the centric Sun for the celestial Sun and Moon have a special power and a wonderful virtue in distilling upon earth by their rays. For heat is easily united to heat, and salt to salt. As the central sun has its sea and crude perceptible water, so the celestial sun has its sea of subtle and imperceptible water (the atmosphere). On the surface of the earth the two kinds of rays meet and produce flowers and all things. Then rain receives its vital force out of the air, and unites it to that of the saltpetre of the earth. For the saltpetre of the earth is like calcined tartar, and by its dryness, attracts air to itself --- which air it dissolves into water. For this saltpetre itself was once air, and has become joined to the fatness of the earth. The more abundantly the rays of the sun descend, the greater is the quantity of saltpetre generated, and so also is the harvest on earth increased. All this does experience daily teach. I have willed thus to set forth solely for the benefit of the ignorant the correspondences which exist between all things, and the efficacious virtue of the Sun, Moon, and Stars. The wise have no need of such instruction. Our substance is openly displayed before the eyes of all, and yet is not known. Oh, how marvellous is our heaven, and our water, and our mercury, and our saltpetre which are in the world sea, and our vegetable, and our fixed and volatile sulphur, and our dead head, or dregs of our sea, and our water that does not wet the hands, and without which no mortal can live --- without which nothing is born or generated in the whole world! It is lightly esteemed by men, yet no one can do without it: for it is more precious than all the world beside, and, in short, it is nothing but our pontic-water which is congealed in the sun and moon and extracted from the sun and moon, by means of our chalybs (steel) through the skill of the Sages by a philosophical artifice and in a surprising manner... I did not really intend to publish this book, for reasons that are named in the preface; but my love for earnest students of this Art got the better of my caution. So have I sought to make known my good-will to those who know me, and manifest unto the initiated that I am their companion and equal, and that I desire their acquaintance. I doubt not that there are many persons of good conduct and clear conscience who possess this great gift of God in secret. I pray and conjure them that they should preserve even the silence of Harpocrates. Let them be made wise by my example, and take warning from my

dangers. Whenever I have revealed myself to the great, it has always been to my peril and loss. But by this work I now shew myself to the Sons of Hermes, while at the same time I instruct the ignorant, and direct lost seekers into the right path. Let them know that the secret is here as plainly expounded as it ever will be. I have kept nothing back except the secret of extracting our "salt of Ammonia," or "Mercury of the Sages" out of our "sea water," and the great use to which it is put. If I have not expressed myself very plainly on these points, it is only because I may not do so. The secret can only be revealed by God, who knows men's hearts and minds, and He will vouchsafe this knowledge, in answer to earnest and importunate prayer after a repeated careful perusal of this Book. The vessel, as I have said, is one, or two at most will suffice; and if you have knowledge of Nature, a continuous fire, and the right substance, you ought to succeed. Let me caution you, in conclusion, not to be led astray by those who waste their time and money on herbs, animals, stones, and all kinds of minerals but the right ones. Farewell, good reader, and may you long enjoy the results of my labours, to the glory of God, the salvation of your soul, and the good of your neighbour.

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## **A Preface to the Riddle of the Sages**

### **Addressed to the Sons of Truth**

Though I have already given unto you, O Children of Science, a full and exhaustive account of our Art, and of the source of the universal fountain, so that there seems no further call to say anything, having, in the preceding Treatises, illustrated the mode of Nature by examples, and declared both the theory and the practice, so far it is permitted me to do, yet there may be some of my readers who think that I have expressed myself here and there in too laconical a fashion. I will therefore once more make known from beginning to end the entire process, but in the form of a philosophical enigma, so that you may judge how far I have been permitted to attain by God. There is an infinite number of books which treat of this Art, but you will scarce find any which contain a more clear explication of the truth than is here set down. I have, in the course of my life, met with a good many who fancied that they had a perfect understanding of the writings of the Sages; but their subtle style of interpretation was in glaring contrast with the simplicity of Nature, and they laughed at what they were pleased to call the rustic crudeness of my remarks. I have also frequently attempted to explain our Art to others by word of mouth; but though they called themselves Sages, they would not believe that there is such water in our sea, and attributed my remarks to temporary insanity. For this reason I am not afraid that my writings will reveal anything to unworthy persons, as I am persuaded that it is only by the gift of God that this Art can be understood. If, indeed, subtlety and mental acuteness were all that is necessary for its apprehension, I have met with many strong minds, well fitted for the investigation of such subjects. But I tell you: Be simple, and not overwise, until you have found the secret. Then you will be obliged to be prudent, and you will easily be able to compose any number of books, which is doubtless more simple for him who is in the centre and beholds the thing itself, than one who is on the circumference only, and can only go by hearsay. You have a clear description of the matter of all things, but I warn you that if you would attain to this knowledge you should continue in earnest prayer to God, and love your neighbour. In the second place, you should not be ready to imagine all manner of subtleties and refinements of which Nature knows nothing. Remain rather in the way of her simplicity, for therein you are far more likely to put your finger on the subject than if you abide in the midst of subtleties.

In reading my book, do not stick too closely to the letter of my words but read them side by side with the natural facts which they describe. You should also from the first fix your eyes steadily on the object of your search, and the scope and aim of our work. It is much wiser to learn with your mind and your brain first than by bitter experience afterwards. The object of your search should be to find a hidden thing from which, by a marvellous artifice, there is obtained a liquid by whose means gold is dissolved as gently and naturally as ice is melted in warm water. If you can find this substance, you have that out of which Nature produced gold, and though all metals and all things are derived from it, yet it takes most kindly to gold. For all other things are clogged with impurity, except gold wherein there is no uncleanness, whence in a special manner this matter is, as it were, the mother of gold. If you will not follow my instructions, and be warned by my cautions, you can derive no benefit from my book. I have spoken as plainly as my conscience would permit. If you ask who I am: I am a Cosmopolitan. If you know me, and wish to be good and honourable men, keep my



name a secret. If you do not know me forbear to enquire after my name, for I shall make public nothing more than appears in this writing. Believe me, if my rank and station were not what they are, I should enjoy nothing so much as a solitary life, or to have joined Diogenes in his tub. For I behold this world full of vanity, greed, cruelty, venality, and iniquity; and I rejoice in the prospect of the glorious life to come. I no longer wonder, as once I did, that the true Sage, though he owns the Stone, does not care to prolong his life; for he daily sees heaven before his eyes, as you see your face in a glass. When God gives you what you desire, you will believe me, and not make yourself known to the world.

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**A Parable,  
or  
Enigma of the Sages**

**Added by Way of an Appendix**

Once upon a time, when I had been for many years of my life sailing from the Arctic to the Antarctic Pole, I was cast ashore by the will of God, on the coast of a certain great ocean; and though I was well acquainted with the properties of that sea, I did not know whether there was generated near those shores that little fish Edieneis, which is so anxiously sought, even unto this present, by men of high and low degree. But as I watched the Naiads and Nymphs disporting themselves in the water, being fatigued with my previous toils, and overwhelmed by the multitude of my thoughts, I was lulled asleep by the soft murmur of the waves; and as I slept sweetly and gently, I beheld a marvellous vision I saw ancient Neptune, with a trident in his hand, rise, with venerable aspect, from our sea, who after a friendly salutation, carried me to a most beautiful island. This island was situated in the southern hemisphere, and contained all that is required for man's use and delight. It appeared a more pleasant and delightful abode than Virgil's Elysian fields. The shores thereof were fringed with verdant myrtles and cypresses. The meadows were studded with a large variety of beautiful and fragrant flowers. The slopes of the hills were clad with vines, olives, and cedars. The roads were overhung by the intertwining branches of laurels and pomegranate trees, which afforded grateful shade to the wayfarer. The plains were covered with groves of orange and lemon trees. In short, the island was an epitome of earthly beauty. Concealed under a rock, Neptune shewed me two minerals of that island, gold and chalybs (steel). Then I was conducted to an orchard in the middle of a meadow, which was at no great distance, the same being planted with a great variety of beautiful trees. Among these he shewed me seven enriched by particular names; and two of them towered above the rest. One bore fruit which shone like the sun, and its leaves resembled gold; the fruit of the other was whiter than lilies, and its leaves were like fine silver. Neptune called the first the Solar, and the second the Lunar tree. The only thing which it was difficult to obtain in the island, was water. The inhabitants had tried to get it from a spring by means of a conduit, and to elicit it from many things. But the result was a poisonous water, and the only water that could be drunk was that condensed out of the rays of the sun and moon. The worst of it was, that no one could attract more than ten parts of this water. It was wonderful water! I can tell you; for I saw with my eyes and touched with my hands its dazzling whiteness, which surpassed all the splendour of the snow. While I stood wrapt in admiration, Neptune vanished from my sight, and there stood before me a tall man, on whose forehead the name of Saturn was inscribed. He took a vessel, and scooped up ten parts of the water, in which he placed fruit from the Solar tree; and the fruit was consumed like ice in warm water. So I said unto him: "Lord, I behold here a marvellous thing. This water is small in quantity; nevertheless, the fruit of this tree is consumed therein by a gentle heat. To what purpose is all this?" He graciously replied "My son, it is true that this thing is wonderful. But this water is the water of life, and has such power to exalt the qualities of this fruit, that it shall afterwards, without sowing or planting -- only by its fragrance -- transmute the six trees which remain into its own nature. Moreover, this water is as a woman to the fruit: the fruits of this tree can putrefy nowhere but in this water; and though the fruit by itself be wonderful and

precious -- yet when it putrefies in this water, it brings forth out of this putrefaction a Salamander that endures the fire; its blood is more precious than all treasures, and has power to render fertile ix trees such as you see here, and to make their fruit sweeter than honey" Then I said unto him: "Lord, how is this thing done?" He replied: "I have already told thee that the fruits of the Solar tree are living, and they are sweet; but whereas the fruit while it is cooked in this water can inform but one part, after its coction has been completed it can inform a thousand." I then enquired whether the fruit was boiled in this water over a fierce fire, and how long? He answered this water has an inward fire, and when this is assisted by continuous outward warmth, it burns up three parts of its own body with this body of the fruit, until nothing but an incredibly small part remains, which, however, possesses the most marvellous virtue. This is cooked by the wise Master first for seven months, and then for ten. But in the meantime, on each fiftieth day, a variety of phenomena is witnessed." Again I besought him whether this fruit was cooked in several waters and whether anything was added to it. He made answer: "There is no water, either in this island or in the whole country but only this kind alone that can properly penetrate the pores of this fruit; and you should know the Solar tree also grew out of this water, which is collected by magnetic attraction out of the rays of the Sun and Moon. Hence the fruit and the water exhibit a wonderful sympathy and correspondence. If any foreign substance were added to the water, its virtue would only be impaired. Hence nothing should be put into the water but this fruit. After its decoction the fruit has life and blood, and its blood causes all barren trees to bring forth the same precious fruit." I asked whether the water was obtained by any secret process, or whether it was to be obtained everywhere? He said: "It is found everywhere, and no one can live without it, but it is best when extracted by means of our Chalybs (steel), as which is found in the belly of the Ram. If you ask what is its use, I answer that before the due amount of coction has been performed, it is deadly poison, but afterwards it is the Great Medicine, and yields 29 grains of blood, each one of which produces 864 of the fruits of the Solar tree." I asked whether it could be still further improved. "The Sages say," he returned, "that it can be increased first to ten, then to a hundred, then to a thousand, then to ten thousand times its own quantity, and so on." I asked whether that water was known by any particular name. He cried aloud saying: "Few know it, but all have seen it, and see and love it; it has many names, but we call it the water of our sea the water that does not wet the hands." "Do they use it for any other purpose?" I enquired; "and is anything born in it?" "Every created thing," he replied, "uses it, but invisibly. All things owe their birth to it, and live in it. Nothing is, properly speaking, in it, though itself mingles with all things. It can be improved by nothing but the fruit of the Solar trees without which it is of no use in this work." I was going to ask him to speak more plainly when he began to cry out in such a loud voice that I awoke out of my sleep, and Saturn and the hope of getting my questions answered vanished together. Be contented, nevertheless, with what I have told you, and be sure that it is impossible to speak more clearly. If you do not understand what I have said, you will never grasp the writing of other philosophers. After a while, I fell into another deep sleep, in which I saw Neptune standing over me, congratulating me on our happy meeting in the Garden of the Hesperides. He held up to me a mirror, in which I saw the whole of Nature unveiled. After we had exchanged a few remarks, I thanked him for conducting me to this beautiful garden, and introducing me to the company of Saturn; and I heartily besought him to resolve for me the difficulties and doubts which Saturn had left uncleared. "For instance," I said, "I have read and believe that for every act of generation a male and a female are required; and yet Saturn spoke of generation by

placing the Solar fruit in the water, or Mercury of the Sages. What did he mean? As the lord of the sea, I know that you are acquainted with these things, and I entreat of you to answer me." He said, "What you say about the act of generation is true; and yet you know that worms are produced in a different way from quadrupeds, namely by putrefaction and the place or earth in which this putrefaction occurs is feminine. In our substance the Mother is the water of which so much has been said, and its offspring is produced by putrefaction, after the manner of worms. Hence the Sages call it the Phoenix and Salamander. Its generation is a resurrection rather than a birth, and for this reason it is immortal or indestructible Now, whatsoever is conceived of two bodies is subject to the law of death; but the life of this fruit is a separation from all that is corruptible about it. It is the same with the Phoenix, which separates of itself from its corruptible body." I enquired whether the substance was compound in its nature. "No," he said, "there is only the Solar fruit that is put into the water which must be to the fruit in the proportion of ten to one. Believe that what was here revealed to you in a dream by Saturn after the manner of our island, is not a dream, but a bright reality which will stand the test of broad daylight." With these words he abruptly left me, without listening to my further questions; and I awoke and found myself at home in Europe. My God shew to you, gentle reader, the full interpretation of my dreams! Farewell!

**To the Triune God be Praise and Glory!**

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## A Dialogue between Mercury, the Alchemists, and Nature

On a certain bright morning a number of Alchemists met together in a meadow, and consulted as to the best way of preparing the Philosopher's Stone. It was arranged that they should speak in order, and each after the manner that seemed best to him. Most of them agreed that Mercury was the first substance. Others said, no, it was sulphur, or something else. These Alchemists had read the books of the Sages, and hence there was a decided majority in favour of Mercury, not only as the true first matter, but in particular as the first matter of metals, since all the philosophers seemed to cry with one voice: "O our Mercury, our Mercury," &c., whatever that word might mean. Just as the dispute began to run high, there arose a violent wind which dispersed the Alchemists into all the different countries of the world -- and as they had arrived at no conclusion, each one went on seeking the Philosopher's Stone in his own old way, this one expecting to find it in one substance, and that in another, so that the search has continued without intermission even unto this day. One of them, however, had at least got the idea into his head that Mercury was the substance of the Stone, and determined to concentrate all his efforts on the chemical preparation of Mercury saying to himself, for this kind of discourse is very common among Alchemists, that the assembly had determined nothing, and that the dispute would end only with the confection of the Stone. So he began reading the works of the philosophers, and among others that of Alanus on Mercury, whereby he became a philosopher indeed, but not one who had reached any practical conclusion. Then he took (common) Mercury and began to work with it. He placed it in a glass vessel over the fire, where it, of course, evaporated. So in his ignorance he struck his wife and said "No one but you has entered my laboratory; you must have taken my Mercury out of the vessel." The woman, with tears, protested her innocence. The Alchemist put some more Mercury into the vessel, and kept close and jealous watch over it, expecting that his wife would once more make away with it. The Mercury rose to the top of the vessel in vaporous steam. Then the Alchemist was full of joy, because he remembered that the first substance of the Stone is described by the Sages as volatile; and he thought that now at last he must be on the right track. He now began to subject the Mercury to all sorts of chemical processes, to sublime it, and to calcine it with all manner of things, with salts, sulphur, metals, minerals, blood, hair, aqua fortis, herbs, urine, and vinegar. All these substances were tried in succession, everything that he could think of was tried; but without producing the desired effect. Seeing that he had still accomplished nothing, the poor man once more began to take thought with himself. At last he remembered reading in some authors that the matter was so contemptible that it is found on the dung hill; and then he began to operate on his Mercury with various kinds of dung. When all these experiments turned out failures, he fell into a deep sleep, and there appeared to him an old man, who elicited from him the cause of his sadness, and bade him use the pure Mercury of the Sages. When the Alchemist awoke he pondered over the words of the old man, and wondered what he could mean by "the Mercury of the Sages". But he could think of no other Mercury but that known to the common herd, and went on with his efforts to purge it; for which purpose he used, first, the excrements of animals, then those of children, and at last his own. He also went every day to the place where the old man had appeared to him, in the hope that he might be able to ask him for a more detailed explanation of his meaning. At times, he would pretend to be asleep; and because he thought that the old man might be afraid to come to him in his waking hours, he would swear to him, and say: "Be not

afraid to come, old man I am most certainly asleep. See, my eyes are tightly shut". At length, from always thinking about that old man, he fell into a fever, and in his delirious visions he at last saw a phantom in the guise of that ancient standing at his bedside, and heard him say "Do not despair, my friend. Your mercury is good, and your substance is good, but it will not obey you. Why do you not charm the mercury, as serpents are charmed?" With this, the old man vanished. But the Alchemist arose, with these words still ringing in his ears: "Serpents are charmed" -- and recollecting that apothecaries ornament their mercury bottles with images of serpents, he took up the vessel with the mercury, and repeated the formula of conjuration "ux, ux, ostas," etc., substituting the word mercury for the name of the serpent: "And thou mercury, most nefarious beast." At these words the Mercury began to laugh, and said to the Alchemist "Why dost thou trouble me, my Lord Alchemist?"

**Alchemist:** Oho, do you call me your lord? Now I have touched you home. I have found a bit to bridle you with; wait a little, and you shall soon sing the tune that I bid you (Then as his courage increased, he cried angrily): I conjure you by the living God -- are you not that Mercury of the Sages?

**Mercury:** (pretending to speak in a whimpering and frightened tone of voice): Master, I am Mercury.

**Alchemist:** Why would you not obey me then? Why could I not fix you?

**Mercury:** Oh, most high and mighty Master, I implore you to spare your miserable slave! I did not know that you were such a potent philosopher.

**Alchemist:** Oh, could you not guess as much from the philosophical way in which I operated on you?

**Mercury:** I did so, most high and mighty Master, but I wished to hide myself, though now I see that I cannot hide myself from my most potent Lord.

**Alchemist:** Then you know a philosopher when you see him, as you now do, my gallant?

**Mercury:** My most high Lord, I see, and to my own great cost, that your Worship is a high and mighty and most potent philosopher.

**Alchemist:** (with a smile of satisfaction): Now at last I have found what I sought (To the Mercury, in awful tones of thunder): Now mind that you obey me, else it will be the worse for you.

**Mercury:** Gladly, Master, if I can for I am very weak.

**Alchemist:** Oho, do you begin to make excuses already?

**Mercury:** No, but I am very languid.

**Alchemist:** What is the matter with you?

**Mercury:** An Alchemist is the matter with me.

**Alchemist:** Are you laughing at me, you false rogue?

**Mercury:** Oh, no, no, Master, as God shall spare me, I spoke of an Alchemist - you are a philosopher.

**Alchemist:** Of course, of course, that is quite true. But what did the Alchemist do?

**Mercury:** Oh Master, he has done me a thousand wrongs; he belaboured and mixed me up with all manner of disagreeable and contradictory things, which have stripped me of all my powers and so I am sick, even to death.

**Alchemist:** You deserved such treatment, because you would not obey.

**Mercury:** I never yet disobeyed a philosopher, but I cannot help laughing at fools.

**Alchemist:** And what is your opinion of me?

**Mercury:** Oh, Master your Worship is a great man, and mighty philosopher, greater by far than Hermes, both in doctrine and wisdom.

**Alchemist:** Well, I won't praise myself, but I certainly am a learned man. My wife says so, too. She always calls me a profoundly learned philosopher.

**Mercury:** I quite believe you. For philosophers are men whom too much learning and thought have made mad.

**Alchemist:** Tell me, what am I to do with you? How am I to make you into the Philosopher's Stone?

**Mercury:** Oh, my master philosopher, that I cannot tell. You are a philosopher, I am the philosopher's humble slave. Whatever he wishes to make me, I become, as far as my nature will allow.

**Alchemist:** This is all very fine, but I repeat that you must tell me how to treat you, and whether you can become the Philosopher's Stone.

**Mercury:** Mr. Philosopher, if you know, you can make it, and if you don't you can't. From me you cannot learn anything with which you have been unacquainted beforehand.

**Alchemist:** You talk to me as to a simple person. Perhaps you do not know that I have lived at the courts of great princes, and have always been regarded as a very profound philosopher.

**Mercury:** I readily believe you, my Master for the filth of your brilliant experiments still cleaves to me.

**Alchemist:** Tell me then, are you the Mercury of the Sages?

**Mercury:** I am Mercury, but you should know best, whether I am the Mercury of you philosophers.

**Alchemist:** Tell me only whether you are the true Mercury or whether there is another?

**Mercury:** I am Mercury, but there is also another.

With these words the Mercury vanished. The Alchemist shouts and calls aloud, but there is no answer. At last he is fain to derive some little comfort from the thought that he has had speech of Mercury and therefore must be very dear to it. With this thought he once more sets himself to sublime, distil, calcine, precipitate, and dissolve the Mercury in the most awful manner, and with different sorts of waters. But his efforts turned out failures, and mere waste of time. Then he began to curse Mercury and to blaspheme Nature for creating it. When nature heard this, she called Mercury to her, and asked him what he had done to the Alchemist, and why he would not obey him. Mercury humbly protested his innocence. Nature admonished him to obey the Sons of Knowledge who sought to know her. Mercury promised that he would do so, but added: "Mother Nature who can satisfy fools?" Nature smiled, and departed. Mercury indignant with our Alchemist, returned also to his own place. The philosopher presently appeared with some excrements of swine, and was proceeding to ply Mercury therewith, when the latter thus wrathfully accosted him: "What do you want of me, you fool? Why did you accuse me?"

**Alchemist:** Are you he whom I so much desire to see?

**Mercury:** I am; but blind people cannot behold me.

**Alchemist:** I am not blind.

**Mercury:** You are as blind as a new-born puppy. You cannot see yourself: how then should you be able to see me?

**Alchemist:** Oh, now you are proud and despise me because I speak humbly. Perhaps you do not know that I have lived at the courts of princes, and have always been called a philosopher?

**Mercury:** The gates of princes stand wide for fools; and it is they that fare sumptuously in the palaces of the great. I quite believe that you have been at court.

**Alchemist:** You are, undoubtedly, the Devil, and not a good Mercury, if you speak like that to philosophers.

**Mercury:** Now, in confidence, tell me whether you are acquainted with any philosophers.

**Alchemist:** Do you ask this of me, when you are aware that I am myself a philosopher?

**Mercury:** (smiling): Behold the Philosopher! Well, my philosopher, what do you seek, and what would your have?

**Alchemist:** The Philosopher's Stone.

**Mercury:** Of what substance would you make it?

**Alchemist:** Of our Mercury.

**Mercury:** Oh, my philosopher, then I had better go: for I am not yours!

**Alchemist:** You are none but the Devil, and wish to lead me astray.

**Mercury:** Well, my philosopher, I think I may return the compliment: you have played the very devil with me.

**Alchemist:** Oh, what do I hear? This is most certainly the Devil. For I have done everything most scientifically, according to the writings of the Sages.

**Mercury:** Truly, you are a wonderful operator; your performances exceed your knowledge by as much as they defy the authorities which you have in your books. For they say that substances should be mixed only with substances of a kindred nature. But you have mixed me, against Nature, with dung and other foul things, and are indifferent about defiling yourself so long as you can torture me.

**Alchemist:** I do nothing against Nature: I only sow the seed in its own proper earth, according to the teaching of the Sages.

**Mercury:** You sow me in dung; at the time of the harvest I vanish, and you reap dung. Verily, you are a good husbandman!

**Alchemist:** Yet the Sages say that their substance is found on the dunghill.

**Mercury:** What they say is true, but you understand only the letter, and not the spirit of their injunctions.

**Alchemist:** Now I see that you are perhaps Mercury. But as you will not obey me, I must once more repeat the words of conjuration: Ux, ux, ostas ----

**Mercury:** (laughing): It is of no use, my friend; your words are as profitable as your works.

**Alchemist:** They say true when they call you a wonderful and inconstant and volatile substance.

**Mercury:** You call me inconstant. But to the constant I am also constant, and to the man of fixed resolve, I am fixed. But you, and the likes of you, are continually abandoning one substance for another, and are ever vagabonds in experiment.

**Alchemist:** Tell me truly, are you the Mercury which, side by side with sulphur and salt, the philosophers describe as the first principle of all things, or must I look for some other substance?

**Mercury:** The fruit, when it falls, lies near the tree that bore it. I am the same that I was except in the matter of age. In the beginning I was young, and I remained so as long as I was alone. Now, I am old, and yet I am the same as ever. I am only older than I was.

**Alchemist:** I am glad that you are old. For it is a constant and fixed substance that I require, and this also have I invariably sought.

**Mercury:** It is in vain that you come to the old man whom you did not know as a



youth.

**Alchemist:** What is this you say ? Did I not know you when you were young? Have I not subjected you to all manner of chemical processes, and shall I not continue to do so till I have prepared the Philosopher's Stone?

**Mercury:** Woe is me! What shall I do? I already scent the foul odour of dung. Woe is me! I beseech you Master Philosopher, not to ply me with excrements of swine -- the foul smell will drive me hence. And what more do you want of me? Am I not obedient ? Do I not mingle with all things that you ask me to amalgamate with? Do I not suffer myself to be sublimated, precipitated, amalgamated, calcined? What more can I do ? I have submitted to be scourged and spat upon till my miserable plight might move a heart of stone. I have given you milk, blood, flesh, butter, oil, and water. I have done all that any metal or mineral can do. And yet you have no pity on me! Woe is me !

**Alchemist:** Oho, it does you no harm, you rascal, you deserve it all richly, for not changing your form, or for resuming the old form after a mere temporary change!

**Mercury:** I do whatsoever you make me do. If you make me a body, I am a body. If you make me powder, I am powder. How can I be more obedient than I am ?

**Alchemist:** Tell me, then, what you are in your centre, and I will not torment you any more.

**Mercury:** I see there is no escape from speaking fundamentally to you. If you will, you may now understand me. With my form which you see you have nothing to do. My centre is the fixed heart of all things, immortal and all-pervading. I am a faithful servant to my master, and a faithful friend to my companions, whom I do not desert, and with whom I perish. I am an immortal body. I die when I am slain, but rise to stand before the judgment seat of a discriminating judge.

**Alchemist:** Are you then the Philosopher's Stone?

**Mercury:** My mother is such, and of her is born artificially some one thing -- but my brother who lives in the citadel has in his gift that which the Sage desires.

**Alchemist:** Tell me, is your age great ?

**Mercury:** My mother bore me yet I am older than my mother.

**Alchemist:** How in all the world am I to understand you if you answer my questions in dark parables? Tell me in one word, are you that fountain concerning which Bernard Count of Trevisan, has written?

**Mercury:** I am no fountain but I am water, and the fountain surrounds me.

**Alchemist:** Since-you are water, is gold dissolved in you?

**Mercury:** Whatever is with me, I love; and to that which is born with me I impart nourishment. That which is naked I cover with my wings.

**Alchemist:** I see plainly that it is impossible to talk to you. Whatever I ask you, your reply is foreign to the point. If you do not answer my questions better, I will torment you again.

**Mercury:** Have pity on me. Master, I will gladly tell you all I know.

**Alchemist:** Tell me are you afraid of the fire?

**Mercury:** I myself am fire.

**Alchemist:** Why then do you seek to escape from the fire?

**Mercury:** Because my spirit loves the spirit of the fire, and accompanies it wherever it goes.

**Alchemist:** Where do you go when you ascend with the fire?

**Mercury:** Every pilgrim looks anxiously towards his country and his home. When he has returned unto these he reposes, and he always comes back wiser than he left.

**Alchemist:** Do you return, then?

**Mercury:** Yes, but in another form.

**Alchemist:** I do not understand what you mean, nor yet about the fire.

**Mercury:** If any one knows the fire of my heart; he has seen that fire (proper heat) is my food; and the longer the spirit of my heart feeds on fire, the fatter will it be: its death is afterwards the life of all things belonging to my kingdom.

**Alchemist:** Are you great?

**Mercury:** My body, as you must know, can become one drop out of a thousand drops, and, though I am always one, you can divide my body as often as you like. But my spirit, or heart, always produces many thousands of parts out of one part.

**Alchemist:** How is this to be brought about? After what manner should my operation be performed on you?

**Mercury:** I am fire within, fire is my food and my life; but the life of fire is air, for without air fire is extinguished. Fire is stronger than air; hence I know not any repose, and crude air can neither coagulate nor restrain me. Add air to air, so that both become one in even balance; combine them with fire, and leave the whole to time.

**Alchemist:** What will happen then?

**Mercury:** Everything superfluous will be removed. The residue you burn in fire, place in water "cook," and when it is cooked you give as a medicine, and have no fear.

**Alchemist:** You do not answer my questions. Wife, bring the excrements of swine, and we will see whether we can get the better of his stubbornness.

In his utmost extremity, Mercury called in the help of Nature, amidst much lamentation and mourning over these threats of our admirable Alchemist. He impeaches the thankless operator; Nature trusts her son Mercury, whom she knows to be true and faithful and comes full of wrath to the Alchemist, calling him imperiously before her.

**Alchemist:** Who calls me?

**Nature:** What are you doing to my son, arch-fool that you are? Why do you torment him? He is willing to give you every blessing, if you can understand him.

**Alchemist:** Who dares to rebuke so great a philosopher, and a man withal so excellent as I am?

**Nature:** O fool, and of all men most insensate, I know and love all philosophers, and am loved of them. I take pleasure in aiding their efforts, and they help me to do that which I am unable to accomplish. But you so-called Alchemists are constantly offending me, and systematically doing despite to me; and this is the reason why all your efforts are doomed to failure.

**Alchemist:** It is not true. I, too, am a philosopher, and understand scientific methods of procedure. I have lived with several princes, and with more than one philosopher, as my wife can testify. Moreover, I possess at this very moment a manuscript which has lain hidden for some centuries in a certain wall. I know very well that I am almost at the end of my labours, and am on the point of composing the Philosopher's Stone; for it was revealed to me a few days ago in a dream. I have had a great many dreams, nor do I ever dream anything untrue; my wife knows it.

**Nature:** It is with you as with a great many of your fellows: at first they know everything, but in the end their knowledge turns to ignorance.

**Alchemist:** If you are truly Nature, it is you who serve for the operation of the work.

**Nature:** That is true; but it is performed only by those who know me, and such do not torment my children, nor do they hinder my working. Rather they clear away the

impediments, that I may the sooner reach the goal.

**Alchemist:** That is exactly what I do.

**Nature:** No; you do nothing but cross me, and deal with my children against my will. Where you should revive you kill; where you should fix, you sublime; where you should calcine, you distil; and thus my obedient son Mercury you torment in the most fearful manner.

**Alchemist:** Then I will in future deal with him gently, and subject him only to gradual coction.

**Nature:** That is well, if you possess understanding; otherwise, you will ruin only yourself and your possessions. If you act in opposition to my commands, you hurt yourself more than him.

**Alchemist:** But how am I to make the Philosopher's Stone?

**Nature:** That question does not justify your ill treatment of my son. Know that I have many sons and daughters, and that I am swift to succour those who seek me, provided they are worthy.

**Alchemist:** But who is that Mercury?

**Nature:** Know that I have only one such son, he is one of seven, and the first among them; and though he is now all things, he was at first only one. In him are the four elements, yet he is not an element. He is a spirit, yet he has a body; a man, yet he performs a woman's part: a boy, yet he bears a man's weapons; a beast, and yet he has the wings of a bird. He is poison, yet he cures leprosy; life, yet he kills all things, a King, but another occupies his throne; he flees from the fire, yet fire is taken from him; he is water, but does not wet the hands; he is earth, and yet he is sown; he is air, and lives by water.

**Alchemist:** Now I see that I know nothing; only I must not say so. For I should lose the good opinion of my neighbours, and they would no longer entrust me with money for my experiments. I must therefore go on saying that I know everything; for there are many that expect me to do great things for them.

**Nature:** But if you go on in that way, your neighbours will at last find you out, and demand their money back.

**Alchemist:** I must amuse them with promises, as long as I can.

**Nature:** And what then?

**Alchemist:** I will try different experiments; and if they fail, I will go to some other country, and live the same life there.

**Nature:** And then?

**Alchemist:** Ha, ha, ha ! There are many countries, and many greedy persons who will suffer themselves to be gulled by my promises of mountains of gold. Thus day will follow day, and in the meantime the King or the donkey will die, or I myself. Nature: Such philosophers are only fit for the gallows. Be off, and take with you my most grievous curse. The best thing that you can do, is to give yourself up to the King's officers, who will quickly put an end to you and your philosophy!

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## Second Part

### Concerning Sulphur

#### Preface

As I am not at liberty to write more plainly than the Ancient Sages, gentle Reader, you may possibly be dissatisfied with my Book, particularly as you have so many other philosophical treatises ready to your hand. But you may be sure that no necessity is laid upon me to write at all, and that if I have come forward it is only out of love to you, having no expectation of personal profit, and no desire for empty glory, for which reason I here refrain, as I have before done, from revealing my identity to the public. I was under the impression that in the first part of this work I had already given a lucid account of our whole Art. But my friends tell me that there is one point with which I have not yet fully dealt, and vehemently urge me to write this second treatise about Sulphur. The question is, whether even this Book will convey any information to one before whom the writings of the Sages and the Open Book of Nature are exhibited in vain. For if you could incline your ear to the teaching of Nature you would at once be able to emancipate yourself from the tutelage of printed volumes; in my opinion it is better to learn from the master himself than from one of the disciples.

In the preface to my twelve Treatises, and again in the twelfth chapter, I have already hinted at the reason why there is now so great a multitude of books on this subject, that they confound and hinder the student instead of helping him. The confusion is rendered worse confounded by the ill-will of the Sages, who seem to have set pen to paper for the express purpose of concealing their meaning; and by the carelessness with which some of the more important volumes are copied and printed; the sense of a whole passage is often hopelessly obscured by the addition or omission of one little word (e.g., the addition of the word "not" in the wrong place). Yet the student may get information even from these books (as the bee obtains honey even from poisonous flowers), if he reads them by the light of natural fact, and with constant reference to the utterances of other Sages. One writer explains another. Yet some of them are so closely beset with the difficulties of an obscure phraseology, that it is almost impossible to understand them, except by reading them side by side with the facts of Nature; for their interpreters and commentators are more hopelessly unintelligible even than the writers whom they take upon themselves to explain; the exposition is more difficult than the text. If you would succeed in this study, keep your eyes fixed on the possibilities of Nature, and on the properties of the natural substance. It is universally described as common and easy of access and apprehension, and it is so, but only to those who know it. He who knows it can discover it in the dunghill; he who does not will fail to find it even in gold I have no desire to praise myself, but this one thing I will say, that the reading of my Books, in combination with a careful study of Nature, and of the writings of other genuine possessors of this Stone, must in the end open up to you the understanding of this secret. If I have planted another tree in the dense forest of Alchemistic literature, I have done so, not in order to obstruct the path of students, but in order to aid and refresh them by the way. Let not the diligent and God-fearing enquirer despair. If he seek the inspiration of God he will most surely find it. This knowledge is more easily obtained of God than of men. For His mercy is infinite, and He never forsakes those who put their trust in Him; with Him there is no

respect of persons, nor does He despise the humble and contrite heart. He has showered the fulness of His mercy even on me, the unworthiest of all His creatures, in shewing to me His wonderful power and ineffable goodness, which I am utterly unable to declare. The only way in which I can, in a small degree, at least prove my gratitude, is by succouring my struggling brother students with friendly counsel and assistance. Rest assured, then, gentle Reader, that He will grant this boon to you, if you wait upon Him day by day with earnest prayer, and in the power of a holy and loving life. He will throw open to you the portals of Nature; and you will be amazed at the simplicity of her operations. Know for certain that Nature is wonderfully simple; and that the characteristic mark of a childlike simplicity is stamped upon all that is true and noble in Nature. If you would imitate Nature, you should take her simplicity for your model in all the operations of Art. If my Book does not please you, throw it away, and take up some other author; it is short, so that you need not spend much time in reading it through. Only persevere: to the importunate knocker the door will at length be opened. The times are at hand when many secrets of Nature will be revealed to men. The Fourth or Northern Monarchy is about to be established; the Mother of Knowledge will soon come; and many things will be brought to light that were hidden under the three preceding monarchies. This fourth kingdom God will found by the hand of a prince who will be enriched with all virtues, and endowed with wisdom greater than that of Solomon. In his time (to adopt the words of the Psalmist) mercy and truth will meet together; peace and justice will kiss each other; truth will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from heaven. There will be one Shepherd and one fold; and knowledge will be the common property of all. For those days I, too, am waiting with longing. Pray to God that it may come soon, gentle Reader. Fear Him, love Him, and- read carefully the books of His chosen Sages-and you will soon see, and behold with your own eyes, that I have spoken truly.

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## Concerning Sulphur

The Second Principle SULPHUR is by no means the least important of the great principles, since it is a part of the metals and even a principal part of the Philosopher's Stone. Many Sages have left us weighty sayings about this substance: for instance, Geber himself ("Sum of Perfection," bk. I, chap. 28), who says: " It illumines all bodies, since it is the light of the light, and their tincture." But seeing that the ancients regarded it as the noblest principle, before we proceed to speak about it, we must first explain the origin of the three principles. The origin of the principles is a subject which has hitherto been but scantily discussed in the works of the Sages; and the student who knows nothing about it, is as much in the dark in regard to this matter, as is a blind man in respect to colour. I therefore propose to make this point which my predecessors have neglected, the subject of my treatise.

Now, according to the ancient Sages there are two principles of things, and more particularly of metals, namely, Sulphur and Mercury; according to the Moderns there are three: Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury, and the source of these principles are the elements; of which it therefore behoves us to speak first. Be it known to the students of this art that there are four elements, and that each has at its centre another element which makes it what it is. These are the four pillars of the world. They were in the beginning evolved and moulded out of chaos by the hand of the Creator; and it is their contrary action which keeps up the harmony and equilibrium of the mundane machinery; it is they which, through the virtue of celestial influences, produce all things above and beneath the earth. We will say a few words about each of them in due order of succession: and first of all about the nearest element, Earth.

## Concerning Elementary Earth

Earth is an element of considerable quality and dignity. In this element the other three, especially fire, are latent. It is admirably adapted both to the concealment and to the manifestation of things committed to it. It is gross and porous. specifically heavy, but naturally light. It is also the Centre of the World and of the other elements; through its centre passes the axis of the earth to both poles. It is porous, as we have said, like a sponge, and produces nothing of itself; but it receives all that the other three project into it, conscientiously conceals what it should hide, and brings to light that which it should manifest. Whatsoever is committed to it putrefies in it through the action of motive heat, and is multiplied by the separation of the pure from the impure. Heavy substances are hidden in it. Light substances are driven by heat to its surface. It is the nurse and womb of all seed and commixtion; and these seeds and compounds it faithfully preserves and fosters till the season of maturity. It is cold and dry, but its dryness is tempered with water; outwardly it is visible and fixed; inwardly it is invisible and volatile. It is a virgin substance, and dead residue of the creative distillation of the world, which God will one day calcine, and after extracting the humour, create out of it a new crystalline earth. In its present state it consists of a pure and an impure element. The first is used by water for producing natural forms; the latter remains where it is. It is also the storehouse of all treasures, and in its centre is the Gehennal fire, conserving the machine of the world, and this by the expression of water, which it converts into air. This fire is produced by perpetual motion, and the influences of the Stars; it is aided by the Solar heat, which is tempered by the atmosphere, and the two together mature the growth of all things. For this reason the element of earth has fire intrinsically, and the earth is purified by this inward fire, as every element is purified by that which is in it. The inmost part, or centre of the earth, is then the highest purity mixed with fire, in which there is ceaseless motion, and we have shewn at some length in the twelve Treatises that it is, as it were, an empty space, into which the other elements project their products. It is enough for us to remember that this elementary earth is like a sponge, and the receptacle of all other elements.

## Concerning Elementary Water

Water is an element of great specific gravity, full of unctuous moisture. Outwardly it is volatile inwardly it is fixed, cold, and humid. It is tempered by air, and is the sperm of the world, in which the seed of all things is conserved. There is a great difference between sperm and seed. Earth is the receptacle of sperm, water the receptacle of seed. Whatever the air, under the influence of fire, distils into the water, is imparted by the water to the earth. There is always an abundance of sperm awaiting seed, in order that it may carry it into the matrix, which is performed by the movement of the air, excited by the imagination of fire. Sometimes sperm has not a sufficient quantity of seed, for want of heat to digest it. Sometimes, when there is no seed, the sperm enters the womb alone, but is ejected again without producing any fruit. At other times conception does not take place, even when there is plenty of seed in the sperm, because the womb is rendered barren by a superfluity of bad sulphur and malignant phlegm. Water is capable of commixtion with all things, by means of its volatile surface; it purifies and dissolves earth; air is congealed in it, and thus intimately united to it. It is the Solvent of the World, because by the action of heat, it penetrates the air, and carries with it a warm vapour which causes the natural generation of those things with which the earth is like a womb impregnated. When the womb has once received a due portion of seed, Nature never rests until the natural form (whatever it may be) has been produced. The humid residue, or sperm, is putrefied in the earth by means of warmth, and out of it worms and other things are generated. An intelligent Artist will readily understand how great a variety of wonders is performed by Nature through this element, as a sperm, but the said sperm must be operated upon, having already within it an imagined astral seed of a certain weight. For Nature produces pure things by means of the first putrefaction, but things far purer by means of the second, as you see in the case of wood, where vegetable fibre is produced as the result of the first putrefaction, while the putrefaction of wood engenders worms and insects-natural forms endowed with sentient life; and it is clear that animate creatures endowed with sense and motion belong to a higher creative level, and are moulded of a purer substance than plants.

Water is the menstruum (solvent) of the world, and exists in three degrees of excellence: the pure, the purer, and the purest. Of its purest substance the heavens were created; of that which is less pure the atmospheric air was formed; that which is simply pure remains in its proper sphere, where, by the Will of God, and the co-operation of Nature, it is guardian of all subtle substances here below. It has its centre in the heart of the sea; its polar axis coincides with that of the earth, whence flow forth all springs and fountains of water, which are presently swollen into great rivers. This constant movement of water preserves the earth from combustion, and distributes the seeds of things throughout its length and breadth. Yet all water courses return to the heart of the sea. As to the ultimate fate of this water opinions are divided. Some say that all water is generated in the stars, and the sea does not overflow its shores because the water is consumed by fire as it reaches the heart of the sea. But this hypothesis is contrary to Nature's methods of working: Nature produces like out of like -and how can the stars, which are air and fire, produce water? Moreover, the safety of this earth depends on the equilibrium of the four elements; if at any time the total quantity of one element exceeded that of the others, the universe would relapse into chaos. Hence, if the stars generated water, they must manifestly produce an equal quantity not only of air and fire, but also of earth-which is manifestly absurd. It is



much more reasonable to suppose that the waters are chained down, as it were, to the foundation of the earth by the circumambient air, and that they are constrained by it to continue in a ceaseless movement towards the Arctic pole-because no vacuum is possible in Nature; which is also the reason why there is a Gehennal fire in the centre of the earth, which is presided over by the Archeus (the first principle) of Nature. For in the creation of the world God first of all separated the quintessence of the elements from the weltering mass of chaos; and out of it He evolved fire, the purest of all substances, giving to it the most exalted place in the universe, and making it, in a special manner, the dwelling-place of His Sacred Majesty. In the centre of chaos was kindled that fire which afterwards distilled and carried upward the purest substance of water. But because this most pure fire now occupies the firmament, and surrounds the throne of God, the waters have been condensed into a body beneath it; and thus the sky is formed, while the water which now forms the atmospheric air and the lower firmament is due to the action of a lower and grosser fire. As the water of the firmament cannot pass the bounds of that highest and celestial fire, so the lower fire cannot pass through the atmospheric air to the earth; nor can the air pass the bounds of this lower fire. The water and the earth were formed together into one organic mass. Only one part of this water was volatilized into air, in order to protect the earth from the fierce and consuming heat of the sun. If there had been a vacuum in the air, all the water would have evaporated; but as the space below the firmament is already filled up with air, the great bulk of the water is kept below, near the centre of the earth, by the pressure of the air. These natural conditions continue to operate day by day, and through their normal action the world will be preserved from destruction during the good pleasure of the Creator. The central fire is kindled day by day by the universal motion and influence of the celestial bodies. This fire heats the water and a certain quantity of the water is dissolved into air; the air day by day keeps down by its weight the residue of the water, and causes it to form one mass with the earth. And as the equilibrium of the world is thus naturally preserved by the Creator, so every natural generative process in the world must repeat the same conditions on a small scale. Thus the elements below act in perfect unison with the elements above, which God created of a far greater purity and excellence, and the example of obedience to their influences, which is set by the whole universe, is imitated on a small scale by the constituent parts of the world below. But let us now proceed to explain the flux and reflux of water. There are two Poles-the Arctic Pole in the north, and the Antarctic Pole, or the southernmost point of the earth. The Arctic Pole possesses the property of magnetic attraction; the Antarctic Pole that of magnetic repulsion. Thus the Arctic Pole attracts the waters along its axis, and then they are again repelled by the Antarctic Pole along its axis; and, as the air does not permit inequality, they are once more forced back to their centre, the Arctic Pole. In this their continual course from the Arctic to the Antarctic Pole, they pass through the middle (i.e., along the axis) of the earth, are diffused through its pores, and break out here and there as springs and fountains, which are swollen into rivers, and return to the Point whence they first flowed forth. This universal motion is incessantly proceeding. The waters then, are not generated by the stars and consumed in the heart of the sea; but they flow forth from the centre of the sea into the whole earth, and are diffused through all its pores. On this principle the Sages have constructed conduits and aqueducts since it is well known that water cannot rise higher than the level of its spring or fount. If this were not an actual fact, art would vainly found its practical conclusions upon it; and the natural principle involved is illustrated in the process by means of which wine is drawn out of a cask.

It may be objected to our view that if the water of our springs were derived from the sea, it would be salt, and not sweet, as we actually find it to be. The answer to this objection lies in the fact that the sea water, in its passage through the pores of the earth, gradually deposits all the salt which it contains, and thus wells forth from the ground in a sweet and fresh condition. It should, however, be remembered that some of our springs-called mineral or saline springs-actually do exhibit all the original saltiness of the sea water which has not passed through earth calculated to retain its mineral element. In some places we also meet with hot springs, which are caused by the passage of the water through certain spots where large deposits of sulphur have been set afire by the central heat of the earth; every one who has tasted this water must have observed its sulphureous flavour. Something closely analogous happens when the water passes through large deposits of iron, or alum! or copper, and acquires their taste. Thus the earth IS a great distilling vessel, formed by the hand of an all wise Creator, on the model of which all Sages have constructed their small distilling vessels; and if it pleased God to extinguish the central fire, or to destroy) the cunning machinery, this universal frame would relapse into chaos. At the end of time, He will kindle the Central Fire into a brighter flame, will cause all the water to evaporate, will calcine the earth-and thus the earth and the water will be rendered more subtle and pure, and will form a new and more glorious earth. The operations of the earth and the water are always performed in combination, and are mutually dependent, since they are the two tangible elements, in which the other two work invisibly. Fire keeps the earth from being submerged, or dissolved; air keeps the fire from being extinguished; water preserves the earth from combustion. This is what the Sages call the equilibrium of the elements, and it illustrates the aid which they render to each other. Fire is closely associated with earth, and air with water. It will suffice if we remember that elementary water is the sperm and menstruum of the world, and the receptacle of seed.

## Concerning Elementary Air

The most noble element of air is inwardly heavy, visible, and fixed, outwardly light, volatile, and invisible. It is hot and moist, Is tempered by fire, and is nobler than earth or water. Air is volatile, but may be fixed, and when fixed, renders all bodies penetrable. Its purest substance has been formed into the vital spirits of animals, that which is less pure into the circumambient atmosphere, and the grosser residue has remained in the water, and associates with it as fire with its kindred earth. In the air the seed of all things is formed, as it were, in the body of the male, and is projected by its circulative motion into its sperm, which is water. It contains the vital spirit of all creatures, is the life of all, and penetrates and forces its seed upon all, as the man does upon the woman. It nourishes, impregnates, conserves the other elements; and we are taught by daily experience that it is the life not only of minerals, animals, and vegetables, but also of the other elements. We see that water becomes foul and unwholesome without a supply of fresh air; without it fire is extinguished-as is well known to Alchemists who regulate the temperature of their fire by the supply of air. Air is also that which conserves the pores of the earth. In short, the whole universe is kept fresh and sweet by air, and it is the vital element of man, beast, plant, and stone. It contains the seed of all things which is forced up, into vegetables for instance, through the pores of the earth by the action of fire, and thus the tree is built up atom by atom out of the vital element of congealed air. This vital force has remained in it ever since the time when the Spirit of Life brooded over the waters in the air. The magnetic power of life which air undoubtedly possesses, was put into it by God at the Creation. As the magnet attracts to itself hard steel, and as the Arctic Pole attracts to itself the water, so the air, by means of the vegetable magnet which is in the seed, draws to itself the nutriment of the menstruum of the world (which is water). This power of attracting water is in a certain part (viz., the 280th part) of all seed. If, then, any one would be a cunning planter of trees, he should take care to turn the point of attraction towards the North; for as the Arctic Pole attracts water, so the vertical point draws to itself the seminal substance. If you would know what the point of attraction in a tree is, submerge it entirely in water; that point which always appears first, will be the point of attraction. In the air, then, is the seed and the vital spirit, or abode of the soul of every creature.

## Concerning Elementary Fire

Fire is the purest and noblest of all elements, full of adhesive unctuous corrosiveness, penetrant, digestive, inwardly invisible, fixed, hot and dry, outwardly visible, and tempered by the earth. Of its purest substance was created the Throne of the Almighty; of that which is less pure, the Angels; out of fire of an inferior purity were created the stars and the heavenly luminaries; that which was less pure still was used to bear up the heavens; that which is impure and unctuous -- that, namely, which we have termed the fire of Gehenna -- is in the centre of the earth, and was there inclosed and shut up to set this lower world in motion. Though these different fires are separate, yet they are also joined together by natural sympathy.

This element is the most passive of all, and resembles a chariot when it is drawn it moves; when it is not drawn, it stands still. It exists imperceptibly in all things; and of it is fashioned the vital rational soul, which distinguishes man from all other animals, and makes him like God. This rational soul was divinely infused into his vital spirit by God, and entitles him to be regarded as a microcosm, or small world by himself. But the fire which surrounds the Throne of God is of an infinitely pure and simple essence, and this is the reason that no impure soul can know God, and that no human eye can penetrate this essential fire, for fire is the death and destruction of everything composite-and all material substances are of this nature What I said about the restful passivity of fire, applies in a certain sense to the eternal calm and unchangeableness of the Divine Nature. For as the fire sleeps in the flint, until it is roused and stirred up from without, so the power of God, which is a consuming fire, is only roused to action by the kindling breath of His Almighty Will. How calmly and solemnly does not even an earthly monarch sit enthroned in the pomp and state of his royalty! His courtiers hardly venture to move, and all around is calm and still. But when he rises what a stir of motion and activity does he not cause! All that are about him arise with him, and presently you see him sweeping along in grand and stately majesty. Yet the pomp of an earthly prince is but a faint reflex of the glory of the King of Kings. When He utters the voice of His Will, all heaven is roused, the world trembles, and thousands of angels speed forth on His errand. But it may be asked how I come to have this knowledge about heavenly things which are removed far beyond human ken. My answer is that the Sages have been taught of God that this natural world is only an image and material copy of a heavenly and spiritual pattern: that the very existence of this world is based upon the reality of its celestial archetype; and that God has created it in imitation of the spiritual and invisible universe, in order that men might be the better enabled to comprehend His heavenly teaching, and the wonders of His absolute and ineffable power and wisdom. Thus the Sage sees heaven reflected in Nature as in a mirror . and he pursues this Art, not for the sake of gold or silver, but for the love of the knowledge which it reveals; he jealously conceals it from the sinner and the scornful, lest the mysteries of heaven should be laid bare to the vulgar gaze. If you will but rightly consider it, you yourself are an image of God, and a little picture of the great world. For a firmament you have the quintessence of the four elements attracted to the formative womb out of the chaos of seed, and bounded by your skin; your blood is fire in which lives your soul, the king of your little universe) acting through the medium of the vital spirit; your heart is the earth, where the Central Fire is always at work; our mouth is your Arctic, and your stomach your Antarctic Pole, and all your members correspond to some part of the greater world as I have set forth at some length in my work on the Harmony of the Universe and in the Chapter on

Astronomy. In the microcosm of man's nature the soul is the deputy or Viceroy of the Creator. It governs the mind, and the mind governs the body: the mind is conscious of all that is conceived in the soul, and all the members understand the mind, obey it, and wait eagerly to carry out its behests. The body knows nothing of itself; all its motions and desires are caused by the mind; it is to the mind what the tool is to the craftsman. But though the rational soul operates in the body, a more important part of its activity is exerted on things outside the body: it rules absolutely outside the body, and therein differs from the vital spirits of brute beasts. In the same way, the Creator of the world partly acts in and through things belonging to this world, and is thereby, in a sense, included in this world. But He absolutely transcends this world by that infinite part of His activity which lies beyond the bounds of the universe, and which is too high and glorious for the body of the world. The great difference between the soul's extracorporeal, and God's extramundane, activity, is that man's rational activity is purely imaginative and mental, whereas God's thoughts are immediately translated into real existences. I might be mentally in the streets of Rome, but my journey would be purely imaginative; God's conceptions are at once objective essences. God, then, is included in the world, only as the soul is enclosed in the body, while it has power to do things which far transcend the capacity of the body. By material relations such as these you may know God, and learn to distinguish Him from the material manifestations of His power. When once the gates of knowledge have been flung wide for you, your understanding will be enlarged.

We said that fire was the quietest of all elements, and that it is stirred by a kind of motion well known to the Sages. The Sage should be perfectly acquainted with the generation and destruction of all things; he is familiar with the creation of the heavens, and the composition and commixtion of things terrestrial; yet, though he knows everything, he cannot make everything. He knows the anatomy and composition of the human body-yet he cannot make a man. This is a mystery which the Creator has kept in His own hand. Nature cannot work till it has been supplied with a material: the first matter is furnished by God, the second matter by the Sage. But in the philosophical work Nature must excite the fire which God has enclosed in the centre of each thing. The excitation of this fire is performed by the will of Nature, and sometimes also by the will of a skillful Artist who can dispose Nature, for fire naturally purifies every species of impurity.

All composite substances are purified by fire, as all substances that are not fixed owe their purification to water. It is the property of fire to separate and divide composite substances; and this separation means a purging away of the impure from the pure. This element also acts secretly, by marvellous means, not only in opposition to the rest of the elements, but also to all other things. For as the reasonable soul was made of this most pure fire, so the vegetable soul was made of the elementary fire which Nature governs. The fire which is contained in the centre of any given thing acts in the following way: Nature provides the motive power, which stirs up the air; the air stirs up and rouses the fire, which separates, purges, digests, colours, and brings every seed to maturity, and expels the matured seed through the sperm into places or wombs, either pure or impure, more or less hot, dry, or humid; and according to the nature of the place or womb, different things are produced (cp. the Twelve Treatises). So the Most High God has ordained that, in the economy of the universe, one thing should be at enmity with another, and that the death of one thing should be the life of the other; that one thing should consume what another produces, and evolve out of it some

higher and nobler form of life. The elementary separation of all living things is death; and hence it is necessary for man to die, as his body is compounded of the four elements, which cannot hold together for ever. In spite of this fact, our science furnishes an incontestible proof of man's original immortality. It is certainly true that all composite substances are liable to decomposition; that this decomposition, when it takes place in the animal world, is called death; and that the human body is a substance compounded of the four elements. But it is also true that the elements of Paradise, where man was created, are not subject to this law, seeing that they are most pure and incorruptible heavenly essences, and if man had remained in this pure and celestial region, his body would have been incapable of natural decay. Adam, however, in an evil day for our race, disobeyed his Creator, and straightway was driven forth to the beasts, into the world of corruptible elements which God had created for the beasts only. From that day forward his food was derived from perishable substances, and death began to work in his members. The pure elements of his creation were gradually mingled and infected with the corruptible elements of the outer world, and thus his body became more and more gross, and liable, through its grossness, to natural decay and death. The process of degeneration was, of course, slow in the case of Adam and his first descendants; but, as time went on, the seed out of which men were generated became more and more infected with perishable elements. The continued use of corruptible food rendered their bodies more and more gross-and human life was soon shortened to a very brief span indeed. In some favoured climes, where men eat and drink moderately, they still sometimes live to a green old age; but in our latitudes men abridge the term of their natural existence by grossly filling themselves with an excess of elementary corruptible food, and thus, before their time, become like "the beasts that perish." When the pure and essential elements are joined together in loving equilibrium, as they are in our Stone, they are inseparable and immortal, like the human body in Paradise; whence also our philosophical treasure has been compared to the creation of man, an analogy which modern wise men, who take all things literally, have understood as referring to the corrupted generation of this present order, which is produced from corruptible elements.

It was the recollection of man's immortality in Paradise that first set Sages a-thinking whether those pure and essential elements might not be obtained in this world, and united in one body. At length a merciful Creator made known to them that the desired conjunction of such elements existed in gold. It could not be found among the animals who are sustained by corruptible food, nor in vegetables, because they exhibit the elements in a state of inequality and contention. When corruptible elements are united in a certain subject, their strife must sooner or later bring about its decomposition, which is, of course, followed by putrefaction; in putrefaction, the impure is separated from the pure: and if the pure elements are then once more joined together by the action of natural heat, a much nobler and higher form of life is produced. In the strife of the elements, which follows when a body has been broken up by the victory of water, earth and air unite with fire, and together they overcome the water, digest, cook, and ultimately congeal it-which is the beginning of a new life. For if the hidden central fire, which during life was in a state of passivity, obtain the mastery, it attracts to itself all the pure elements, which are thus separated from the impure, and form the nucleus of a far purer form of life. It is thus that our Sages are able to produce immortal things, particularly by decomposition of minerals; and you see that the whole process, from beginning to end, is the work of fire.

Thus, then, we have briefly set forth as much as will serve our purpose concerning the four elements. Truly the description of each might be extended into a large volume, but we postpone all amplification for our Treatise on Harmony, which, God helping, if our life be spared, will be opportune to a more large discourse upon natural things.

## Concerning the Three Principles of All Things

The three Principles of things are produced out of the four elements in the following manner: Nature, whose power is in her obedience to the Will of God, ordained from the very beginning, that the four elements should incessantly act on one another, so, in obedience to her behest, fire began to act on air, and produced Sulphur; air acted on water and produced Mercury; water, by its action on earth, produced Salt. Earth, alone, having nothing to act upon, did not produce anything, but became the nurse, or womb, of these three Principles. We designedly speak of three Principles; for though the Ancients mention only two, it is clear that they omitted the third (Salt), not from ignorance, but from a desire to lead the uninitiated astray. Whoever would be a student of this sacred science must know the marks whereby these three Principles are to be recognised, and also the process by which they are developed. For as the three Principles are produced out of four, so they, in their turn, must produce two, a male and a female; and these two must produce an incorruptible one, in which are exhibited the four (elements) in a highly purified and digested condition, and with their mutual strife hushed in unending peace and goodwill. In every natural composition these three represent the body, the spirit, and the hidden soul; and if, after purging them well, you join them together they must, by a natural process, result in a most pure substance. For though the soul is most noble, yet it cannot reach the goal without the spirit which is its place and abode; and if it is your desire to bring it back to a given place, both the soul and the place must be purged and washed from all impurity, so that the soul may dwell in glory, and nevermore depart. Without these three Principles, the Artist can do nothing, since even Nature is powerless without them. They are in all things, and without them there is nothing in the world, neither, indeed, can be. Their origin being such as we have described, it is from these, by an imitation of Nature, that you must produce the Mercury of the Philosophers, and their first matter, bearing in mind the laws which govern natural things, and especially metals. Do not think that Salt is unimportant because it is omitted by the Ancients; they could not do without it, even if they did not name it, seeing that it is the Key which opens the infernal prison house, where sulphur lies in bonds. The three Principles are necessary because they are the immediate substance of metals. The remoter substance of metals is the four elements, but no one can produce anything out of them but God; and even God makes nothing of them but these three Principles. Why, then, should the Sage lose time and labour over the four cements, when he has the substance made ready to his hand by Nature? It is surely less troublesome to go three miles than four, and as these three Principles exist in all things, and, according to their proportions, etc., produce either metals, or plants or animals, it is best to use them as our first substance. The body is earth, the spirit water, the soul fire or sulphur of gold. The Spirit augments the quantity of the body, the soul the virtue. But because in the matter of weight there is more of spirit than of fire, the spirit is uplifted, oppresses the fire, and attracts it to itself in such a way that both augment in virtue, and the earth, which is mediate between them, augments in weight. The Artist should determine which of the three Principles he is seeking and should assist it so that it may overcome its contrary. Afterwards he must seek by his skill to supplement what has been wanting in Nature and thus his chosen Principle will obtain the necessary victory. The element of earth is nothing but a receptacle, in which fire and air carry on their strife through the mediation of air. If water predominate, temporal and corruptible things are produced; if fire obtains the victory, it produces lasting and incorruptible things. So you know which of the elements ought to receive your aid. Moreover, though fire and



water are in all things, they can produce nothing without air and earth. Their activity is aroused by external heat (in Nature, the Central Fire of the earth), and in their struggle they are assisted each by that which is like to it. By this strife they are subtilized in the pores of the earth, and when they ascend to the surface they produce flowers and fruit, in which they closely associate together as friends; and the more they are subtilized and purified in their ascent, the more excellent are the fruits which they produce.

When the purification has thus been performed, let water and fire become friends, which they will readily do in their earth which ascends with them; and the process will be the more speedily and perfectly accomplished, if you combine the two in their proper proportions-thus improving upon Nature. In all natural compounds fire is always the smallest part; but it is aided and stirred up by the action of outward fire; and according as fire is overcome or obtains the mastery, imperfect or perfect things are the result. The outward fire does not enter into the composition as an essential part of it, but only by the effect which it helps to produce. The inward fire is sufficient, if it only receive nutriment from the outward fire, which feeds it as wood feeds elemental fire; in proportion to the quantity of nutriment the inward fire grows and multiplies. Care should be taken, therefore) that the outward fire is not so fierce as to devour instead of feeding, the inward fire. Gentle coction will be the best means of attaining perfection, and of adding excellence to weight. But as it is difficult to add to a compound substance, I would advise rather to produce the same effect by removing that which is present in an excessive quantity. Remove that which is too much, and let the compound develop itself naturally. But many artists sow straw instead of grain; others sow both; many throw away that which the Sages love; others begin and do not persevere to the end; they look for short and easy labour in a difficult Art. But we say that this Art consists in an even mingling of the virtues of the elements-in the natural equilibrium of the hot, the dry, the cold, and the moist-in the conjunction of the male and female, the female having engendered the male, i.e., of fire and the radical humour of the metals. If you understand that the Mercury of the Sages contains within itself its own good Sulphur, digested and matured by Nature, you can accomplish the whole process by means of Mercury alone; but if you know how to add the supplement which our Art requires to the natural proportions of substances, to double the Mercury, and to triple the Sulphur, you will all the more quickly produce, first the good, then the better, and finally the best-though only one sulphur appears, and two mercuries (which, are, however, of the same stock); they should not be crude nor too much digested, yet well purged and dissolved (if you understand me).

It is really unnecessary to describe the matter of the Mercury and the Sulphur of the Sages, as it has already been as plainly delineated by the Ancients as is consistent with our vow. We do not altogether say that the Mercury of the Philosophers is a common thing, or that they have openly called it by its name, and that the matter from which Mercury and Sulphur are philosophically extracted has been plainly pointed out. For the Mercury itself is not found above ground, but is extracted by an artifice from Sulphur and Mercury conjoined, in short, Sulphur and Mercury are the ore of our quicksilver, and this quicksilver has power to dissolve, mortify, and revive metals, which power it has received from the sulphur (which has some of the properties of an acid). In order to put you on the right track, I will also tell you the difference between our quicksilver and common mercury. Common mercury does not dissolve gold and silver so as to amalgamate with them; but when our quicksilver dissolves gold and

silver, it almagamates with them in inseparable union, as water is mixed with water. Common mercury has bad combustible sulphur, which turns it black; our quicksilver contains incombustible, fixed, good, snow-white and red sulphur. Common mercury is cold and humid; our quicksilver is hot and humid. Common mercury blackens other bodies; our quicksilver renders them white and pure as crystal. Common mercury is changed by precipitation into a yellow powder and bad sulphur; our quicksilver is converted by heat into snow-white, good, fixed, and fusible sulphur. Common mercury becomes more fusible, our quicksilver more fixed, the more it is subjected to coction. Our quicksilver possesses such marvellous virtue that it would by itself be sufficient for our purpose, if subjected to gentle coction; but in order to accelerate its congelation, the Sages add to it its well digested and matured sulphur.

We might well have cited philosophers in confirmation of the points of our discourse, but as our writings are more clear than are theirs, we have no need of their support. Whosoever understands them will understand us better. If you would practise our Art, learn first to hold your tongue, and study the nature of minerals, metals, and vegetables. Our Mercury may be obtained from all things, as everything has it; only from some substances it is more easily procured than from others. Our Art is not a matter of luck or accident, but is founded on a real knowledge, and there is only one matter in the world by which, and of which, the Stone of the Philosophers is prepared. The substance is indeed to be found everywhere, but the method of its extraction out of some matters would take a lifetime, and if you begin your search without a due knowledge of natural things, more especially in minerals, you will be working in the dark and in blindness. It is, indeed, possible to set about our Art in a casual manner; and some who actually operate on our quicksilver, begin at the wrong end, and thus fail in bringing it to perfection, because they are quite in the dark about its real nature. Yet after all, we must confess that a right knowledge of our Art is the gift of God alone, and is granted to diligent students in answer to earnest and importunate prayer. To the Master it may appear easy enough; but to the beginner it must seem at first very hard and uphill work. He should not, however, despair, for in due time he will receive the reward of his diligence and aspiration; even in the dangers which the knowledge may bring upon him, he will be kept from harm by the loving hand of Providence, as I can testify from personal experience. We have with us God's Ark of the Covenant, which contains the most precious of earthly things, and is guarded by the holy Angel of the Lord. We heard that our enemies had fallen into the snare which they had laid for us; that those who sought our lives had been enclosed in the meshes of death; that those who attempted to rob us of our goods had lost all that they possessed; and that those who strove to blacken our reputation, died in shame and dishonour. Such is the care which God has of us, Who, from our childhood, has kept us safe under the shadow of His wings. And the feeling uppermost in our minds is the humbling consciousness of our utter unworthiness: we do not deserve the very least of His great mercies. But one thing we do and will do: our hope and trust always have been, are, and will be, in Him alone. We will not put our confidence in men or in princes: we will place ourselves in the hands of One who remains unchanged when all earthly power and greatness have passed away. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: never did Sage utter truer word than this; and if we would attain to the knowledge of this glorious science, if we would be able to use it well when we possess it, we must wait on God continually. and importune Him with earnest prayer. But to proceed with our description of the Matter. We said that it was quicksilver, and quicksilver only: whatever is added, is gained from this same substance. We have

repeatedly affirmed that all things earthly are evolved out of three principles. But for our purpose they must be purged of their impurities, and then recombined; that which is wanting is added-and thus imitating and assisting Nature we arrive at a degree of perfection such as Nature is unable to attain, on account of the impurities with which her operations are clogged. Do not suffer yourself to be confounded by the apparent contradictions which the Sages have introduced into their writings for the purpose of keeping their secret. Select only those sayings which are agreeable to Nature; take the roses, leave the thorns. If you wish to produce a metal, your fundamental substance should be metallic; only a dog can beget a dog; without wheat you will vainly plough your field; and all your endeavours in this Art will be in vain, unless you take your radical humour from a metal. There is one substance, one Art, one operation It is as erroneous to suppose that any of the particular benefits of our Stone can be enjoyed before the Stone itself has been prepared, as it would be absurd to imagine that you can have a branch without a root or tree. If you have water you can cook in it various kinds of meat, and thus obtain broth of different flavours; but there will be no broth unless you have both the water and the meat In metals, then, as in all other things, there is only one first substance, but the universal substance is modified in a vast variety of ways, according to the course of its subsequent development. Thus one thing is the mother of all things. This great fact ought always to be borne in mind in studying the works of the Sages; for nothing but mistakes and disappointment can result from a slavishly literal interpretation of their books. It is a pity that, instead of humbly studying and following Nature our Alchemists are so ready to adopt any fancy or notion that happens to pass through their minds. They seek to attain the end not only without a middle part, but without so much as a beginning. But how can anyone who sets about our Art in so casual and haphazard a manner expect anything but disappointments? Let our Alchemists have done, then, once for all, with their sophisticated methods, to which they ascribe so great an importance-with their dealbations, rubrefactions, fixations of the Moon, extractions of the soul of gold,-and let them place themselves under the unerring guidance of Nature For though the soul of the metal has to be extracted, it must not be killed in the operation; and the extraction of the living soul, which has to be reunited to the glorified body, must be carried on in a way very different from the violent method commonly prevailing among Alchemists. Wed not propose to multiply wheat without seed corn. But let us, in concluding this part of the subject, earnestly inculcate on the student's mind the necessity of having seed that will germinate and grow, and to avoid the use of seed which has been killed by an excess of fiery heat.

## Concerning Sulphur

Among the three principles the Sages have justly assigned the first place to Sulphur, as the whole Art is concerned with the manner of its preparation. Sulphur is of three chief kinds: that which tinges or colours; that which congeals mercury and essential sulphur, which matures it. The properties and preparation of this Sulphur we propose to describe, not in a set treatise, but in a dialogue like that which brought out the essential properties of Mercury. We will only say, by way of preface, that Sulphur is more mature than the other principles, and that Mercury cannot be coagulated without it. The aim and object of our Art is to elicit from metals that Sulphur by means of which the Mercury of the Sages is, in the veins of the earth, congealed into silver and gold; in this operation the Sulphur acts the part of the male, and our Mercury that of the female. Of the composition and action of these two are engendered the Mercuries of the Philosophers.

In our former dialogue we gave an account of the meeting of Alchemists, which a sudden tempest brought to so abrupt a close. Among those who took a prominent part in the proceedings, was a good friend of the first Alchemist; he was not a bad man, or an impostor, but, as they say, nobody's enemy except his own; yet he was foolish withal, and though really very ignorant, had no small opinion of his own wisdom and learning. He had at the meeting been the foremost champion of the claims of Sulphur to be-regarded as the first substance of the Stone, and was satisfied that he would have been able to make good that claim, if the meeting had not been prematurely broken up. So when he got home he resumed his operations on Sulphur in a very confident spirit. He subjected it to distillation, sublimation, calcination, fixation, and to countless other chemical processes, in which he spent much time and money. without arriving at any result whatsoever. His failures at length began to prey on his health and spirits, and in order to recruit the former, and raise the latter, he fell into the habit of taking long walks in the neighbourhood of the town where he lived. But wherever he went he could think of nothing but Sulphur. One day, with his mind full of this besetting idea, and being wrought almost to an ecstasy he entered a certain verdant grove, in which there was abundance not only of trees, herbs, and fruits, but also of animals, birds, minerals, and metals. Of water there was indeed a great scarcity; it was carried to the place by means of aqueducts, and among these was a conduit flowing with water extracted from the rays of the moon ; -- but this water was reserved for the use of the Nymph of the grove. In the grove there were two young men tending oxen and rams, and from them he learned that the grove belonged to the Nymph Venus. The Alchemist was gratified enough, but all his thoughts were absorbed by the subject of Sulphur, and when he remembered the words of the Sages, who say that the substance is vile and common, and its treatment easy, when he recollected the vast amount of time, labour, and money which he had vainly spent upon it, he lifted up his voice and in the bitterness of his heart, cursed Sulphur. Now Sulphur was in that grove, though the Alchemist did not know it. But suddenly he heard a voice which said: "my friend why do you curse Sulphur? "

He looked up in bewilderment nobody was to be seen. "My friend, why are you so sad?" continued the voice.

**Alchemist:** Master, I seek the Philosopher's Stone as one that hungers after bread.

**Voice:** And why thus do you curse Sulphur?

**Alchemist:** My Lord, the Sages call it the substance of the Stone; yet I have spent all my time and labour in vain upon it, and am well nigh reduced to despair.

**Voice:** It is true that Sulphur is the true and chief substance of the Stone. Yet you curse it unjustly. For it lies heavily chained in a dark prison and cannot do as it would. Its hands and feet have been bound, and the doors of the dungeon closed upon it, at the bidding of its mother, Nature, who was angry with it for too readily obeying the summons of every Alchemist. It is now confined in such a perfect labyrinth of a prison, that it can be set free only by those Sages to whom Nature herself has entrusted the secret.

**Alchemist:** Ah! miserable that I am, this is why he was unable to come to me! How very hard and unkind of the mother! When is he to be set at large again?

**Voice:** That can only be by means of hard and persevering labour.

**Alchemist:** Who are his gaolers?

**Voice:** They are of his own kindred, but grievous tyrants.

**Alchemist:** And who are you?

**Voice:** I am the judge and the chief gaoler, and my name is Saturn. Alchemist: Then Sulphur is detained in your prison?

**Voice:** Yes; but I am not his keeper.

**Alchemist:** What does he do in prison?

**Voice:** Whatever his gaolers command.

**Alchemist:** And what can he do?

**Voice:** He can perform a thousand things, and is the heart of all. He can perfect metals and minerals, impart understanding to animals, produce flowers in herbs and trees, corrupt and perfect air; in short, he produces all the odours and paints all the colours in the world.

**Alchemist:** Of what substance does he make the flowers?

**Voice:** His guards furnish him with vessels and matter; Sulphur digests it; and according to the diversity of the digestion, and the weight of the matter, he produces choice flowers, having their special odours.

**Alchemist:** Master, is he old?

**Voice:** Know, friend, that Sulphur is the virtue of the world, and though Nature's second-born-yet the oldest of all things. To those who know him, however, he is as obedient as a little child. He is most easily recognised by the vital spirit in animals, the colour in metals, the odour in plants. Without his help his mother can do nothing.

**Alchemist:** Is he the sole heir, or has he any brothers?

**Voice:** He has some brothers who are quite unworthy of him; and a sister that he loves, and who is to him as a mother.

**Alchemist:** Is he always the same?

**Voice:** As to his nature, it is always the same. But in person his heart only is pure: his garments are spotted.

**Alchemist:** Master, was he ever quite free?

**Voice:** Yes; in the days of the great Masters and Sages whom Nature loved, and to whom she gave the keys of the prison.

**Alchemist:** Who were these wise adepts?

**Voice:** There have been very many, and among them Hermes, who was one and the same with the mother of Sulphur. After him there were kings, princes, a long line of Sages, including Aristotle and Avicenna. All these delivered Sulphur from his bonds.

**Alchemist:** What does he give to them for delivering him?

**Voice:** When he is set free, he binds his gaolers, and gives their three kingdoms to his deliverer. He also gives to him a magic mirror, in which the three parts of the wisdom

of the whole world may be seen and known at a glance: and this mirror clearly exhibits the creation of the world, the influences of the celestial virtues on earthly things, and the way in which Nature composes substances by the regulation of heat. With its aid, men may at once understand the motion of the Sun and Moon, and that universal movement by which Nature herself is governed-also the various degrees of heat, cold, moisture, and dryness, and the virtues of herbs and of all other things. By its means the physician may at once, without consulting an herbarium, tell the exact composition of any given plant or medicinal herb. But now-a-days men are content to trust to the authority of great writers, and no longer attempt to use their own eyes. They quote Aristotle and Galen, as if there was not much more to be learned from the great Book of Nature which is spread open before them. Know that all things on the earth and under the earth are engendered and produced by the three principles, but sometimes by two, unto which the third, nevertheless, adheres. He who knows these three principles, and their proportions as conjoined by Nature, can tell easily by their greater or less coction, the degrees of heat in each subject, and whether they have been well, badly, or passably cooked. For those who know the three principles know also all vegetables by sight, taste, and odour, for these senses determine the three principles, and the degree of their decoction.

**Alchemist:** Master, they say that Sulphur is a Medicine.

**Voice:** Nay, you might rather call him a physician, and to him who delivers him out of prison, he gives his blood as a Medicine.

**Alchemist:** How long can a man ward off death by means of this universal Medicine?

**Voice:** Until the time originally appointed. But many Sages who did not take it with proper caution, have died before that time.

**Alchemist:** Do you call it a poison then?

**Voice:** Have you not observed that a great flame swallows up a small one? Men who had received the Art by the teachings of others, thought that the more powerful the dose they took of our Medicine the more beneficial would be the effect. They did not consider that one grain of it has strength to penetrate many thousand pounds of metals.

**Alchemist:** How then should they have used it?

**Voice:** They ought to have taken only so much as would have strengthened and nourished, without overwhelming, their natural heat.

**Alchemist:** Master, I know how to make that Medicine.

**Voice:** Blessed are you if you do! For the blood of Sulphur is that inward virtue and dryness which congeals quicksilver into gold and imparts health and perfection to all bodies. But the blood of Sulphur is obtained only by those who can deliver him from prison; and therefore he is so closely imprisoned that he can hardly breathe, lest he should come to the Palace of the King.

**Alchemist:** Is he so closely imprisoned in all metals?

**Voice:** In some his imprisonment is less strict than in others.

**Alchemist:** Why, Lord, is he imprisoned in the metals so tyrannously?

**Voice:** Because if he once came unto his royal palace, he would no longer fear his guards. He could look from the windows with freedom, and appear before the whole world, for he would be in his own kingdom, though not in that state of highest power whereto he desires to arrive. **Alchemist:** What is his food?

**Voice:** His food is air, in a digested state, when he is free; but in prison he is compelled to consume it in a crude state.

**Alchemist:** Master, cannot those quarrels between him and his gaolers be composed?

**Voice:** Yes, by a wise and cunning craftsman.

**Alchemist:** Why does he not offer them terms of peace?

**Voice:** He cannot do so by himself: his indignation gets the better of his discretion.

**Alchemist:** Why does he not do so through some commissary?

**Voice:** He who could put an end to their strife would be a wise man, and worthy of undying honour. For if they were friends, they would help, instead of hindering each other, and bring forth immortal things.

**Alchemist:** I will gladly undertake the duty of reconciling them. For I am a very learned man, and they could not resist my practical skill. I am a great Sage, and my Alchemistic treatment would quickly bring about the desired end. But tell me, is this the true Sulphur of the Sages ?

**Voice:** He is Sulphur; you ought to know whether he is the Sulphur of the Sages.

**Alchemist:** If I find his prison, shall I be able to deliver him?

**Voice:** Yes, if you are wise enough to do so. It is easier to deliver him than to find his prison.

**Alchemist:** When I do find him, shall I be able to make him into the Philosopher's Stone ?

**Voice:** I am no prophet. But if you follow his mother's advice, and dissolve the Sulphur you will have the Stone.

**Alchemist:** In what substance is this Sulphur to be found ?

**Voice:** In all substances. All things in the world -- metals, herbs, trees, animals, stones, are its ore.

**Alchemist:** But out of what substances do the Sages procure it?

**Voice:** My friend, you press me somewhat too closely. But I may say that though it is every where, yet it has certain palaces where the Sages can most conveniently find it; and they worship it when it swims in its sea and sports with Vulcan (god of fire), though there it is disguised in a most poor garb. Now is it in a dark prison, hidden from sight. But it is one only subject, and if you cannot find it at home you will scarcely do so in the forest. Yet, to give you some heart in your research, I will solemnly assure you that it is most perfect in gold and silver-most easily obtained in quicksilver.

With these words Saturn departed, and the Alchemist, being weary with walking, fell into a deep sleep, in which he saw the following vision: He beheld in that grove a spring of water, near which Salt and Sulphur were walking and quarreling, until at last they began to fight. Salt dealt Sulphur a grievous wound, out of which there flowed, instead of blood, pure, milk-white water, that swelled into a great river. In this river the virgin goddess, Diana, came to bathe; and a certain bold prince, who was passing by, was inflamed with great love towards her; which she, perceiving and returning, pretended to be sinking under water. The prince bade his attendants assist her; but they excused themselves, saying that the river, though it looked small and all but dried up, was most dangerous. " And," said they, ' many of those who have passed here before have perished in it.' Then that prince threw off his thick cloak, plunged into the river, and stretched out his arm to save the beautiful Diana; but she grasped it so convulsively that they both sank under water together. Soon afterwards their souls were seen rising upward above the water, and they said, " We have done well, for in no other way could we be delivered from our stained and spotted bodies."

**Alchemist:** (speaking): Will you ever return into those bodies?

**Souls:** Not while they are so polluted-but when they are cleansed, and the river is dried up by the heat of the sun.

**Alchemist:** What do you do in the meantime?

**Souls:** We soar above the water till the storm and the mists cease....

Then the Alchemist thought that he saw a great number of his fellows come to the spot where the body of the Sulphur lay slain by the Salt; and they divided it among themselves, and gave a piece to him also. Then they went home, and began to operate on their (dead) Sulphur, and are at it to this day. Presently Saturn returned, and the Alchemist said: Master, come quickly, I have found Sulphur -- help me to make the Stone.

**Saturn:** Gladly, my friend. Prepare the quicksilver, and the sulphur, and give me the vessel.

**Alchemist:** Oh, I do not want Mercury. It is a delusion and a snare, as my friend the other Alchemist discovered to his smart.

**Saturn:** I can do nothing without quicksilver.

**Alchemist:** Oh no, we will make it of Sulphur only.

So they set to work on that piece of dead Sulphur, and sublimed, calcined, and subjected it to all manner of chemical operations. But they produced nothing save little bits of sulphurous tow, such as they use for lighting fires. Then the Alchemist confessed the fruitlessness of his endeavours, and bade Saturn set about the work in his own way. Then Saturn took two kinds of quicksilver, of different substance but one root, washed them with his urine, and called them the sulphurs of sulphurs; then he mixed the fixed with the volatile, after which he placed them in a proper vessel, and set a watch to prevent the sulphur from escaping; afterwards he placed them in a bath of very gentle heat -- and thus they made the Philosopher's Stone, which must always follow as the outcome of the right substance. Then the Alchemist took it in his hand, admired its beautiful purple colour, and danced about with it, shouting aloud with joy and delight. Suddenly the glass slipped out of his hand and broke into a thousand pieces; the stone vanished; and the Alchemist awoke with nothing in his hand but some pieces of sulphurous tow. There are a good many Alchemists who, having an extremely favourable opinion of themselves, and fancying that they can hear the grass grow, rail against this Art, because they think that if the Stone were not a mere delusion, they could not have failed to find it. We, for our part, are not over anxious to rob these people of their comfortable conviction. But to men who were worthy (men both of high and low degree) we have repeatedly proved the reality of our Art by incontestable ocular evidence. Let me warn those who wish to follow the true method in studying our Art, airways to read with constant reference to natural facts, and never, under any circumstances, to do anything contrary to Nature. If the Sages say that fire does not burn, they must not believe it; for Nature is greater than the Sages; but if they say that it is the property of fire to dry and heat things, they will accept this statement, because it is in accordance with the truth of Nature --- and the facts of Nature are always simple and plain. If any one came and taught you to make this Stone, as though he were giving you a receipt for making cheese out of milk, he might speak more plainly than I have done; but I am compelled to veil and conceal my meaning because of the vow which my Master exacted of me.

My last words shall be addressed to you who have already made some progress in this Art. Have you been where the bridegroom has been married to the bride, and the nuptials were celebrated in the house of Nature? Have you heard how the vulgar have seen this Sulphur, as much as have you who have taken such pains to seek it? If you wish that even old women should practise your philosophy, shew the dealbation of



these sulphurs, and say openly to the common people: Behold, the water is divided, and the Sulphur has gone forth; when it returns it will be whiter than snow, and will congeal the water. Burn the Sulphur with incombustible sulphur, wash it, and make it white and purple until the Sulphur becomes Mercury, and the Mercury Sulphur, and you can proceed to quicken it with the soul of gold. Our Mercury must be corrected by means of Sulphur-otherwise it is unprofitable. A prince without a people is a wretched sight-and so is an Alchemist without Sulphur and Mercury. If you understand me, I have spoken.

The Alchemist went home, bewailed the broken Stone, and his folly in not asking Saturn about the Salt of the Sages, and the way of distinguishing between it and ordinary salt. The rest he related to his wife.

Conclusion Every student of this Art should first carefully read what is said-in this and other Treatises -- about the creation, operation, properties, and effects of the four elements; otherwise he cannot apprehend the nature of the three principles, or find the substance of the Stone, or understand its development. God has created the elements out of chaos; nature has evolved the three principles out of the elements; and out of these principles she makes all things, and gives power to her beloved disciples to produce marvelous preparations. If Nature produces metals out of the principles, Art must follow her example. It is one of the rules of Nature to act through intermediate substances; and this book should enable the student to judge what substances are intermediate between the elements and metals, and between metals and the Stone. The difference between gold and water is great, that between water and mercury not so great, and that between gold and mercury very small, for mercury is the habitation of gold, water the habitation of mercury, and sulphur is that which coagulates mercury. The whole arcanum lies hidden in the Sulphur of the Sages, which is also contained in the inmost part of their Mercury, which has to be prepared in a certain way that shall be described on another occasion.

I have not written this Treatise with the object of refuting the ancient Sages, but only for the purpose of correcting, explaining, and supplementing their statements. After all, they were only men and they sometimes did make assertions which can now no longer be maintained. For instance, when Albertus Magnus says that gold was once found to have developed in the teeth of a dead man, he is out of harmony with the possibilities of Nature; for an animal substance can never develop into a mineral. It is true that animals and vegetables contain sulphur and mercury, as well as minerals; but these principles are animal and vegetable, not mineral. If there were no animal sulphur in man, the mercury of his blood could not be congealed into flesh and bones; and if plants contained no vegetable sulphur, their mercury or water (sap) would not be congealed into leaves and flowers. The three kinds of sulphur are essentially the same, but, like the three mercuries, they are differentiated according to the three kingdoms, and cannot act outside their own kingdoms. Each kind of mercury can be coagulated by none but its own sulphur, and if gold was found in the teeth of a dead man it must have been introduced in an artificial manner --- either as gold, or in the shape of some other metal which by the gradual action of its own metallic sulphur on its metallic mercury, was afterwards transmuted into gold. It is mistaken impressions and superstitious notions, like this one of Albertus Magnus, that we have set ourselves to correct in this Treatise, by stating once for all the true facts of animal, vegetable, and mineral development.

Let the painstaking student be satisfied to have received a true account of the origin of the Three Principles. There is no greater help towards a successful end than a good beginning. I have in this Treatise started the student on the right road, and given him clear and practical directions. With God's blessing, and by dint of diligent and persevering study, he may now fairly hope to reach the glorious goal. But I, having told out all that is lawful for me to utter, now commit myself to the mercy of a loving Creator, who will receive me to Himself; and I commend the gentle and pious Reader to the same great Father of All, to whom be praise and glory, through the endless succession of the ages.

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*M. Gasler*

THE NEW PEARL OF  
GREAT PRICE.

A TREATISE CONCERNING THE TREASURE  
AND MOST PRECIOUS STONE OF  
THE PHILOSOPHERS.

OR THE METHOD AND PROCEDURE OF THIS DIVINE ART;  
WITH OBSERVATIONS DRAWN FROM THE WORKS OF  
ARNOLDUS, RAYMONDUS, RHASIS, ALBERTUS,  
AND MICHAEL SCOTUS, FIRST PUBLISHED  
BY JANUS LACINIUS, THE CALABRIAN,  
WITH A COPIOUS INDEX.

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THE ORIGINAL ALDINE EDITION TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH.

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PREFACE  
TO THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION.

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TWO features of special interest attach to the "Pearl of Great Price," as written by Bonus of Ferrara, and edited by Janus Lacinius. In the first place, it is one of the earliest works printed on alchemy, and the original is a very beautiful specimen of typography. Concerning the latter point, it is only necessary to say that it was issued from the press of Aldus, appearing in 1546, with the privilege of Pope Paul III. and the Senate of Venice for the space of ten years. This edition is, of course, exceedingly rare, and is highly prized by collectors. In the second place, it is a very clear, methodical, and well-reasoned treatise, comparing favourably in these respects with the bulk of alchemical literature. A reader who is unacquainted with alchemy

will probably not appreciate these points, but any one who, like the present editor, has had occasion to become widely familiar with Hermetic authors, will do honour to the lucidity of Bonus.

Concerning the adept himself, no biographical materials whatsoever are forthcoming, nor, as in most other cases, is there even a legend to fall back on. He is supposed to have been a native of Lombardy, and to have performed his alchemical labours at Pola, a maritime town of Istria, about 1330. He is sometimes described as Bonus of Ferraria,\* and on this and other grounds Tiraboschi † identifies him with the "monk Ferarius," who about the same period

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\* And also of Traguria in Dalmatia, Mantua, and other places.

† *Storia della Letteratura Italiana*, Tom. V., Part I., p. 332. This work attacks Lenglet du Fresnoy, the historian of alchemy, as an inexact writer, but Tiraboschi had no acquaintance whatsoever with alchemy, and does not seem to have read the authors whom he endeavours to identify. Imaginative persons might, perhaps, be more inclined to question the equivocal name of Janus, the Calabrian Minorite Friar, and to suspect that his master Bonus was possibly his alter ego.



produced two treatises, namely, *De Lapide Philosophorum* and *Thesaurus Philosophicæ*, which are printed in the *Theatrum Chemicum*. A comparison of these works, which, unlike the *Pretiosa Margarita*, are exceedingly obscure, and have been at no time esteemed by students,\* does not seem to justify this course.

The original manuscript upon which the monk of Calabria laboured, does not seem to have been published. The work which is attributed to Bonus, under the title of *Introductio in Divinam Chemicæ Artem Integram*, which appeared in quarto at Basle, and is reprinted

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\* Nous avons aussi le Traité du Moine Efferari ou Ferrari, mais ce dernier est peu lû par les connoisseurs : quoiqu'au milieu de beaucoup d'obscurité on y trouve quelques rayons de lumière, mais qu'il faut y savoir découvrir. On le croit de la fin du treizième siècle, ou du moins du commencement du quatorzième, parce qu'en citant Geber, La Tourbe, et le solitaire Morien, il ne dit pas un mot d'Arnaud de Villeneuve, ni de Raymond Lulle ; c'étoient cependant deux grands maîtres, qui méritoient bien d'être citées, s'il avoit vécu après eux.—*Histoire de la Philosophie Hermétique*.—It may also be noted that these authors are not cited by Bonus, who quotes incessantly, but at the same time from a very limited circle of the most ancient Sages.

x.      *The New Pearl of Great Price.*

in the *Theatrum Chemicum* as well as in the collection of Mangetus, is simply the *Pearl of Great Price*\* under another title; but we have also *Petri Boni de Secreto Omnium Secretorum Dei Dono Liber*, in 8vo, Venitiis, 1564.

The abridgment of the *Pretiosa Margarita*, made by Janus Lacinius, has received the reputation of fidelity on the faith of the editor's claim, and, in the absence of the original, it would be neither wise nor benevolent to dispute it. It is, however, of unmanageable length, and abounds, after the fashion of the period, in prolix disquisitions upon side issues, so that in the present translation it has been found necessary to abridge the abridgment, and to present the English reader with a faithful digest which omits nothing of importance, but presents it in an accessible form, by a

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\* There are various editions of the *Pretiosa Margarita Novella*, under one or other of its titles—as, for example, that of Basle, 4to, 1572; that of Argentoratum, 8vo, 1608; an 8vo is catalogued by bibliographers, without name of place, under date 1692. A German translation appeared at Leipsic, in 1714.



reasonable and patient pruning of mere repetitions and irrelevances. Those who are unskilled in the Latin that was written by alchemists will, it is hoped, take this statement on trust, and will extend to the present editor the courtesy that was dispensed to Lacinius by bibliographers like Lenglet du Fresnoy. On the other hand, the student who will be at the pains to compare this version with the Aldine original, will, it is also hoped, be justified in endorsing the claim.

ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE.

EPIGRAM,  
ADDRESSED TO THE GENTLE READER  
BY PIERIUS ROSEUS.

**T**HIS work casts out cruel disease  
from the human body, disease  
produced by malignant humours;  
and thus you are preserved. It will  
teach you how to regain the beautiful  
flower of youth, and how to secure a  
green and placid old age. All this may  
be yours, by the favour of the gods.  
Poverty will be triumphantly put to  
flight; your treasure-house will be filled;  
you will be able to succour the needy,  
and to render the sacrifice of praise to  
great Jupiter.

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ANOTHER EPIGRAM,  
BY THE SAME.

Those who, for the sake of gain,  
have endured all manner of toil, our  
Calabrian bids be of a good heart. Do

you love the goldmaker's art? Surprise and ecstasy are in store for you! But if any man do not possess this book, let him not dream that he can attain anything.

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## AN EPIGRAM

IN HENDECASYLLABIC LINES,

BY HIPPOLYTUS FANTOTIUS DELPHICUS,  
OF PERUSINUS.

I, the Divine Art, having long suffered indignity at the hands of foolish impostors, lay sorrowing in thick darkness. Then did I imploringly beseech illustrious men of learning to pity my doleful plight, and to succour my distress; but my suppliant hands were uplifted in vain. At last one of them was filled with compassion because of my moans and tears; Lacinius flung wide my prison doors, and set a lordly crown on my head. By the flashing light of genius, he shewed to all what glorious rewards I had to bestow on my followers; and every reader may see what stores of

wisdom and learning I showered upon him. All the knowledge of Geber, of Bonus, and all which Raymond signified in so many books, the power of his genius focussed in one small treatise. Worthy of the highest honour is this illustrious Master, whose teaching renders me accessible to all men.

JANUS LACINIUS, THE CALABRIAN  
MINORITE FRIAR (OF PSYCRONEA), TO  
THE GENTLE READER SENDS GREETING.

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THE philosophers inform us that opposites belong to the same category, and therefore they throw light on each other by being brought into juxtaposition. The illustrious character of liberality and generosity only intensifies the disgrace of avarice and selfish greed. Those who know that life was bestowed on them for the sake of their friends and their country, whose years also are spent in the service of others, are worthy of the most distinguished honour. Those, on the other hand, who, by the pride of life and the greed of gain, are led to bury their talents, and to turn a deaf ear to the appeals of justice and humanity, while they avariciously and relentlessly pursue their own selfish pleasure, are such vile,

abandoned, and harpy-like creatures that they are justly branded with the contempt and execration of mankind. The despicable avarice of those who, so far from doing any good with their money to others, do not even enjoy it themselves, by its hateful and repulsive want of social kindness sets off to the greatest advantage the overflowing generosity and liberality of opposite natures. Hence, after my return from Cisalpine Gaul to Padua, I was greatly attracted by a most lucid discourse of Bonus, a profound scholar of Ferrara, on the possibility and truth of the Alchemistic Art. Concerning this subject, he expressed himself with such profound, subtle, copious, and accurate learning that I cannot remember any obscure point which was not touched upon with unprecedented clearness and definiteness. This dissertation must be of the greatest utility, not only to ardent students of Alchemy, but even to its detractors. I should, therefore, be justly chargeable with meanness and illiberality if I refused to do all in my

power to make it accessible to the general public. Such an accusation I should be loth indeed to incur, and I have, therefore, arranged for the publication of the aforesaid memorable discourse of Bonus of Ferrara, together with copious extracts from the works of Raymondus Lullius, Arnold of Villanova, Michael Scotus, Rhasis, Albertus, and other men of light and leading. In this synopsis you will find nothing that is not profound, excellent, and positively reliable. The Sages whom I have quoted possess so remarkable an insight into the nature of things, so abundant and incredible a store of learning, that solemn importance attaches to every word they utter; but it is my opinion that Bonus excels them all, and I am sure that the reader will agree with me when he sees the golden current of philosophy issue from his lips. He is more profound than all the rest in laying the foundations of his system, more subtle in his manner of expressing truth, more lucid in setting forth the secret working of Nature. It



is my admiration for his genius that has induced me to describe his discourse as a "Pearl of Great Price." The pearls which we find here are indeed precious, without an obscuring spot, but clear and pure, utterly unlike the writings of those who only embarrass and bewilder the enquirer by their dark and hopelessly perplexing phraseology. Our Bonus sheds noonday brightness where they dispense only darkness as of Egypt : he shews to all students not only the truth and possibility, but the actual necessity of our Art. His utterances I have, with great industry, collected, elucidated, and expurgated, and I here present them to the student in an accessible form. Accept my gift with a joy proportioned to its worth ; fold it close to your heart ; thank God for it ; read it diligently, day and night ; and accept my best wishes that it may lead you onward to success. If this book be well received, I intend to follow it up with an explanatory synopsis of all the works of Raymondus Lullius. Farewell.



NUNCUPATORY DISCOURSE,  
THE INTERLOCUTORS BEING LACINIUS  
AND BONUS, OF FERRARA.

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*Bonus.* It is both customary and right, O Lacinius, that those who have accomplished anything worth mentioning in any art or science should make known their discoveries to the world, in order that mankind at large may be benefited by them. This office I have not been able to perform for myself; but as you have collected and studied my works, I earnestly hope that you will not suffer them to remain covered with the dust of forgetfulness, but that you will send me forth, in company with Arnold, Raymond, and others, to deliver my message to mankind.

*Lacinius.* I will gladly do what you ask. But there is a time-honoured custom amongst authors of dedicating

their works to some Pope or Prince whose favour they wish to gain, or whose patronage they desire to acknowledge. To whom shall your book be dedicated?

*Bonus.* I am aware of the custom which you mention. Some adopt this device in order to save their work from the obscurity and neglect which they may have good reason to fear. Others, by placing the name of some illustrious person on the title-page, desire to safeguard themselves against the supercilious carelessness of critics, who at once throw aside any book of which the author is as yet unknown to fame. Thus, in dedicating their writings to great men, most authors are impelled by motives of self-interest, for they know very well that their patrons will probably never so much as look at their production. For this and other reasons, I do not wish my book to be dedicated to either Pope or Prince.

*Lacinius.* But are you not afraid of the insolence of the envious, the

abuse of the greedy, the sneers of sciolists, the calumnies of merchants—in short, the opposition of all who think that nobody is wise but themselves? Will not their enmity shroud you in Cimmerian darkness?

*Bonus.* It is the nature of curs to bark, and they will do so while they live, especially when they see any one better than themselves. I do not care what fools say, but only what honest men, and what truth itself, may utter.

*Lacinius.* But if I dedicate you to some illustrious Prince they will perhaps cease to bark.

*Bonus.* You take too favourable a view of these men. If their mouths are filled with blasphemy against God, we cannot expect them to reverence anything. No, do not let any hope of propitiating them change your purpose.

*Lacinius.* But, perhaps, a patron might reward me for my labour, and thus enable me to live.

*Bonus.* So thought Aurelius Augurellus, who dedicated his work on

gold-making to Pope Leo X., and received from that prelate, whose generosity was well-known, a gown of green silk, the colour of hope.

*Lacinius.* He was right. For how could he give anything more costly to a man who professed to be an adept in the art of gold-making? Might I not at least shew my gratitude to some old and dear friends and benefactors by inscribing the work to them?

*Bonus.* By such a course you would be more likely to convert your friends into enemies. Do you not know that all who practise this art are very anxious to keep it a secret from the whole world?

*Lacinius.* Alas! Is it, then, a profane pursuit?

*Bonus.* That is the opinion of the vulgar. But the art is sacred, and all its adepts are sanctified and pure. For "men either discover it because they are holy, or it makes them holy."

*Lacinius.* That is not the opinion of the present age. People say that this

art is unbecoming not only a godly but even an honest man.

*Bonus.* And do you also echo the ignorant babble of the vulgar?

*Lacinius.* Would it were of the vulgar only! But I know that it is the opinion of all classes, both high and low, learned and ignorant.

*Bonus.* Can it be true? Surely they must be thinking of those sophistical impostors who are a disgrace to our science. Such men are not philosophers, but thieves and robbers: between us and them there is all the difference of day and night, good and evil, God and mammon. But, nevertheless, by their wicked and shameless practices, they have succeeded in making our blessed Art a byword among the vulgar. Yet it is essentially an art which can never become known to any but honest and god-fearing persons. Was not the inventor of this Art, the thrice-great Hermes, a person of signal sanctity? Are there not among the professors of the great magistry holy

divines like John of Damascus, Albertus Magnus, S. Thomas, Roger Bacon, Haymon, Raymond, Godfrey, John, the most reverend Bishop of Ticina, Cardinal Garsia, Friar Helyas, Friar William, Friar Richard, Peter of Iliacum, Morienus, and many other monks, nay, as Vincentius, the historian, tells us, S. John the Evangelist himself? Of the latter it is said that when the two youths, who had given all their goods to the poor for the sake of Christ, were heavy at heart because they saw their slaves arrayed in gorgeous robes, while they themselves were poorly clad, he bade them bring him bundles of rods and pebbles from the seashore, and changed them all into pure gold. This, however, I regard as a miracle, rather than a proof of our Art, for the substance was too unlike that which we use, and "one action does not make an artist." But what shall I say of Raymond, whose life and genius are the admiration of all? Raymond was first opposed to this magistry, and attempted to convince



Arnold de Villanova of its impossibility, but was himself overcome, not so much in argument as by the evidence of his senses. By this discomfiture, Raymond was induced to study the Art ; and when his search was crowned with success, he became the foremost champion of Alchemy, writing 500 volumes in its defence. He was also the first to discover the method of evolving precious stones out of the metallic principles ; nay, he was able, not only to change lead into gold, but he transmuted gold into lead, and thus turned back the course of Nature. It is also related of him that he performed the almost incredible task of transmuting a tiny bar of metal partly into gold, partly into silver, brass, tin, iron, and lead. Are these things of no account ? Are they absurd or ridiculous ? And is it not wicked and unworthy of a refined and cultivated mind to suppose that the knowledge and practice of our Art is unbecoming a religious and god-fearing man ? If Paul wove tents, if Luke

painted, and Peter and John pursued the calling of fishermen, honest and useful work cannot be unworthy the attention of a godly person. Surely, it is more religious to do something than to be idle!

*Lacinius.* Your argument is unanswerable, for you appeal to the practice of those whose words and deeds were the standard of truth, justice, faith, innocence, religion, and holiness for all mankind: as the sky is illumined with stars, so they were appointed as the lights of the world.

*Bonus.* Why, then, are you so fearful of launching our little book without any dedicatory inscription?

*Lacinius.* I fear most that this book may make the matter too clear to the vulgar herd, thus bestowing God's most precious earthly gift upon the wicked and undeserving, in defiance of the ancient precept.

*Bonus.* That rule was more applicable to men of old than to our present state of Christian liberty. Heathen Sages might be fearful of spreading this



knowledge too commonly, but Christ has taught us the true use of riches—to relieve the wants of the poor and needy.

*Lacinius.* Why, then, do our masters follow in the footsteps of the ancients, and predict ruin to mankind from the “profanation” of this mystery? John de Rupescissa conjures his readers not to make the Art known to the wicked and unbelieving, as such a course would ruin the Christian faith.

*Bonus.* Do you imagine that the faith of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, can be overthrown by these means? Has it not always grown most rapidly, precisely where it has been most severely opposed? But Christ Himself has given us a sovereign rule for our guidance in this matter: “Freely ye have received, freely give.” What is the use of concealed diamonds, or a hidden treasure, to the world? What is the use of a lighted candle if it be placed under a bushel? It is the innate selfishness of the human heart which makes these

persons seek a pious pretext for keeping this knowledge from mankind.

*Lacinius.* I know some men who are so jealous of the preservation of this secret that they will hardly read their own books, and would not for all the world allow any one else to look at them, just as if they feared that the Stone would at once leap forth from the book, if it were only opened, and that it would soon lie about in every gutter. These persons are such skinflints withal that they would rather remain in ignorance than spend a single penny in search of the Stone. I suppose they expect the knowledge to be showered down upon them from heaven. Surely we have reason to pray that such people may be delivered from their own blinding meanness and illiberality.

*Bonus.* Would that a ray of Divine light might illumine the gross darkness of their understandings! But I am afraid that their folly is past praying for. If indeed they could be brought to see that this world is under Divine rule and

governance, that no mortal can approach God but by God, that even the light cannot be perceived without light, they might come to understand that, without the special grace of God, this ineffable gift is not bestowed on any man.

*Lacinius.* How can those harpies reply to that argument?

*Bonus.* They are in a state of frenzied ignorance, which prevents them from perceiving the difficulties of the task; and so the Stone which they find is the Stone of Sisyphus. For "they are few whom Jupiter loves, or whom their manly perfection exalts to the stars." When, indeed, the Stone is found, our friends, who now laugh and sneer at us, will be at a loss how to express their love.

*Lacinius.* Alas, that this glorious and heavenly magistrery should be regarded by many as a mere fraud and imposture!

*Bonus.* No wonder, if overweening and ignorant persons such as carpenters, weavers, smiths, take upon them-

selves to set up laboratories, and to pretend to a knowledge of our Art. The universal prevalence of impostors naturally makes people think that our whole Art is a fraud from beginning to end.

*Lacinius.* But is this knowledge not also sought by learned men, nobles, princes, and even by kings?

*Bonus.* Yes, but the motive which prompts them all is an illiberal love of gold. Their hearts are as hard as the flints which they wish to change into the precious metals, and they are as ignorant withal of the elementary facts of Nature as the poorest labourer. The consequence is that they fall an easy prey to impostors and itinerant charlatans, and spend their lives in foolishly experimenting with arsenic, sulphur, and all manner of solvents. Thus, instead of learning to prepare the Stone, they dissipate their money, and have empty pockets for their pains.

*Lacinius.* It is a just reward for their folly; for what have those substances to do with metals?

*Bonus.* We will then send forth our little book, not protected with the name of any prince or noble, but equipped only with the strength of virtue and truth, after the manner of those Egyptian kings who dedicated all things to Mercury, the giver of virtue and genius, and to the Sun, the generator of all things. We will dedicate our book to Mercury and the Sun, and to all who love righteousness and truth. But those wise people who do not approve of anything that they do not understand must listen to the book, and let it speak for itself. It is well for an author if he has no need to commend himself, because his book commends him. He were a vain workman who looked for praise and preferment from anything but the value of his work. Farewell.

A FORM AND METHOD OF PERFECTING  
BASE METALS,

BY JANUS LACINIUS THERAPUS,  
THE CALABRIAN.

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*The art of Generating M or Q.*

SOME of the principles of our Art are apprehended mentally or intellectually, such as Chaos, Alteration, Power, Operation, Generation, and Digestion. Others are perceived by the senses, as wine, or the First Matter, body or form, elements, the perfect being, the forming ferment, colours, fermentation, separation. Some are apprehended both by mind and sense, *e.g.*, Sky, or Heaven.

A. From CHAOS goes forth an intelligent Master, who, amidst the rude, confused, and undigested mass of the elements, perceives himself advancing



towards M or Q, until by B, C, D, and by the primordial elements, which follow from Nature herself, he arrives thither.

B. The SUBSTANCE is that from which D arises when the Artificer works extrinsically. We also apply it to the imperfect metals which are to be changed into M or Q.

C. The FORM is the intelligent outward influence (the Master), which, sets in motion these Principles. It is that also which gives being to M or Q, and by which T, S, V, Z are changed into X or Y.

D. The Sky is the female principle, by which that which is received of the male is nourished and increased until it is wholly changed into M or Q.

E. The ELEMENTS are changed from B into D, and by way of C, on the other hand, F, G, H, I, are intermingled.

F. CONVERSION takes place, first of C into D, and then of D into C, finally of both in turn into M or Q. F also indicates the potency of which

D is the Act, and through which pearls are made and generated artificially.

G. PERMIXTION is the union of the male and the female principle (*e.g.*, C with D).

H. DISSOLUTION is the hermaphroditic conception which takes place in either C or D.

I. GENERATION is partly that by which C and D produce M, and partly that by which M and D produce Q. If we place the Substance in a closed vessel, it is brought about by Nature rather than by the aid of art.

K. Of COLOURS, the first is black, which is more difficult to bring about than the rest, from the fact that it is the first. It shews that C and D have united, and that conception has taken place, *i.e.*, that M or Q will ultimately be produced. Then comes white, by which we gradually progress from C to M, and thence to Q; then saffron, which indicates that the conjunction of the substances is in progress, because the seed is diffused through the whole of D; the



fourth colour is red, indicating the actual accomplishment of M or Q.

L. DIGESTION is the gradual development of that which is conceived, by gentle outward heat, *e.g.*, the evolution of M out of C and D, or of Q out of M and D.

O. SEPARATION is the severing of elements, which, originating from B and D, are also separated from the same.

P. OPERATION is either the whole process of change by which B and the rest of the principles become M or Q, or the use of M and Q in transmuting base metals into silver or gold.

M. The PERFECT BEING is the efficient cause, or the form of that into which C and D are changed by way of E, F, G, H, I, K, L, O, P, and has power to perfect imperfect metals.

N. FERMENTATION is the wonderful principle by which M is developed into Q. It is brought about by the bland warmth of a gentle fire. Thus M is still wanting in some of the most

potent properties of Q, which is the perfect Tincture. Q is capable of unlimited extension, not only quantitatively, but qualitatively. If you can change M into Q, you can multiply and perfect Q indefinitely.

Q, then, is the formative tincture, consummately perfect, and consisting of the equilibrium of all the elements. Hence its virtue is far greater and more potent than that of M. It changes imperfect metals into silver or gold (X or Y), and it is an efficacious remedy for all mental and bodily disease in man, seeing that it expels all disturbing elements; it also makes and keeps men good and kindly disposed towards others. It is, finally, a sovereign cure of the weakness of old age.

Mix one part of gold (X) with twelve parts of Our Water; pound them small; place them in a moderately deep jar; set over it an alembic in the ordinary way; stop up the jar and the apertures of the alembic, up to the beak, with clay; let it dry thoroughly; place it on the oven

(not immediately over the coals, but on the iron) in such a way that the whole jar shall be covered by it as far as the alembic, and let the aperture between jar and furnace be also sealed with clay. Then light the fire, and there will come oil into the alembic, together with the water, and will float on the water with an orange colour. Continue the fire till all the water is distilled; let it cool; remove the recipient; separate the oil from the water, and open the jar: you will find a hard, brittle, and pulverisable body. If you like, repeat the whole process, pouring the same or other water over the body; distil as before. The water that comes out will not be so much as at first, and if you repeat the process a third time, there will be hardly any water at all. The body that remains will be a blackish powder, which you calcine in the following way:

If the body be one ounce, pour over it three ounces of Mercury, and pound them together, thus producing an amalgam like butter. Then place it in a

glass vessel, and stop up the apertures with clay on the outer side. Set it on a trivet over a gentle fire of three or four coals, stirring it all the time with a small wooden rod, and be careful to shut your mouth and nose, because the fumes are destructive to the teeth. Continue to stir till all the Mercury has disappeared, and there remains a subtle body of more intense blackness. Repeat this even to the third time, till the body is pulverised and intensely black. Then take it, place it in a smaller vessel, and pour on it as much of the aforesaid oil as will moisten it; close the vessel, and let it stand over a lamp; in three days the body will be dried, and it will begin to assume a whitish appearance. Pour on more oil as before; dry by the same fire, and the substance will exhibit an increased whiteness. Repeat the process up to the fourth time; the substance will then have turned of a dazzling whiteness, delicate as an orient pearl of the purest water. Then proceed with our ore, salt, and gum, which must become one. A

gentle fire can do no harm, but the warmth of horsedung is better.

The blackness of the substance, when it appears, is not the blackness of ink, but a bright ebony colour. When it has been changed into whiteness, we must then look out for the appearance of the saffron hue, which will in no long time be followed by a most glorious ruby colour. Between the appearance of M (the white colour) and Q (the ruby colour) there should be an interval of thirty days, during which the heat of the fire should be slightly increased, and the vessel kept carefully closed. The substance will then be perfect, and you should carefully preserve it for your own use and that of your friends. One part of it will transmute 2,000 parts of any base metal into its own glorious nature.

To change one drachm of M into Q, add to it three ounces of D and one ounce of C. Subject the whole to gentle coction for thirty days, till it passes through K, after which you will behold perfect Q, round and red. When you

have performed and accomplished all this, you may consider yourself as a great master ; and you should render to the great and good God fervent and constant thanks for His unspeakable benefit. Thus I have bestowed upon you a gift, gentle reader, the vast value of which will be understood by generations to come.

S = lead.

X = gold.

T = tin.

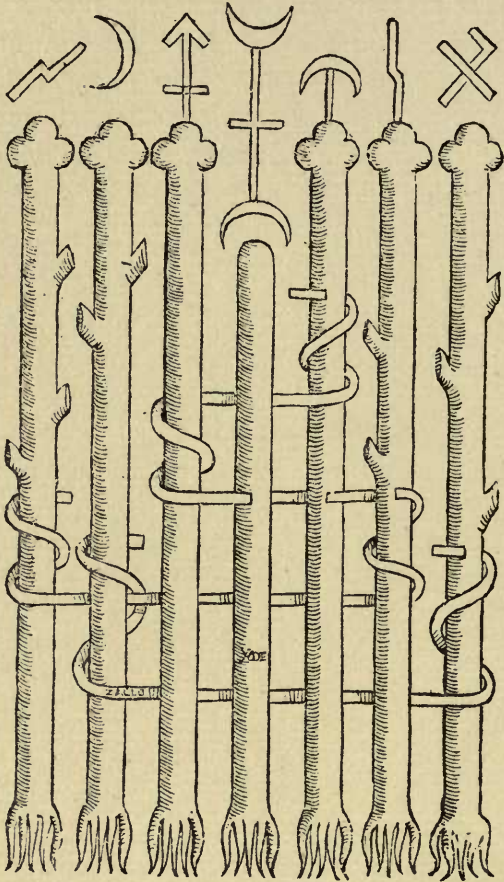
Y = silver.

V = iron.

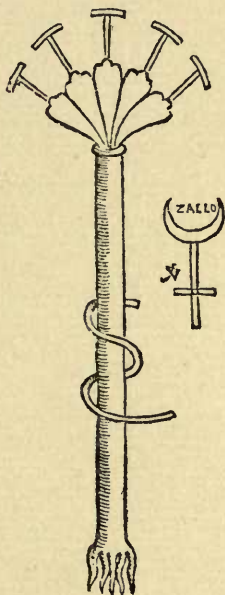
Z = bronze.



[Figures representing these seven metals.]

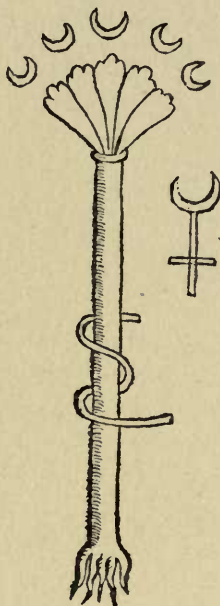


We have drawn the composition of the trees of the grove together; we will now describe their natures one by one, according to the best of our ability. We will, in the first place, begin with those trees upon the left, the scrolls whereof simply encircle the bark, and with their purgation as follows:—The first tree is hot, dry, red, like red-hot bronze. It becomes moist, dry, and black, like lead; cold and humid, like quicksilver; hot, humid, and saffron-coloured.

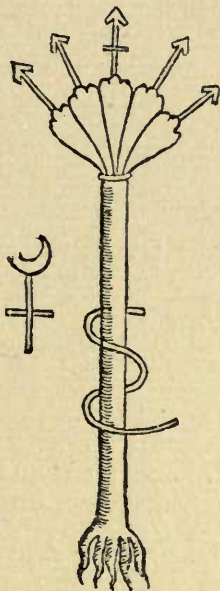




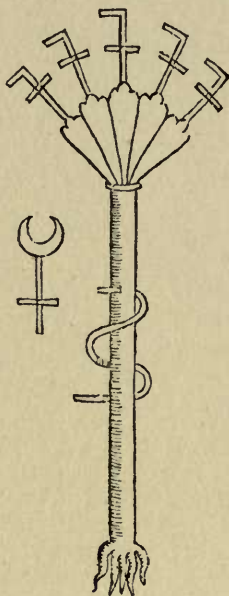
The second tree is hot and dry, like glowing brass; it becomes humid and black, like quicksilver; dry and white, like lead; hot, humid, and saffron-coloured, like blood-red gold.



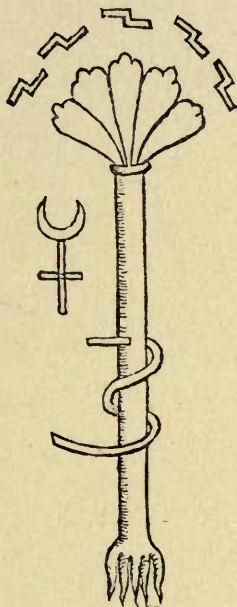
The third tree is hot, dry, and red. It becomes dry and black, like lead; humid and white, like tin or quicksilver; hot, humid, and saffron, like blood-red gold.



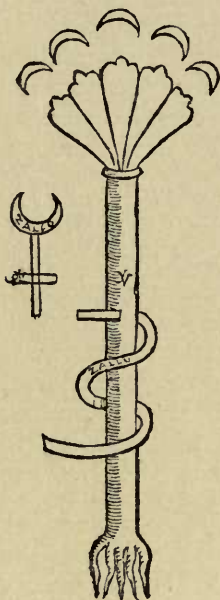
The first tree on the right-hand side has a scroll which enters the front and comes out on the other side ; it is hot, humid, and saffron-coloured, like red-hot gold. It becomes dry and black, like earthy silver ; humid, like silver ; hot, dry, and red, like red-hot bronze.

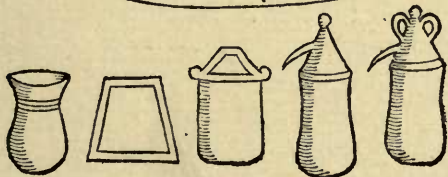
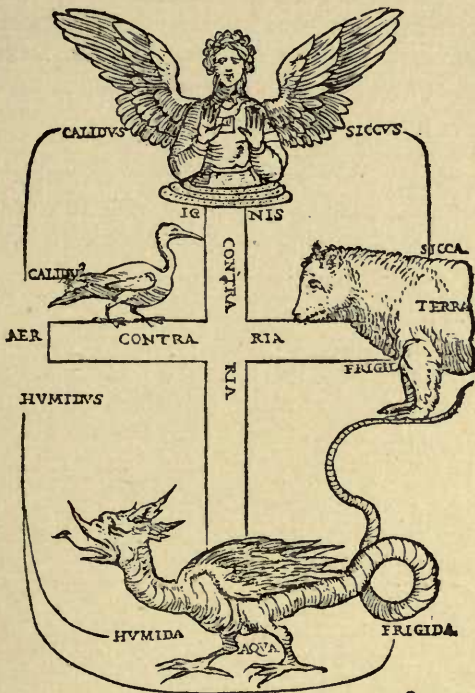


The second tree, which is pierced by its scroll, is dry and red, like red-hot bronze. It becomes dry and black, like lead; humid and white, like quicksilver; hot, humid, and saffron-coloured, like blood-red gold.



The third tree, which is pierced by its scroll, is hot, dry, and red, like red-hot bronze. It becomes dry and black, like lead; humid and white, like tin; hot, humid, saffron-coloured, and of a bloody red.





## EXPOSITION OF THE TYPICAL FIGURES.

Three rules must be carefully observed in our art: first prepare the right substance; then carry on the work continuously, so that it may not be marred by interruption; thirdly, be patient, and follow always in the footsteps of Nature.

Get (as your substance) highly purified Water of Life, and keep it; but do not suppose that the liquid which moistens all things, is the bright and limpid liquid of Bacchus. For while you anxiously look about in out-of-the-way places for extraordinary events, you pass by the sparkling waves of the blessed stream.

Enter the Palace in which are fifteen mansions, where the king, his brow circled with the diadem, sits on a lofty throne, holding in his hand the sceptre of the whole world; before him, his son and five servants kneel in robes of different colours, imploring him to



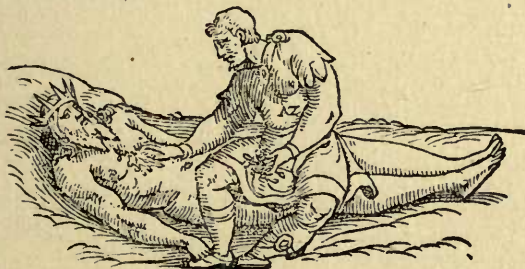


bestow upon his son and his servants a share of his power ; but he does not even reply to their request.

The son, incited by the servants, stabs the father as he sits on the throne. (Let an amalgam be made with highly purified water, etc.)

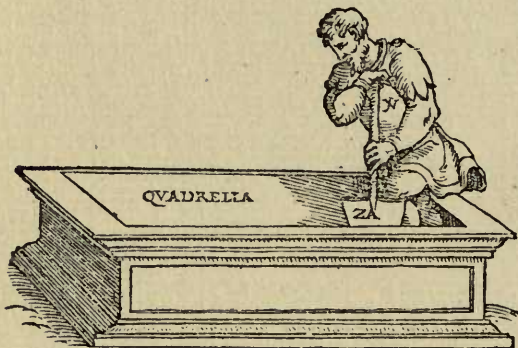


In the third picture we see the son catching his father's blood in his robe (which is the second process of our art, already explained in the method).

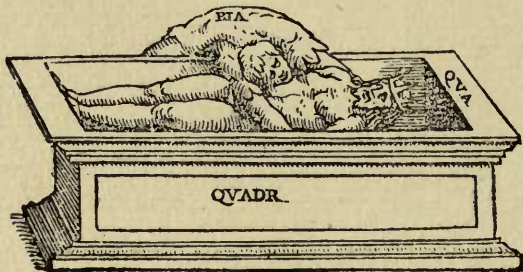




A grave is dug in the fourth mansion (which is the furnace). Its depth is two handbreadths, and its width four inches.



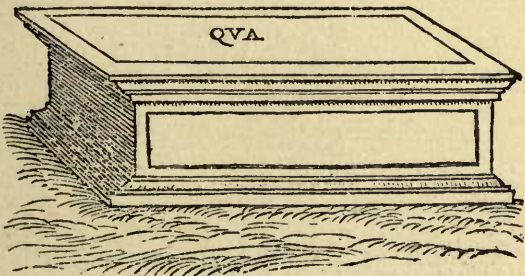
In the fifth mansion the son thought to throw his father into the grave, and to leave him there ; but (by means of our art) both fell in together.



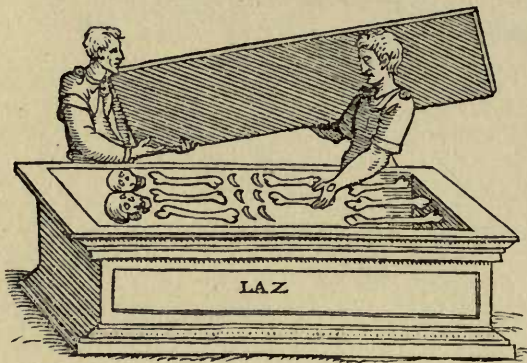
The sixth mansion is that in which the son still strives to get out, but one (who sprang from them in the second operation) comes, and prevents him from so doing.



While the father and son are in the tomb, which is called the seventh mansion, there follows putrefaction in their ashes, or a very hot bath.



In the eighth mansion, that which happened during the putrefaction is inspected, the vase having become cold, etc.



In the ninth mansion the bones are taken from the tomb. This happens when the whole body has been dissolved by successive solution, which, being done, keep it carefully.



In the tenth mansion, the bones are divided into nine parts, the dissolved substance being subjected to gentle coction for nine days, till a portion of it turns black. Remove this latter, and keep it in another vessel in a hot place. Subject the water to gentle heat for another nine days. Again remove that which has turned black, and put it with the rest. Continue the operation till the water is clear and pure. Let its Water of Life be poured over the black substance in a small glass vessel, so that it shall float over it to the height of an inch, and let it stand nine days over a gentle fire, renewing the water every day, if necessary. (Thus the earth will become clear and white, according to the teaching of the philosophers; for this earth is putrefied and purified with its water.)



An angel is sent, who casts the bones on the purified and whitened earth (which is now mixed with its seed, and let the whole be placed in a closed jar with its alembic. Let the thicker substance be divided from the water by a more violent fire, and remain as a hard substance at the bottom).

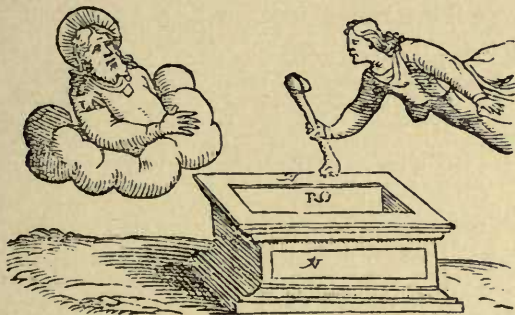
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In the eleventh mansion the servants pray God to restore their king. Henceforth the whole work is concerned with his restoration.





For this purpose a second angel is sent in the twelfth mansion, who places the other part of those bones on the earth (till they are all thickened: then a wonderful thing happens).



Thus, a succession of angels is sent, who cast the first, second, third, and fourth part of the bones on the earth, where they become white, transparent, and firm. The fifth and sixth parts are changed into yellow, and so also with the seventh, eighth, and ninth; the earth of the bones becomes as red as blood or rubies.



Then the king rises from the tomb, full of the grace of God. His body is now all spiritual and heavenly, and he has power to make all his servants kings.

At last he exercises his power upon his servants and his son, placing crowns of gold upon their heads, and making them kings by his grace, since God had given him great power and majesty.



Let no impostor, greedy or wicked person, touch this glorious work with his unclean hands. Let the honest man and him of a wise heart come hither, and him who is capable of exploring the most hidden causes of things.





THE NEW PEARL OF GREAT  
PRICE,

*Being a Concordance of the Sages on the Great  
Treasure, the Stone of the Philosophers,  
the Arcanum, the Secret of all  
Secrets, and the Gift of God.*

BY PETER BONUS, OF FERRARA.

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**B**OTH among ancients and moderns the question whether Alchemy be a real Art or a mere imposture has exercised many heads and pens; nor is it possible for us entirely to ignore the existence of such a dispute. A multiplicity of arguments has been advanced against the truth of our Art; but men like Geber and Morienus, who were best fitted to come forward in its defence, have disdained to answer the cavilling attacks of the vulgar. They have not, as a matter of fact, furnished us with anything beyond the bare assertion that the truth of

Alchemy is exalted beyond the reach of doubt. We will not follow their example, but, in order to get at the foundation of the matter, we will pass in review the arguments which have been, or may be, set forth on both sides of the question.

In the case of a science which is familiarly known to a great body of learned men, the mere fact that they all believe in it supersedes the necessity of proof. But this rule does not apply to the Art of Alchemy, whose pretensions, therefore, need to be carefully and jealously sifted. The arguments which make against the justice of those claims must be fairly stated, and it will be for the professors of the Art to turn back the edge of all adverse reasoning.

Every ordinary art (as we learn in the second book of the Physics) is either dispositive of substance, or productive of form, or it teaches the use of something. Our Art, however, does not belong to any one of these categories; it may be described indeed as both

dispositive and productive, but it does not teach the use of anything. It truly instructs us how to know the one substance exclusively designed by Nature for a certain purpose, and it also acquaints us with the natural method of treating and manipulating this substance, a knowledge which may be either practically or speculatively present in the mind of the master. There are other crafts which are not artificial, but natural, such as the arts of medicine, of horticulture, and glass-blowing. They are arts in so far as they require an operator ; but they are natural in so far as they are based upon facts of Nature. Such is the Art of Alchemy. Some arts systematise the creations of the human mind, as, for instance, those of grammar, logic, and rhetoric ; but Alchemy does not belong to this class. Yet Alchemy resembles other arts in the following respect, that its practice must be preceded by theory and investigation ; for before we can know how to do a thing, we must understand all the conditions and circumstances

under which it is produced. If we rightly apprehend the cause or causes of a thing (for there often is a multiplicity or complication of causes), we also know how to produce that thing. But it must further be considered that no one can claim to be heard in regard to the truth or falsity of this Art who does not clearly understand the matter at issue ; and we may lay it down as a rule that those who set up as judges of this question without a clear insight into the conditions of the controversy should be regarded as persons who are talking wildly and at random.



REASONS APPARENTLY MILITATING  
AGAINST THE REALITY  
OF OUR ART.

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**I**T was usual among the ancients to begin with a destructive argument. This custom we will now follow.

*Reason First.*

Whoever is ignorant of the elements of which any given substance is composed, and of the quantities of each element in such composition, cannot know how to produce that substance. Now, the alchemists are necessarily ignorant of the exact composition of metals: therefore, as the metals are composite substances, it is not possible that the alchemists should know how to produce them.

*Reason Second.*

Again, if you are unacquainted with the determinate proportion of the elements entering into the composition

of any given substance, you cannot possibly produce that substance. I allude to the exact degree of digestion which has taken place in, and the peculiar manner and mode of composition which constitute the specific essence, or form, of any assigned substance, and make it what it is. This specific form of metals can never become known to a human artist. It is one of Nature's own secrets, and the Art of Alchemy must, therefore, be pronounced not only unknowable, but utterly impossible.

*Reason Third.*

We are also ignorant of the proper or specific instrument, or means, which Nature uses to produce those peculiar substances defined as metals. We are aware that Nature, in the production of every different substance, uses a certain modified form of digestive heat. But in the case of metals, this digestive heat is not derived either from the sun, or, exclusively, from any central fire, for it is inextricably mixed and compounded of the two, and this in a manner which

no man can imitate. Therefore, Alchemy is impossible.

*Reason Fourth.*

Moreover, we know that the generation of metals occupies thousands of years. This is the case in Nature's workshop in the bowels of the earth: hence we see that even if this Art were possible, man's life would not be long enough for its exercise. Everything requires for its generation a certain predetermined period of time; and we find in the case of animals and vegetables that this period of generation and development cannot be hastened to any considerable extent. It might indeed be said that Art can do in a month what Nature requires a thousand years to accomplish—by intensifying and exalting the temperature of the digestive warmth. But such a course would defeat its own object, since a greater degree of heat than is required for the development of metals (*i.e.*, an unnatural temperature) would hinder rather than accelerate that development.



*Reason Fifth.*

Again, the generation of metals, as of all things else, can only be accomplished in a certain place specially adapted to the purpose. Definite peculiar local conditions must be fulfilled if a seed is to spring up and grow ; an animal can only be generated and developed in its own proper womb. Now, glass, stone, and earthenware jars and vessels can never take the place of the natural womb of metals in the bosom of the earth. Hence, Alchemy is nothing but a fraudulent pretence.

*Reason Sixth.*

Once more, that which is effected by Nature alone, cannot be produced artificially ; and metals belong to this class of substances. Generation and corruption are the effect of an inward principle, and this inward principle is Nature, which creates the substantial forms of things. Art, on the other hand, is an outward principle, which can only bring about superficial changes.

*Reason Seventh.*

If Art cannot produce that which is of easy separation, and, therefore, of easy composition, it cannot produce that the separation and composition of which are more difficult. Now, a horse or a dog are easily decomposed, while the putrefaction of metals requires a great length of time. But yet Art cannot produce a horse or a dog; hence it can still less produce metals.

*Reason Eighth.*

Metals do indeed belong to the same genus or kind; they are all metals, just as a horse and a man are both animals. But as horse and man are specifically different, and as one species cannot be changed into another, so the various metals are specifically different; and as a dog can never become a man, so neither can one metal be changed into another. This reason and its solution are advanced by Geber.

*Reason Ninth.*

The principles which stir up the vital spark slumbering in metals are

necessarily unknown to the student of Nature. For these principles are supplied by the movements and influences of the stars and heavenly bodies, which are overruled by the Supreme Intelligence, and preside over the generation, corruption, and conservation of species, imparting to everything its own peculiar form and perfection. These influences which determine whether a certain metallic substance shall be gold, silver, etc., no human mind can possibly fix or direct to any given spot. Therefore, etc.

*Reason Tenth.*

Artificial things bear the same relation to natural things which Art bears to Nature. But as Art is not Nature, neither are artificial things the same as natural things: and artificial gold, even if produced, would not be the same thing as natural gold. For the methods of Nature are inward, they are always one and the same, and never vary; but the methods of Art, on the other hand, vary with the idiosyncrasies of the artist.

*Reason Eleventh.*

It is easier to destroy than to make things : but we can hardly destroy gold : how then can we make it ?

*Reason Twelfth.*

The ancient philosophers were in the habit of teaching all the arts and sciences they knew to their disciples, and of declaring them in their books ; but of this Art they never mention a word, which proves that it was unknown to them. Moreover, Aristotle tells us that if a man knows a thing he can teach it : but the books of the so-called Alchemistic Sages are full of obscurities and a wantonly perplexing phraseology. This shews that their boasted knowledge was an impudent pretence.

*Reason Thirteenth.*

Many ancient Sages, as well as kings and princes, who had hundreds of profound scholars at their beck and call, have sought the knowledge of this Art in vain ; now, this would not have been the case if it had any real existence.

*Reason Fourteenth.*

Alchemists say that their one Stone changes all metals into gold ; this would mean that it hardens lead and tin, which are softer than gold, and that it softens silver, iron, and bronze, which are harder than gold. But it is impossible that one and the same thing should produce opposite effects. If, indeed, it could produce two such mutually exclusive effects, it would have to do the one *per se* and the other *per accidens*—and either that which is hardened or that which is softened would not be true gold. We should thus have to assume the existence of two Stones, one which hardens and colours *per se*, and one which softens and colours *per se* ; but this would be in flat contradiction to one of the few clear statements of the Alchemists themselves. And even if there were two different Stones, their difference would be reproduced in their effects, and there would thus result two different kinds of gold, which is impossible.

*Reason Fifteenth.*

If gold and silver could be evolved out of any metallic substance, they could be prepared most easily out of that which is most closely akin to them ; but as it is impossible to prepare them out of their very first principles, viz., quicksilver and sulphur, they cannot be evolved out of metals specifically different from them. For it is clear that out of these two matters all metals are derived and generated ; orpiment, sal armoniac, and secondary spirits like marcasite, magnesia, and tutia, being all reducible to these two primary forms. There are seven spirits of Alchemy, the four principal ones, quicksilver, sulphur, orpiment, and sal armoniac, and the three secondary and composite spirits, marcasite, magnesia, and tutia ; but sulphur and quicksilver include them all. The Stone would have to be obtained either from the metals or from these spirits. But the Sages represent the Stone as bearing the same relation to the metals which is borne by form to



substance, or, soul to body : hence, it cannot be extracted from such gross things as metals. They do indeed say that by calcining, dissolving, distilling, and coagulating those bodies they purge out all that is gross, and render the metals spiritual and subtle. But they know well enough that any fire violent enough to perform this would kill or destroy the vital germ of the metal.

Nor can so highly spiritual a substance as the Philosopher's Stone is represented be obtained from the metallic spirits (sulphur and quicksilver). For they must either be fixed or volatile. If they are volatile they are useless : they evaporate when exposed to the action of fire, and leave bodies still more impure and defiled than they were before ; or they even cause other bodies to evaporate along with them. If, on the other hand, the spirits in a fixed state are to represent the Stone, they will not be able to accomplish any of those things which the Stone is supposed to encompass. For, in that case, they

are hard and petrine, like earth or flint, and thus are unable to enter other bodies and pervade them with their own essence. If they are subjected to the violent action of fire, they become like glass, *i.e.*, they undergo a process of vitrification, and, with their metallic humour, they lose their malleability and all their other metallic properties. Even lead and tin become glass when their metallic humour is burnt out of them, and it is rank absurdity to say that the vitreous substance is malleable, or ever can become so; for it is the metallic humour which renders metals malleable and fusible. Moreover, glass, or anything vitrified, in melting does not amalgamate with other metals, but floats on the surface like oil. Besides, quicksilver in its natural state adheres to all metals, but it does not adhere either to marcasite (which resembles it too closely for such a purpose), nor to glass: this shews, incontrovertibly, that glass is no metal, whether such glass be natural, or some other substance vitri-



fied. Again, glass, or any vitrified substance, when it has been dipped in cold water, or otherwise refrigerated, can be broken, pounded, and converted into powder; but all metals will bend rather than break, because of their greater malleability and the metallic humour which is in them. You can also either engrave or stamp any image upon cold metals and it will retain that image; but glass (unless in a state of fusion) will do nothing of the kind. Thus, it appears that malleability is a property which belongs to metals, and to metals only; and in the various metals this property, with the property of fusibility, exists in different degrees, according to the grade of their digestion and sulphureous admixtion. In glass, too, there are different proportions of fusibility, perspicuity, opacity, and colouring, which depend upon differences of the material used in its manufacture. Only metals in a cold state are capable of a certain degree of liquefaction; glass, on account of its great viscosity, may be

liquefied when it is melted in a fiercely heated furnace, but not after refrigeration, because then the aforesaid viscosity disappears. When metal is cold or red hot its viscosity is greatest, and in such a state it can be expanded; but fusion separates its different parts, and then much of this viscosity is lost. With glass the very opposite is the case. Therefore, if by calcination a metallic spirit becomes vitrified, it is not capable of any further change; and, being fixed, it cannot enter other bodies, or convert them. Therefore, also, if metallic spirits, which are the very vital principles of gold and silver, cannot evolve them out of metals, nothing else can.

*Reason Sixteenth.*

Again, the Alchemists appear to say that they do not create metals, but only develop those which are imperfect; they call gold and silver perfect metals, and the rest imperfect. We reply that this is an impossibility. The fact is that everything which has its own substantial form, and all its peculiar

properties, is specifically perfect. A horse is perfect as a horse, though it has not the rational nature of man ; and tin and lead are as perfect in their way as gold and silver. Whatever is perfectly that which it was designed to be, the same also is bound so to remain ; thus, lead and tin are fully as permanent and enduring as gold and silver.

*Reason Seventeenth.*

Again, whatever is multiplied by Nature after its kind, in its own species, may be regarded as permanently belonging to that species. And tin and lead, etc., are of this class. They are not an imperfect form of that which we behold perfected in gold and silver. They are base metals, while gold and silver are precious ; and a base thing can never develop into a precious thing, just as a goat can never become a horse or a man.

*Reason Eighteenth.*

Where there is not the same ultimate disposition of elements, there cannot be the same substantial and

specific form. Now alchemistic gold and silver cannot exhibit the same ultimate arrangement as natural gold and silver; consequently, they are not the same thing. Hence, if there be such a thing as alchemistic gold, it is specifically different from ordinary gold.

*Reason Nineteenth.*

Again, those things which have not the same generation, must be, so far, different from each other. Now, gold of Art, if any, is generated by a different process from that which Nature employs. It follows that the gold of Alchemy is not true but fantastical gold.

*Reason Twentieth.*

Anything that is contingent, and liable to chance, cannot be the subject matter of science: for science deals with the necessary, incorruptible, and eternal. The Alchemists themselves say that the secret of their Art seldom becomes known to any one: hence they themselves put their own claim to scientific accuracy out of court.

*Reason Twenty-first.*

Again, Aristotle (Meteor. iv.)—according to the ancient version—expressly denies the truth of Alchemy, calling it a sophistical and fantastical pretence—though some say those words were interpolated by Avicenna (which, however, we do not believe). We beg leave to transcribe Aristotle's very words: Let me tell the Alchemists that no true change can take place between species; but they can produce things resembling those they desire to imitate; and they can tinge (*i.e.*, colour) with red and orange so as to produce the appearance of gold, and with white so as to produce the appearance of silver (tin or lead). They can also purge away the impurities of lead (so as to make it appear gold or silver); yet it will never be anything but lead; and even though it look like silver, yet its properties will still be those of lead. So these people are mistaken, like those who take armoniac salt for common salt—which seem the

same and yet are in reality very much diverse. But I do not believe that the most exquisite ingenuity can possibly devise any means of successfully eliminating the specific difference (*i.e.*, the substantial form) of metals. The properties and accidents which constitute the specific difference are not such as to be perceived with the senses; and since the difference is not cognizable (*i.e.*, not sensuously perceptible), how can we know whether they have had it removed or not? Moreover, the composition of the various metallic substances is different, and, therefore, it is impossible that one should be changed into another, unless they be first reduced to their common prime substance. But this cannot be brought about by mere liquefaction, though it may appear to be done by the addition of extraneous matter.

By these words the philosopher seems to imply that there can be no such thing as a pure Alchemistic Art, that which passes current under the name being mere fanciful and deceptive



talk. From his remarks we elicit five reasons which (apparently) militate against the truth of our Art.

*Reason Twenty-second.*

[THE FIRST OF ARISTOTLE.]

He who only changes the accidents of things, does not change them specifically, and, as the substantial form remains the same, we cannot say that any real alteration has been effected. Now, the transformation (if any) which takes place in Alchemy is of this kind; therefore, we may confidently assert that it is not real. Alchemists may, as it were, wash out the impurities of lead and tin, and make them look like gold and silver; but in their substantial form they are still neither better nor worse than lead and tin. Certain foreign ingredients (colouring matter, etc.) may make people fancy that they see real gold and silver before them. But those are the same people who could not tell the difference between common salt and salt of ammonia. Nevertheless, these two, though generically the same, exhibit consider-

able specific differences, and no skilled master of chemistry could possibly confound them.

*Reason Twenty-third.*

[THE SECOND OF ARISTOTLE.]

Any transformation that does not involve the destruction of the substantial and specific pre-existent form, is no real transformation at all, but a mere juggling pretence. Now this exactly describes the performances of Alchemy.

*Reason Twenty-fourth.*

[THE THIRD OF ARISTOTLE.]

It is impossible for us to know whether a thing which in itself is incapable of being perceived by our senses has been removed or not. Now, the specific differences of metals belong to this category : therefore, Alchemy falsely claims the power of accomplishing a thing which in reality transcends all human possibility and knowledge. The external characteristics with which we are acquainted in metals are not those which constitute their inward and essential nature, but their accidents, and



properties, and passivities, which are alone subject to the cognizance of our senses. If this mysterious and deeply hidden something could be touched and handled, we might hope to destroy, or abolish, and change it. But, as it is, such an attempt must be considered utterly hopeless.

*Reason Twenty-fifth.*

[THE FOURTH OF ARISTOTLE.]

Things which are not mixed in the same elementary proportions, and are not compounded after the same manner, cannot be regarded as belonging to an identical species. Now, this relation does not exist between natural gold and the metals which Alchemy claims to transmute into that metal. Consequently, they cannot become real gold. The fact is that we are ignorant of the true composition of the precious metals—and how can we bring about a result the nature of which is not clear to us?

*Reason Twenty-sixth.*

[THE FIFTH OF ARISTOTLE.]

One species can only be transmuted

into another by returning into the first substance common to both, before each was differentiated in the assumption of its own substantial form. This first substance must then be developed into the other species. But such a complicated operation the Alchemists fail to achieve. They do not reduce the metals to the first substance; hence there is with them no true generation, nor is there any genuine corruption, but only a spurious manipulation of accidents. They melt the metal in their furnace, and then add to it certain prepared chemical substances which change its appearance; but no one can say that there has been a true transformation. So long as they do not reduce the metal to its first substance, and then introduce into it another substantial form, it will still be the same metal, whatever alterations they may seem to effect in its outward appearance. The original substance and first principle of gold and silver are quicksilver and sulphur. To this substance they cannot reduce any

metal by bare liquefaction. Hence their transmutation of metals is never true, but always sophistical. If you wish to generate a man out of meat and vegetables, and other food that is eaten, this food will first have to become blood, and the blood will have to undergo a chemical change into seed, before it can be available for purposes of generation. In the same way, if any metal is to become gold and silver, it must first become quicksilver and sulphur. The Alchemists may indeed say that there is between metals no specific, but only an accidental difference. They suppose that the base metals are in a diseased condition, while gold and silver exhibit the healthy state of the metallic substance; and thus they contend that lead and tin can be converted into gold and silver by a mere alterative motion, just as an alterative motion (produced by some medicine) may convert a diseased into a healthy man. But this is equivalent to the affirmation that, apart from the morbid matter which they contain, all

metals are actually gold, and here is an assertion which it is impossible to substantiate. If all metals have the same substantial form, they have the same properties and passivities ; for properties and passivities are directly the outcome of the substantial form. Hence all metals would have the same properties and qualities (whether active or passive) as gold. But this is not the case ; for they do not abide the test of fire as gold does, nor have they the same comforting medicinal effect, which proves that the difference between them is not merely accidental, but specific. Yet they might again advance that, though all metals have the same substantial form as gold, they have not the same qualities and properties, because these are kept inactive or obscured by the morbid matter ; as, for instance, when a man suffers from epilepsy, or apoplexy, or madness, he cannot perform the operations of a complete man ; and if a woman suffer from contraction of the womb, or syncope, she may have the substantial form of

a woman, and yet she cannot exercise all the functions of a woman. They further say that, as in the human subject this incapacity is removed by the alterative action of some medicine, so in metals, the full effects of the substantial form (which is that of gold) may be brought out by alchemistic action. But the substantial form is not complete until the development is fully accomplished, and if the base metals are not fully developed, they can have no real substantial form, let alone that of gold and silver. And if a thing have not the same substantial form with anything else, it cannot have, even in a latent condition, the properties and qualities characteristic of that thing. Nothing can have the peculiar qualities of a man that has not the form (*i.e.*, the essential characteristics) of a man. The form of gold consists in the brightness which the sulphur receives from the purifying quicksilver in digestion. This brightness belongs only to gold and silver, or even to gold exclusively, as will be shewn. It is a sign that the

development of these precious metals is complete, and the fact that the other metals do not possess it also shews that they cannot have the substantial form or essential characteristics of gold. Hence the comparison of the base metals to diseased bodies is false and misleading. We have thus demonstrated that the claims of Alchemy are frivolous, vain, and impossible. We might adduce other reasons, but we believe those already given to be sufficient.



NOW WE WILL PROCEED TO PROVE THE  
TRUTH OF THE ART OF ALCHEMY.

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WE may prove the truth of our  
Art—  
(1) By the testimony of  
the Sages.

(2) By the most forcible arguments.

(3) By analogy, and manifest ex-  
amples.

(1) Aristotle, in the *Dialectics*, says that every master has a right to speak authoritatively with reference to his own art. According to this rule, it is the Sages, and the Sages only, that ought to be consulted with reference to the truth of Alchemy. Now, we find that ancient philosophers, who have written with remarkable clearness and force on other arts and sciences, have given their testimony to the truth and authenticity of this art in books which they have

devoted thereto. They have described it as an art which regulates natural action, working upon a proper matter, towards the attainment of a design of Nature's own conceiving, to which also Nature cannot attain without the aid of the intelligent artist, the same being further performed, as it is said, after one only method. Hence Hermes: It is true without falsehood, certain, and most true; that which is above is even as that which is below, and that which is below is like unto that which is above, for the accomplishment of the wonders of one thing. And Morienus: If, therefore, thou shalt rightly consider those things which I shall say unto thee, as also the testimonies of the ancients, well and fully shalt thou know that we agree in all things, and do all of us reveal the same truths. This was the deliberate conviction of Hermes, in his *Secreta*, who is styled the father and prophet of the Sages, of Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Socrates, Plato, Democritus, Aristotle, Zeno, Heraclitus, Diogenes, Lucas,



Hippocrates, Hamec, Thebit, Geber, Rhasis, Haly, Morienus, Theophilus, Parmenides, Mellissus, Empedocles, Abohaly, Abinceni, Homer, Ptolomeus, Virgil, Ovid, and many other philosophers and lovers of truth, whose names it would be tedious to record. Of most of these we have seen and studied the works, and can testify that they were, without a single exception, adepts, and brothers of this most glorious order, and that they knew what they were speaking about. Hermes, in his second book, says: My son, reflect on all that you hear, for I do not suppose that you are deprived of reason, etc. Rhasis (in his book on the *Perfect Magistry*), exhorting us unto a like earnestness, bids us read incessantly the writings of philosophy that we may be her sons, and get understanding in this arcane magistry. For he who does not read books cannot apprehend the details of our Art; he who knows nothing about the theory of our Art, will find its practice very difficult. Geber, in the *Prologue* of his *Sum of*

*Perfection*, exhorts the student to pore over his volumes by day and by night, and to revolve them diligently in his mind, that so he may perceive the drift of our directions. Galen declares that theory and practice mutually correct and supplement each other. True theory is borne out by practice ; false theory is shamed and disgraced by it. Moreover, when the science is obscure, and has been handed down after the manner of a dark tradition, there is all the more reason for reference to the adepts of the past therein. For which reason, says the philosopher in the second book of *Ethics*: In things which are obscure it is necessary to have recourse to open testimonies. So also Morienus: While every thing is distinguished according to its effects, the facts concerning it are more fully confirmed by the testimony of many. Rhasis (c. 70) bids us pin our faith to the ancient sages. Abohaly, that is to say, Avicenna, in his book on *Medicine*, and the chapter in which he discusses the confinement of fevers to

certain places, says that where they do not occur, the people would not therefore be justified in supposing that they do not exist. In the same way, no man in his senses would deny the truth of Alchemy for the very insufficient reason that he himself is ignorant of it : such a person would be content with the authority of weighty names like Hermes, Hippocrates, and numerous others. There are many reasons why the masters conceal this art. But if any one denies its existence on the ground that he is ignorant of it, he is like some one who has been shut up all his life in a certain house, and therefore denies that the world extends beyond the four walls of his habitation. There is not really any need to advance any arguments to establish the actuality of our art, for the art itself is the best proof of its own existence ; and being securely lodged in the stronghold of knowledge, we might safely despise the contradiction of the ignorant. Nevertheless, we will adduce a few arguments to prove the strength

of our position. At the same time, we ask the reader to remember that our best and strongest arguments are based on facts which we are not at liberty to use.

ARGUMENTS [PARTICULARLY TWO STRONG  
ONES] IN FAVOUR OF OUR MOST  
GLORIOUS ART.

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**I**T is most difficult to establish the claims of this Art argumentatively. Aristotle tells us that, in some cases, certain arguments are so nicely balanced as to leave the mind in a state of uncertainty as to what is the exact truth; in other cases [he says] the subject matter hardly admits of a logical demonstration. To this latter class belongs the case of Alchemy. In all operative sciences (as Aristotle sets forth) the truth of a proposition ought to be shewn, not by logical argument, but by ocular demonstration. The appeal should be not to the intellect, but to the senses. For particulars belong to the domain of sense, while universals belong to the domain of reason. If we are unable to convey to

any one an ocular proof of our Art, this fact must not be regarded as casting a slur on our veracity. The difficulty of our task is enhanced by the circumstance that we have to speak of our Art to the ignorant and the scornful, and are thus in the position of a painter who should attempt to explain nice shades and differences of colour to the colour-blind ; or of a musician who should discourse sweet harmony to the deaf. Every one, says Aristotle, is able to form a correct opinion only of those things which are familiarly and accurately known to him ; but he who denies that snow is white cannot have any eyes in his head. How can any one discover the truth in regard to any science, if he lacks the sense to distinguish the special province of matter, or the material relations, with which that science deals? Such people need to exercise faith even to become aware of the existence of our Art. Pythagoras, in the *Turba Philosophorum*, says that those who are acquainted with the elements will not be numbered among deniers.



A doctor who desires to prove that a certain medicine will produce a certain effect in a diseased condition of the human body, must substantiate his position by practical experiment. For instance, some one suffers from a superabundance of red colour in the veins of the stomach and liver, and I say that the cure is an evacuation after digestion. If I wished to discover what medicine would produce this effect, I would say : Everything that, after digestion, produces an evacuation of bile, will heal the patient. Now, I know that rhubarb or scamonea will produce this effect ; therefore, rhubarb or scamonea will be the right remedy to choose. Nevertheless, the truth of my assertion could be satisfactorily proved only by means of a practical experiment. In all these matters, as Hamec says, nothing short of seeing a thing will help you to know it. If you wish to know that pepper is hot and that vinegar is cooling, that colocynth and absinthe are bitter, that honey is sweet, and that aconite is poison ; that the

magnet attracts steel, that arsenic whitens brass, and that tutia turns it of an orange colour, you will, in every one of those cases, have to verify the assertion by experience. It is the same in Geometry, Astronomy, Music, Perspective, and other sciences with a practical scope and aim. A like rule applies with double force to Alchemy, which undertakes to transmute the base metals into gold and silver. Whatsoever has the power to transmute imperfect and incomplete metals into perfect and complete metals has the power to make gold and silver. Now, this quality is possessed by the Stone which the philosophers make known to us. It is plain that there are but two perfect metals, namely, gold and silver ; just as there are but two perfect luminaries, namely, sun and moon. The other metals are imperfect and incomplete, and whosoever educes them to perfection, the same also converts them into gold and silver. The truth and justice of this claim, like all other propositions of a practical nature, has to be



demonstrated by a practical experiment, and in no other way can it be satisfactorily shewn. But such a practical demonstration would, on the other hand, once for all put an end to the controversy, and convincingly demonstrate to every well-regulated mind the truth of the Art by which it is accomplished. Find our Art, says Galen, and you will have proved its reality, which is performed not by the first principles of the Art, but by its operations.

It is to be borne in mind that this Art is the minister and follower of Nature. Hence the principles of Alchemy are twofold, natural and artificial. The natural principles are the causes of the four elements, of the metals, and all that belongs to them. The artificial principles are, according to Geber, eight in number : Sublimation, Separation, Distillation, Calcination, Dissolution, Coagulation, Fixion, and Ceration, besides all the tests, signs, and colours by which we know whether these operations have been properly performed or not.

The tests of gold are Incineration, Cementation, Ignition, Fusion, Exposure to corroding vapours, Mixture with some solvent, etc. But there is also another high and divine principle which is the key and connecting link between all the others, without which it is impossible to accomplish our work, which also before all others ought to possess the mind of the student. That which is fixed destroys the specific form of that which is volatile, so as to do away with its volatile properties. If the volatile substance evaporates together with the fixed, the whole experiment is spoiled ; but if the fixed retains the volatile and protects it from evaporation, our work is perfected. We know that substances whose root is earth and water can be dissolved and become liquid ; in Alchemy their virtues are not destroyed, but the adept has it in his power to preserve them. What is said about this principle in the books of the Sages is without doubt figuratively spoken by means of type and allegory, and therefore it is mere presumption on

the part of an outsider to attempt to formulate an argument against our Art out of anything that the Sages have said.

The second argument is as follows. Anything in which the specific properties, qualities, and operations of a certain substance are observed, is of the same nature with that substance. Now, we find in the gold and silver of Alchemy all the distinctive peculiarities of natural gold; consequently, it is natural gold. We do not know the substantial form of anything; we do know its qualities, properties, operations, and accidents; consequently, it is in regard to these particulars that we must look for agreement, because all our knowledge necessarily has a sensuous or perceptive basis. The substantial form, on the other hand, is nothing but a convenient intellectual abstraction. In determining the nature of anything, we must found our judgment on its practical manifestations. We say that whatever performs all the functions of an eye, is an eye; whatever does

not is not really an eye, but only the shadow or image of an eye. A wooden saw is not a saw, but only a representation of a saw, etc., etc. I maintain, then, that we know a thing by its accidents; and as the substance of all metals is homogeneous, we may safely apply this rule to metallic substances. Every metal, then, which exhibits all the qualities of gold, orange colour, fusibility, malleability, indestructibility, homogeneous nature, and great density, must be regarded as gold, and it would be mere sophistry to try and make out that it is anything else. If the gold of Alchemy were not the same as natural gold, our detractors would be bound to shew that the very same specific properties can co-exist with substantial forms of an opposite and contradictory nature—a task which they will find it very difficult to accomplish. This reasoning is borne out by several most important passages in the works of Plato and Aristotle [*Libell. de Secret. Secreto, cap. de Lapidibus Pretiosis*]. There are also other arguments which

prove the truth of our Art, which will be set forth in our chapters on the principles, and on the generation of metals, and their transmutation.

THE TRUTH OF OUR ART PROVED  
BY ANALOGY.

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SOMETHING closely analogous to the generation of Alchemy is observed in the animal, vegetable, mineral, and elementary world. Nature generates frogs in the clouds, or by means of putrefaction in dust moistened with rain, by the ultimate disposition of kindred substances. Avicenna tells us that a calf was generated in the clouds, amid thunder, and reached the earth in a stupified condition. The decomposition of a basilisk generates scorpions. In the dead body of a calf are generated bees, wasps in the carcase of an ass, beetles in the flesh of a horse, and locusts in that of a mule. These generations depend on the fortuitous combination of the same elements by which the animal or insect is ordinarily pro-



duced. Aristotle (*de Animal.*, 6), however, says, that these creatures do not belong to the same order as those generated in the ordinary way, and have not the same substantial form. We, on the other hand, maintain (and we are sure of having all common-sense people in agreement with us) that ants are ants, flies, flies, and spiders, spiders, in whatever way they originate. For in the vegetable world Nature produces out of decomposed matter, cabbages, parsley, and pumpkins, which afterwards exhibit the same flowers, fruit, and seed as those evolved in the ordinary way, and are also propagated in the same manner. We maintain that there are some things which are propagated by generation only, such as men, vipers, whales, and palm-trees; other things by putrefaction only, as lice, fleas, grass, earthworms, and similar imperfect existences; some things are propagated in both ways, like mice, beetles, wasps, etc. Everything depends, as we have said, on a certain disposition of elements and rearrange-

ment of atoms ; in this way a wild vine may become a good one by transplantation and the skill of the husbandman (as Aristotle tells us) ; moreover, the same philosopher vouches for the truth of the observation that good plants may often be reared from inferior seed, if there be a change of climate and other outward conditions.

The same law holds good in the mineral world, though not to quite so great an extent. Thunderbolts are formed in the clouds, and iron darts, amidst terrible explosions. These mineral substances are produced, according to Aristotle (*Meteor., iv. end*), by the rapid extinction and desiccation of atmospherical fire. It is said that near Vergen there fell from the sky a piece of iron weighing 150 tons, which was so hard that it long resisted all attempts to work it up into swords and other iron implements. The Arabs relate that the Alemanic blades, which are very hard and well tempered, are fashioned of this kind of iron. Such great masses of metal are either formed



suddenly by the fierce action of burning heat on a large lump of viscous clay, or, little by little, through the agency of some more gradual cause. There are certain places in which water, as it wells forth, is changed into stones of divers colours ; and we know that there exists in the earth the mineral power of congealing water. We are also told that vegetables and animals may be converted into stone by a certain petrifying mineral action. Moreover, there is a spot in Arabia which imbues everything with its own colour. There the bread of Corascenus was changed into a stone, and yet retained its own colour. The same kind of spontaneous generation is also sometimes observed in the case of elements. By striking two hard stones together we produce fire ; by boiling water, air is created ; by the condensation of air, we obtain water ; by the distillation of water, we become possessed of a residue of earth. All these examples we quote, not because they necessarily admit of verification, but in order to make our

meaning plain to the uninitiated, and to shew, by analogous reasoning, the possibility of our art. To the initiated such confirmatory evidence, drawn from analogous facts, must seem both childish and unnecessary. Nor is there any process in Nature which is more than distantly and partially analogous to the operation of our most blessed Stone. The closest analogy is furnished by smoke, which may become fixed or condensed as soot; for here a spirit, as it were, evaporates from the fire, and assumes a corporeal form. The same may be said of the formation of tartar in good wine. For all vapour is spiritual in its nature, that is to say, its property is volatile. Out of dry vapours are generated dry things, and from humid vapours come moist substances; the digestion and proportionate commixture of both these kinds produce the diversity of all generated species, according to the exigency of their nature. And as these vapours, whether dry or moist, are actively fugitive and ascending, so are they poten-

tially permanent and resting. If the alchemist by the preparation of this proper matter in a proper vessel, with the suitable degree of fire, paying due attention to the significance of the sequence of colours, can obtain that which constitutes the essence of gold in a concentrated volatile or spiritual form, he can pervade with it every atom of a base metal, and thus transmute it into gold. This action of foreign bodies any one can observe on the surface of metals; tutia imparts to bronze the colour of gold, orpiment and arsenic colour it white like silver; the fumes of Saturn congeal quicksilver; the rind of the pomegranate converts iron into steel, and the fumes of burnt hair give to silver an orange tinge. Let us suppose the metals to be penetrated by some more powerful and all-pervading agent in their very inmost parts, and throughout all their molecules, — and we have something very closely resembling the alleged action of the Philosopher's Stone. The spirits of metals potentially contain their

bodies, and this potentiality may at any moment become actual, if the artist understands, and knows how to imitate, Nature's methods of working.

A GENERAL DETERMINATION UPON THE  
DIFFICULTY OF THE QUESTION, WITH  
THE ELUCIDATION THEREOF.

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CONCERNING this admirable, excellent, divine, and most secret Art, it is a matter of no ordinary difficulty to satisfactorily resolve the question of the actuality thereof, but, as appears from Aristotle, it is absurd to prove the existence of Nature, or to argue the possibility of what is known. Our subject is the transmutation of metals into true gold and silver by the skill of art. It deals not alone with the formation of metals in the earth but of their manufacture out of the earth. Alchemy is the Art by which the principles, causes, activities, properties, and affections of metals are thoroughly apprehended; and by means of this knowledge those metals which are imperfect, incomplete, mixed, and corrupt, and therefore base, are

transmuted into gold and silver. We have here, as in medicine, practice founded upon sound and well-tested speculative knowledge; and here also, as in medicine, we can be practically successful, only if our knowledge be strictly in accordance with the facts of Nature. Alchemy is an operative science, and produces effects by supplying natural conditions, *e.g.*, by the action of fire. Medicine is either preventive or curative; it either teaches us the conditions of health, and instructs us how to avoid disease, or, when we are ill, it provides the exact remedy which our disease requires. Alchemy has no need of conservative or preventive action; but it instructs us how to restore and cure, as it were, the diseases of metals, and to bring them back to a state of perfect health, in which state all metals are either silver or gold. The difficulties of our Art are great, especially on account of the disagreement which apparently prevails amongst its most authoritative exponents. The second difficulty of our



Art is that of carrying out practically the clearest and most straightforward printed directions. This difficulty might be got over by watching the operations of some great master ; but in the nature of the case, only few can enjoy so high a privilege. The third difficulty consists in the fantastic tricks and absurdly barren devices of fraudulent professors of this Art, in consequence of which many find it impossible to believe in the reality of our operations. And the claims of the Art itself appear so miraculous, and so far exalted above the ordinary course of Nature, that the vulgar herd are of necessity led to regard the Alchemist as a kind of sorcerer or magician, and to place his pretensions in the same class with those of the man who professes to work signs and wonders. These are but a few of the difficulties in which the study of our Art is involved ; and if there be so many obstacles in the way of its investigation, how much more difficult must be the discovery of its methods ?

Nevertheless, I stoutly maintain that the Art of Alchemy is clear and true, and founded upon Nature ; that its products are as truly silver and gold as the precious metals which are produced in the bowels of the earth ; and that I am fully prepared to substantiate all these assertions in the following chapters, and to place them beyond the reach of reasonable doubt. We will triumphantly rebut the attacks of Aristotle, and refute all other objections, putting them to flight with the all-prevailing weapons of truth and reason. Aristotle, in *Nicom. Ethic.* vii., says that if all difficulties are solved, and the contrary of every objection proved to be true, you can feel that you have established your position, but your refutation will be all the more convincing if you point out the cause of your opponent's error. If, however, any man denies first principles, there is no possibility of reasoning with him ; on the other hand, you can reason with a man who acknowledges first principles, and only arrives at erroneous results by a fallacious process



of ratiocination. It is to this class of our opponents that we address the following statement of our position.

EXPLANATORY OF OUR METHOD OF  
PROCEDURE IN DETERMINING  
THIS QUESTION.

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**B**UT in order that the truth of this Art may be fully known, we will begin by citing the authority, and quoting the words of, the ancient Sages, subsequently resolving any doubt or difficulty which they may suggest. In every case we will take care to state our reasons. Any one that would write about Alchemy must know its terms, with its differences and its scope ; and it is their ignorance of these particulars which has led many critics hastily to condemn our claims. Those who are ignorant of any science, are like the spectators who can distinguish neither the persons nor their gestures on the stage. A blind man might as well discourse about colours,

and criticize the merits of a picture — a deaf man might as well set up as a judge of some musical composition—as an uninformed person presume to deliver judgment on the claims of the Art of Alchemy.

The scope and aim of that Art we have already defined. It is an operative science, of which the object is to transmute base metals into gold and silver. It is concerned with the principles, causes, properties, and affections of metals. Principles are the efficient and final cause, which are both outward. Causes are described as the substance and form, which are the internal causes belonging to the very thing itself. Properties are the peculiar active operations of the metals (*e.g.*, the strengthening virtue of gold). Affections are the qualities of metals in a passive state, *e.g.*, the power of gold to resist the operation of fire, and so on. The essential differences between the metals we do not know: hence we allege in their place the properties and accidents peculiar to

each. It should further be remembered that no natural agent ceases from its action in a given substance until its end has been attained. In all metals quicksilver is understood for the substance, and sulphur for the active principle which supplies form to the matter; no metal is, therefore, complete and perfect, from which the sulphur has not become separated; and since this is the case only in gold, gold alone can properly be called a perfect metal—gold alone represents the first and true intention of Nature with regard to metals; all other metals still contain an admixture of sulphur, and are imperfect. The incomplete metals are called mixed metals, because here the agent is still mixed with the substance; and this sulphur is one of the great occasions of the corruptibility of metals: it blackens them, and causes them to evaporate and be burned in the fire, but gold ever enjoys immunity from this defect, whether in or out of the fire. The transmutation of metals into gold, then, must consist in the elim-

ination of this sulphur, which result is brought about only by the Philosopher's Stone, and by that instantly, for it acts both within and without, the exterior alterations being followed by the interior transmutation for the generation of the form of gold. Alchemy (*i.e.*, the Elixir of Alchemy) is a corporeal substance, made of one thing, by the operation of one thing, says Liliun. In medicine we apply the same name both to the science and to the remedy which it prescribes ; and a like analogy we must be permitted to follow in our most glorious Art of Alchemy.

AFTER SHEWING THE TWO  
CHIEF DIFFICULTIES OF ALCHEMY,  
WE PROCEED TO EXHIBIT ALL  
THE DIFFERENT MODES OF  
THESE DIFFICULTIES.

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TO one who is acquainted with the scope and meaning of this Art, it is not so strange that only few attain to our knowledge; to him the wonder is rather that any man has ever succeeded in discovering its methods.

*The First Cause of Difficulty.*

The achievements of our Art seem miraculous rather than in accordance with the ordinary working of Nature. Hence Sages like Hermes, Barsenus, Rhasis, Rosinus, and others, tell us that it is only by Divine inspiration, or by ocular demonstration, that the student can understand the directions of his



teachers. Morienus warns us that whoever would study this Art must know the other sciences, and especially Logic and Dialectic, as the Sages always express themselves in veiled and metaphorical phraseology. Theophilus says that the only way of apprehending the meaning of the Sages is by constant reference to experiment as well as reading [*Turba*]. He who bends his back over our books (says Barsenus), and does not sit at the feet of Nature, will die on the wrong side of the frontier. The first great difficulty, then, is the obscurity of the directions found in the books of the Sages.

*Second Cause of Difficulty.*

The second difficulty consists in the apparent disagreement of those who profess to exercise our Art at the present day. Amongst these persons are observed a great diversity of method, and a considerable variety even in the choice of their substance. The mistakes of some of the professors of Alchemy make men doubt the genuineness of its claims.

*Third Cause of Difficulty.*

Again, there are very few that actually possess the Stone. The pretensions of those who boast that it is in their possession discredit the Art in the eyes of the multitude.

*Fourth Cause of Difficulty.*

The expressions used by the different Masters often appear to be in open contradiction one to another ; moreover, they are so obscurely worded that of ten readers each one would understand them in a different sense. Only the most ingenious and clearsighted men have a chance of finding their way through this pathless thicket of contradictions and obscure metaphors.

*Fifth Cause of Difficulty.*

Another difficulty is the way in which the substance of our Stone is spoken of by the Sages. They call it the vilest and commonest of all things, which is found among the refuse in the street and on the dunghill ; yet they add that it cannot be obtained without considerable expense. They seem to say in



the same breath that it is the vilest and that it is the most precious of all substances. One man affirms that it is so costly that much gold will not buy it; and, on the other hand, Daucus tells us that we are to beware of foolishly spending gold in the pursuit of this Magistry.

Moreover, from what has been said, we can see that all the names of this Stone are fictitious and misleading. This indeed is the constant practice of the Sages, as Rosinus adds, though he makes an exception of Hermes, who says: Know that no true Tincture is obtained except from the Red Stone. But most of the directions which we find in the books of the Sages cause us to mix the true substance with many foreign ingredients, and thus to mar our work. How, then, shall we, by considering their works only superficially, and according to their literal interpretation, fathom the profound knowledge required for the practical operations of this Magistry? If the base metals are to attain the fixed nature of gold, says Rhasis, we

shall need much labour, much meditation, much patient study, and constant reference of the words of the Sages to the facts of Nature, which alone can explain them.

*Sixth Cause of Difficulty.*

The tropical expressions and equivocations, the allegories, and metaphors, employed by the Sages, also create a most serious obstacle in the path of the student. Hence investigation, and the practical operations which should be based upon it, are embarrassed at every step with doubt and perplexity of the most tantalising kind. We must not wonder, therefore, that the students and professors of Alchemy are peculiarly liable to error, since it is often all but impossible to do more than guess at the meaning of the Sages. At times it would almost look as if this Art could be acquired only by the living voice of the Master, or by direct Divine inspiration.

*Seventh Cause of Difficulty.*

Every other science and art is closely reasoned; the different proposi-

tions follow each other in their logical order; and each assertion is explained and demonstrated by what has gone before. But in the books of our Sages the only method which prevails is that of chaos; there is everywhere studied obscurity of expression; and all the writers seem to begin, not with first principles, but with that which is quite strange and unknown to the student. The consequence is that one seems to flounder along through these works, with only here and there a glimmering of light, which vanishes as soon as one approaches it more closely. Such is the opinion of Rosinus, Anaxagoras, and other Sages.

*Eighth Cause of Difficulty.*

The way in which the Sages speak of the vessel in which the decoction is to take place, is very perplexing. They give directions for preparing and using many different kinds of vessels, and yet in the same breath they tell us, after the manner of Liliūm, that only one vessel is needed for the entire process of de-

coction! It is true that the words of the Sages about the one invariable vessel become plain as soon as we understand the Art, but to the beginner they must appear very perplexing.

*Ninth Cause of Difficulty.*

The proper duration of our Magistry, and the day and hour of its nativity and generation, are also shrouded in obscurity. Its conception, indeed, takes place at one single moment; here we are to notice the conjunction of the purified elements and the germ of the whole matter; but if we do not know this, we know nothing of the entire Magistry. There are certain signs which occur with great regularity, at their own proper times and seasons, in the development of this Stone; but if we do not understand what they are, we are as hopelessly in the dark as before. The same remark applies to the exact proportions in which the different elements enter into its composition. The time required for the whole work is stated by Rhasis to be one year; Rosinus

fixes it at nine months; others at seven; others at forty, and yet others at eighty, days. Still we know that as the hatching of a chicken is always accomplished in the same period, so a certain number of days or months, and no more, must be required for this work. The difficulty connected with the time also involves the secret of the fire, which is the greatest mystery of the Art. The day when the Stone will be finished may be predicted from certain signs, if they are only known to us, just as the day when an infant will be born may be predicted from the time when it first begins to move in its mother's womb. These critical periods, however, are nowhere clearly and straightforwardly declared to us; and there is all the more need of care, vigilance, and attention on our part.

*Tenth Cause of Difficulty.*

The Sages appear to vary quite as much in their descriptions of the substance from which this Stone is elaborated. In order to mislead the ignorant

and the foolish, some name arsenic, some sulphur, some quicksilver, some blood, some eggs, some hair, some dung, etc., etc. In reality, there is only one substance of our Stone ; nothing else upon earth contains it ; it is that which is most like gold, and from which gold itself is generated, viz., pure quicksilver, that is, not mixed with anything else, as we shall shew further on. The substance of Alchemy—though called by a perplexing variety of names—is the substance of Nature, and the first substance of metals, from which Nature herself evolves them. Were it otherwise, it would be impossible for Art to imitate Nature.

Aristotle says that the more unity and simplicity of subject-matter and method there are in an art, the more easily is it known ; and when we once possess the necessary preliminary knowledge, his words apply with remarkable force to our Art. That Art would be mere child's play, if the Sages had expounded it as simply and plainly as they



might have done. But let us tell ignorant professors of Alchemy that the more complicated and sophisticated their methods, the more hopelessly are they at variance with the simple and all-prevailing truth of Nature.

OUR ART IS SHEWN TO BE ONE, NOT ONLY IN ITS SUBSTANCE, BUT IN ALL OTHER RESPECTS. THE UNITY OF THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE IS MAINTAINED IN ITS SUBSTANCE, AND IN ITS METHOD OF OPERATION, WHICH ADMITS OF NO FOREIGN ELEMENTS.

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THE substance of our Art is one, and admits of no variation or substitute, and so also the mode of our Art is one. The unity of our Art is proved by the fact that, though the Sages exhibit considerable diversity in their methods of expressing themselves, yet they all understand each other. The very fact that Greek understands Greek, and Latin Latin, and Arab Arab, proves the unity of each language; and it is the same with our Art. Amidst the greatest apparent diversity there is a wonderful substantial agreement in the works of the Sages; they differ in



words, names, and metaphors, but they agree in reference to things. By one way, says Lilius, by one thing, by one disposition is our whole Magistery accomplished. So Alphidius tells us that we want only one thing, viz., water, etc. With these sayings agree the words of Mahometh, Morienus, Geber, Rhasis, Solomon, the son of David, Senior, and Mundus, in the *Turba*, who says: Nature delights in the same nature, kind in kind, kind overcomes kind, kind contains kind, and yet they are not different kinds, or several, but only one kind, having within itself those properties by which it excels all other things. So Haly remarks in his *Mysteries*: Know, brother, that our whole Magistery is one Stone, which is self-sufficient, is not mixed with anything else, proceeds from one root, becomes several things, and yet again is restored to its unity. This one thing is described by the Sages in many ways, and thus it has been supposed to be many things. But such mistaken impressions are char-

acteristic of those who profess our Art without really knowing anything about it.

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#### INSTANCES AGAINST THE SAID UNITY.

It appears indeed as if there were many roads to our Art, and not one only. Geber avers that there are many ways to produce one effect. The same opinion is expressed by Rhasis in his book on the *Perfect Magistry*, where he speaks of bodies and spirits, and their purification and divers and manifold composition. We answer, as before, that there is only one way and one substance, as shall be abundantly demonstrated hereafter. The words of Rhasis are indeed true, but in our substance body and spirit are the same thing in different stages of development. And so, whether body or spirit, that which is perfectly prepared, the same is the pure and one Elixir. It is in like manner with regard to plurality of methods: food nourishes, but the stages by which this result is brought about are many,

as every physiologist will tell you. If there seem to be many methods, they are all only aspects and subdivisions of our *one* method. The White Stone and the Red Stone, the medicine of the third order, as Geber tells us it should be called, are really the same thing ; the White Stone is only less perfect than the Red. Nature, says Florus, is one, and if any man strays away from her guidance, he mars his labour. You do not require many things, but only one thing which has a father and mother, and its father and mother feed and nourish it, nor can it be distinguished in any way from its father and mother. From the one substance is evolved, first the White, and then the Red Tincture ; there is one vessel, one goal, and one method. It is true that in the books of the Sages the impression is conveyed as if there were many substances and many methods : but they only mean different aspects or stages of the same thing. Solution, Sublimation, Distillation, Coagulation, Calcination, etc., are misleading

terms; the distinctions are logical, or verbal, rather than real. Pythagoras tells us that Coction, Calefaction, Dealbation, Attrition, Affusion, and Tinging are only different stages of the same operation in the fire. There are many names, but one regimen.

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THE FIRST DISTINCTION SHEWETH  
THAT THIS ART IS NATURAL AND  
DIVINE, AND THAT BY IT THE  
ANCIENT SAGES FORETOLD THE  
FUTURE MIRACLES OF GOD.

Our Art is partly natural and partly supernatural, or Divine. In changing the base metals into gold and silver by the projection of the Stone, it follows (by an accelerated process) the method of Nature, and therefore is natural. But if we consider the digestion and generation, the conception and origin, of the Stone, we have, in Sublimation, the creation of a soul through the mediation of the spirit, and rising heavenward with the spirit. At another stage we have

the soul and spirit permanently fixed at the end of the Sublimation ; and this happens through the addition of the Hidden Stone, which is not sensuously apprehended, but only known intellectually, by revelation or inspiration. Alexander says : There are two stages in this Art, that which you see with the eye, and that which you apprehend with the mind. The hidden Stone may be called the gift of God, and if it does not mingle with our Stone, the work of Alchemy is marred. Now, the same hidden Stone is the heart and tincture of gold sought by the Sages. In this way, Alchemy is supernatural and Divine, and in this Stone consists the whole difficulty of the Art. We have need of faith in this matter, just as much as we have need of it in regard to God's miraculous dealings in Scripture. It is God alone that perfects our Stone, and Nature has no hand in it. It is on account of this fact that the ancient Sages were able to prophecy : the influence of the supernatural Stone ex-



alted them above the ordinary level of human nature. The prophecies which they uttered were frequently of a special and most important character. Though heathens, they knew that there would come for this world a day of judgment and consummation ; and of the resurrection of the dead, when every soul shall be reunited to its body, not to be severed from it thenceforward for ever. Then they said that every glorified body would be incorruptible, and perfectly penetrated in all its parts by the spirit, because the nature of the body would then resemble that of the spirit. Bonellus, in the *Turba* says : All things live and die at the beck of God, and there is a nature which on becoming moist, and being mingled with moisture for some nights, resembles a dead thing ; thereafter it needs fire, till the spirit of that body is extracted, and the body becomes dust. Then God restores to it its soul and spirit. Its weakness is removed, and it is raised incorruptible and glorious. Our substance conceives by itself, and is

impregnated by itself, and brings forth itself—and this, the conception of a virgin, is possible only by Divine grace. Moreover, the birth leaves our substance still a virgin, which, again, is a miraculous event. Hence we cannot but call the conception, birth, and nutrition of our Stone supernatural and divine. Alphidius tells us that our Stone is cast out into the streets, raised aloft to the clouds, dwells in the air, is nourished in the river, sleeps upon the summits of mountains; its mother is a virgin, its father knows no woman. These ancient Sages also knew that God must become man, because on the last day of our Magistry that which generates, and that which is generated, become absolutely one; then the old man and the child, and the father and the son, are indistinguishably united. Hence they concluded that the Creator must also become one with the creature; moreover, they knew that man was, alone of all created beings, made in the image of God. Plato wrote the Gospel, which

many years later was re-written and completed by S. John, even as S. Augustine recites in the eighth book of his *Confessions*. Our Magistry, says Morienus, is the Mystery of Mysteries of the Most High God, which He committed to His saints in Paradise.

It is to be noted that natural operations which lie out of the course of ordinary natural development, have in them a Divine or supernatural element. And the power which is in Nature is also derived from God. Our Magistry depends quite as much on Divine influences as upon the operations of Nature, and the succour of the artist who assists Nature. The change is brought about by the power of God, which operates through the knowledge of the artist. How difficult, how mysterious, how wonderful, how arduous must it then be for the artist to attain to so lofty a summit of spiritual insight! We may well call this Magistry a divine and glorious mystery, which transcends not only Nature, but the godlike reason of man ;



for even man cannot apprehend the mystery, except by direct inspiration or by circumstantial oral teaching, combined with minute ocular demonstration.

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HERE FOLLOWS THE SECOND DISTINCTION, IN WHICH SHALL BE SHEWN HOW THIS ART WAS INVENTED ; TO WHOM IT IS GIVEN, FROM WHOM IT IS WITHHELD, AND WHY THE SAGES KEEP IT SUCH A CLOSE SECRET.

None of the ancients would have been able to bring to light the hidden mysteries of this Art, had not God Himself, the Bestower of all good and perfect gifts, first revealed it to His Saints that feared His Holy Name. Rhasis, in his *Book of Three Words*, calls it the gift of God. Aristotle says that it was first known to Adam. Others affirm that it was revealed to Enoch in a vision ; and these persons identify Enoch with Hermogenes, or Hermes Trismegistus. Aristotle, in his *Epistle to Alexander*, calls the origin of the Art one of the greatest

and most sacred mysteries ; and therefore he entreats that prince not to ask for more information than he gives him in the said treatise. Some persons indeed maintain that this treatise is a rank forgery, and that it was certainly not composed by Aristotle ; and this opinion they base on internal evidence, more especially on the difference in style which may be observed in the book when compared with the other writings of the illustrious Stagirite. But the difference of style is sufficiently accounted for by the exceptional nature of the subject matter : and this epistle has always been attributed to Aristotle. Testimony is borne to the same fact also by John Mesve, and in Haly's book on the *Mystery of Mysteries*. Now because this Art was revealed by God to His obedient servants, it is the duty of all Sages not to reveal it to any unworthy person. It is true that whoever understands a science, or art, knows how to teach it ; nor would jealousy or envy become a wise man : but the Sages have expressed

their knowledge in mysterious terms in order that it might be made known to no person except such as were chosen by God Himself. But though the phraseology of the Sages be obscure, it must not therefore be supposed that their books contain a single deliberate falsehood. There are many passages in the writings of Morienus, Geber, and others, where this charge is indignantly rebutted. Those for whom the knowledge of Alchemy is intended, will be able, in course of time and study, to understand even the most obscure of Alchemistic treatises : for they will be in a position to look at them from the right point of view. It is only the wise and God-fearing whom we invite to this banquet : let those who are not bidden refrain from attempting to cross our threshold. The books of our Sages are only for the Sons of Knowledge. The Sages, says Hermes, are not jealous of the obedient, gentle, and lowly student : it is the profane, the vicious, and the ignorant to whom they desire to give a wide berth.

Therefore, I conjure you, my friends, not to make known this science to any foolish, ignorant, or unworthy person. God-fearing Sages, adds Alphidius, have never carried their jealousy so far as to refuse to unveil this mystery to men of their own way of thinking. But they have carefully concealed it from the multitude, lest there should be an end of all sowing, planting, reaping, and of agriculture and work generally. These are very good and humane reasons, then, why this Art should not be revealed to everybody. Moreover, it is delivered to us in obscure terms, in order that the student may be compelled to work hard in its pursuit. We do not prize that which costs us nothing ; it is our highest delight to reap some great benefit as the reward of our labour. Therefore, it would not be good for you if this knowledge were to come to you after reading one book, or after spending a few days in its investigation. But if you are worthy, if you possess energy and the spirit of perseverance, if you are

ready to study diligently by day and by night, if you place yourself under the guidance of God, you will find the coveted knowledge in God's own good time. Do not be satisfied with alteration of metals, like our modern sophists, but aim at transmutation; and do not suffer them to lead you aside with their sophistical jargon and their absurd and baseless pretensions. Knowledge is one, as truth is one; and let me add that our knowledge and our truth are both very simple and straightforward. If you once depart from the unity and truth of Nature, you are involved in the bewildering mazes of confusion and error.

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OBSERVE HERE THE OPERATION AND EXPERIENCE OF ALCHEMY, HOW IT CALLS FOR CONSTANT MANUAL OPERATIONS, AND THE TEACHING OF EXPERIENCE, FOR THE ARTIST TO PURIFY THE ELEMENTS, AND TO COMBINE THEM WHEN PURIFIED, ETC.

In our glorious Art nothing is more necessary than constant reference to the

facts of Nature, which can be ascertained only by actual experiment. The dross which is purged off by means of the natural operation must be removed by the artist, if his work is to prosper. The philosopher Socrates directs us to seek the cold of the Moon that we may find the heat of the Sun, and to exercise the hands so that the laborious nature of the work may be lightened. Hence it is all but impossible, as we may learn from Geber in his *Sum of Perfection*, for a blind man, or one whose sense of touch is defective, or for a man without hands, to be successful in our Magistry. The experience of sight is essential, more especially at the end of the decoction; when all superfluous matter has been removed, the artist will behold an awful and amazing splendour, the occultation of Sol in Luna, the marriage of East and West, the union of heaven and earth, and the conjunction, as the ancients tell us, of the spiritual with the corporeal. In that process of cooling, as we may learn from the *Turba Phil-*



*osophorum*, Hermes, and Avicenna, the manifest is concealed, while that which was concealed is made manifest. The first operation, which is done by hand, is the first stage of the work, which consists in Sublimation and Purification. The second operation, in which the artist has nothing to do but to look on, is the second stage of the work. Here the purified and sublimed substance is fixed and becomes solid. This operation should bring about the perfection of our substance. No one can exercise our Magistry in the absence of the practical teaching of experience, without which the most diligent poring over books would be useless. The words of the Sages may mean anything or nothing to one who is not acquainted with the facts which they describe. If the son of knowledge will persevere in the practical study of our Art, it will in due time burst upon his enchanted vision. The study of books cannot be dispensed with, but the study of books alone is not sufficient. There must be a profound

natural faculty for interpreting the significance of those symbols and analogies of the philosophers, which in one place have one meaning and in another a different. For, as Morien tells us, all books on Alchemy are figuratively written. By theory and practice working together, you will be led to the fruition of the most precious arcanum, which is the greatest and most wonderful treasure of this world. If you think that you have understood the directions of the Sages, put your impression to a practical test; if you were mistaken, Nature will take good care to correct your error, and if you will follow her guidance and take her suggestions, she may, after several experiments, put you in the right path. Thus you must go on, letting theory suggest practice, and correcting practice by theory, until at length all difficulties are resolved, and your way lies plain before you. Meditation, says Rhasis, is of no value without experience, but it is possible for you to gain your object by experience



without meditation. The practical method will at once enable you to detect any false or sophistical statement, and to avoid being infected with the folly of our modern Alchemists. You will never, for instance, fall into so gross a mistake as to suppose that our Art can change common flints into diamonds or other precious stones. Those who put forward such a statement do not seem to understand that there is here wanting that identity of first substance which undoubtedly exists in the case of base and precious metals. The products of such an art (falsely so called) are not diamonds or precious stones, but pieces of glass, the colouring matter of which is supplied from without, and not—as it ought to be—from within. Moreover, even if we really knew the precise nature of the first substance of precious stones, we could hardly produce them, because they are not fusible like metals. Against all such errors the practical Alchemist will be on his guard. It is impossible for us to imitate Nature in

the production of substances of which we have only the proximate matter, and are in ignorance of the mode of their acting, as, for example, in marcasite, tutia, and antimony, of which the matter is quicksilver and sulphur ; much less then can we imitate her in the manufacture of precious stones when we are ignorant in both points.\*

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THIRD DISTINCTION, SHEWING THAT  
THIS ART IS MORE CERTAIN THAN  
OTHER SCIENCES, AND THAT IT IS  
NOBLE, BRIEF, AND VERY EASY.

The remarkable agreement of all Sages demonstrates that this Art is more certain than any other. There is amongst them a wonderful speculative and practical harmony, and their contradictions are only verbal and superficial. The whole Magistry of our Art can be learned in a single hour of one who knows—which is the case with no

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\* Bonus was a contemporary of Raymond Lully, and was therefore unacquainted with his treatise on the composition of precious stones.

other science or Art. Yet one who can perform the practical operations of Alchemy is not yet an Alchemist, just as not every one who speaks grammatically is a grammarian. Such persons still lack that knowledge of the causes of things which exalts the mind of man, and raises it to God. Hermes, in the beginning of his *Book of Mysteries*, calls Alchemy a most true and certain Art, shewing that what is above is like that which is beneath, and that which is beneath is like that which is above, etc., etc. Again, our Art is more noble and precious than any other science, Art, or system, with the single exception of the glorious doctrine of Redemption through our Saviour Jesus Christ. It must be studied, not, like other Arts, for gain, but for its own sake ; because itself has power to bestow gold and silver, and knowledge more precious than either gold or silver. It may also be called noble, because there is in it a Divine and supernatural element. It is the key of all good things, the Art of Arts, the

science of sciences. There are, according to Aristotle, four noble sciences: Astrology, Physics, Magic, and Alchemy—but Alchemy bears the palm from them all. Moreover, it is a science which leads to still more glorious knowledge; nor can there be found a branch of human wisdom, either speculative or practical, to equal it. We naturally desire, says Aristotle (*de Animal.*, 10), to know a little of a noble and profound science, rather than to understand thoroughly some commonplace branch of knowledge. Our Art frees not only the body, but also the soul from the snares of servitude and bondage; it ennobles the rich, and comforts and relieves the poor. Indeed, it may be said to supply every human want, and to provide a remedy for every form of suffering.

It has been set forth by the Sages in the most perplexing and misleading manner, in order to baffle foolish and idly curious persons, who look rather at the sound than at the meaning of what is said. Yet, in spite of foolish and

ignorant people, the Art is one, and it is true. Were it stripped of all figures and parables, it would be possible to compress it into the space of eight or twelve lines.

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*This Art is noble, brief, and easy. It requires one thing, which everybody knows. It is in many things, yet it is one thing. It is found everywhere, yet it is most precious. You must fix it and tame it in the fire; you must make it rise, and again descend. When conjunction has taken place, straightway it is fixed. Then it gives riches to the poor and rest to the weary. The operation is good, if it become first dry and then liquid, and what Rebis (Twothing) is, you will find in the practical part of this work.*

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FOURTH DISTINCTION, SHEWING THE ERROR INTO WHICH MANY FALL TOWARDS THE END OF THE WORK, NAMELY, IN THE COMPOSITION OF ELEMENTS; WHAT IS THE BEGINNING OF THE WORK AND WHAT IS ITS END; AND HOW THIS ART IS NOT FOR ALL WISE PEOPLE.

It is difficult enough to know and investigate natural things, and their causes; but the knowledge of supernatural things is proportionately still more difficult. Hence we must not be surprised that the mysteries of our Art are discovered only by few enquirers. It is not good fortune, but only the grace of God, joined to reason, that will ensure success.

Many students of our Art who have operated naturally only, have accomplished the first part of our Magistry; but as the second part contains a supernatural element, being ignorant and incredulous, they were not able to perform it, and thus that which they had already done was neither permanent nor valu-



able. For there can be no permanence in the first part unless it be joined to the second in the same hour, for the second is the key of the whole work. I knew a man, says Gregory, who began the work in the right way, and achieved the white Tincture ; but when there was some delay about the appearance of the Red Colour, he gave up in despair, etc. This man knew the simple elements of our Art, their purification, commixtion, and the different signs which were to appear ; he was ignorant only of the day and hour in which the conjunction of the simple elements and the completion of the work might be expected ; and because he did not know what to do at that time, the whole Magistery vanished from his sight. For the White Stone was not yet fixed, and, being exposed to too much heat, it evaporated. The permanent fixation of the Stone is the Divine or supernatural department in our Art, which is performed by the composition of these simple elements together, when the fixed Stone

retains the volatile, and they remain together eternally, wherein is the whole power of Alchemy, which is neither accomplished by Art or Nature only, but by God the glorious. I do you to wit, says Lucas in *The Crowd*, that all things created are composed of four elements, and return into them; in these they are generated and corrupted, according to the will of God. It is through the shortcomings of their creation, as Alphidius testifies, that all things are subject to decay. Our Stone must have the elements so cunningly united in its composition that they can never thenceforward be separated. You need special pains towards the end of our Magistery. The foetus grows without any care, day by day and hour by hour, for nine months in the mother's womb; but when its growth is completed, it needs an expulsive effort of the uterus, or else it must die; and something of the same kind happens with regard to our Stone, which, though it is produced perfect in itself, is yet wanting in tincture.



fixity, and marital conjunction. When the hatching of chickens is accomplished, the little creatures often want some aid to assist them in getting out of the egg, and if they cannot obtain that aid they are choked and die. We must know, says Rhasis, the hidden nature of the Stone and of its dissolution; for if you have not an accurate knowledge of these particulars you had better stay your hand at once. Let us not for a moment suppose that it will be profitable for us to set about this Magistry if we do not understand the composition of the elements. This is the part of our work which is supernatural, since it unites earthly to heavenly things, and therefore it is called Divine, celestial, glorious, wonderful, most beautiful, most difficult. It is an Art which we can know by Divine inspiration. The ancient Sages described the entire first part of the work as the beginning of the work, and the beginning of the work was with them the nativity and germination of the Stone, which takes place

on the day when the coction and digestion of the substance is complete, and its sublimation perfect. In other words, to them the beginning of the work was the completion of the digestive process, and the digested and perfected substance itself. The end and complement of the work is the retaining of the Stone after its digestion. Now, Aristotle tells us that a slight error in the beginning may be a great one in the end ; one mistake breeds a whole swarm of disastrous consequences. Hence we must be very careful about the first steps we take in the development of our substance, or we may irreparably mar our work at the very outset, the error becoming more and more apparent as the operation proceeds. The perfection of the end must be already germinally contained in the beginning. Whiteness is the beginning of our Magistry, its perfection and end is Redness ; and the Red Tincture is germinally contained in the white. The spirit cannot enter the body until it is purified ; but when purification has taken

place, we may expect the permanent conjunction of the corporeal and the spiritual principles. So should the state of whiteness be anxiously looked for, because it is the beginning and foundation of this work.

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HERE FOLLOWS THE FIFTH DISTINCTION, SHEWING THAT THIS STONE IS LIKE ALL THINGS IN THE WORLD, AND THAT IT GOES BY DIFFERENT NAMES. HOW FAR ALCHEMY HAS ANYTHING IN COMMON WITH OTHER SCIENCES.

Our Stone, from its all-comprehensive nature, may be compared to all things in the world. In its origin and sublimation, and in the conjunction of its elements, there are analogies to things heavenly, earthly, and infernal, to the corporeal and the incorporeal, to things corruptible and incorruptible, visible and invisible, to spirit, soul, and body, and their union and separation, to the creation of the world, its elements, and their

qualities, to all animals, vegetables, and minerals, to generation and corruption, to life and death, to virtues and vices, to unity and multitude, to actuality and potentiality, to conception and birth, to male and female, to boy and old man, to the vigorous and the weak, to the victor and the vanquished, to peace and war, to white and red, and all colours, to the beauty of Paradise, to the terrors of the infernal abyss.

To the initiated it is clear that Moses, Daniel, Solomon, several of the prophets, and the evangelist S. John, possessed the knowledge of this Art, it having been revealed to them by God Himself. These holy men did not affect the Art for the sake of the acquisition of gold and silver, but on account of its beauty and the insight which it affords into the things of the spiritual world. As our Art is touched upon in all other sciences, so the prophets referred to it for the purpose of illustrating Divine truth. Nor is this wonderful, seeing that our Art speaks of all

things, both visible and invisible, by analogy. This remark refers not only to philosophy, physics, medicine, astrology, geomancy, etc., but is of universal application.

It may be asserted as a general truth that the verities and realities of things come first, while their similitudes and allegories are secondary and derivative. The ancient Sages, before Aristotle, were therefore greatly mistaken in supposing that any art or science could be taught or delivered to others by means of allegories and metaphorical analogies. Before an Art is known, it should be taught—according to Aristotle, Averroes, and Avicenna—by a plain and straightforward method; when it is once known, the allegorical method may be employed with advantage.

Owing to the custom of the Sages, that, namely, of giving an allegorical expression to their meaning, and carefully eschewing the plain scientific method, we have an infinite variety of names used to describe our precious

Stone, every one of which may be said, in a tropical manner, to represent a certain aspect of the truth of our Art. So Rhasis in the *Light of Lights* warns us that his sayings are to be typically understood. The same principle may open up to us an understanding of the paradoxical assertion of Pythagoras—in *The Crowd*—that our Stone is found everywhere and yet not found ; it is a stone and not a stone, worthless and precious, carefully hidden and yet familiarly known to all, with one name and yet many names. The great variety of its names is referred by Alphidius to the fact that in it there are analogies to all kinds of animals and stones, to all colours and odours, and all the works of men, either manual or mental. Melvescindus adds, that if we call it spiritual we are right ; if we describe it as corporal, we are not mistaken ; if we style it heavenly, we do not lie ; if we call it earthly we say the truth. Lilius avers that our Stone has as many names as there are things, or names of things.



Alphidius says : In our Magistry there is a great abundance of parables, names, and similitudes for the purpose of hiding the truth from the ignorant and revealing it to the wise. Morienus delivers himself to the same effect.

The consequence of this great multiplicity of names is that our Stone has really no proper name of its own, by which it is generally known, except this one sufficiently vague and indefinite name of Philosopher's Stone. This appellation being hardly sufficiently representative of the qualities of our Stone, each individual Sage has invented one or more names of his own, of which the appropriateness is patent only to those who are acquainted with the facts to which they refer. They are generally derived from some process or change of colour which our substance undergoes in the course of our Magistry. The substance indeed is one, but just as gold being worked up into different shapes is called by different names, such as ring, bracelet, crown, etc., though in substance

all these are nothing but gold ; so our one substance comes to bear different names derived from the changes to which it is subjected. In the same way as ordinary men in common parlance express their meaning proverbially and metaphorically, clothing a plain thought in figurative language, so our Sages find it necessary to describe this secret of secrets, and mystery of mysteries, in figurative terms, so that it may remain a profound arcanum to the wicked, the arrogant, the profane, and all to whom God Himself will not permit it to be revealed.



## REFUTATIONS OF THE OBJECTIONS TO ALCHEMY.

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THE FOREGOING DISTINCTIONS AND DECLARATIONS HAVING BEEN SET FORTH, TO THE GREAT ELUCIDATION OF THE WHOLE SUBJECT, WE WILL NOW PROCEED TO REFUTE THE ARGUMENTS ALLEGED AGAINST THE TRUTH OF OUR ART, AT THE SAME TIME GIVING SUCH ILLUSTRATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS AS MAY SUGGEST THEMSELVES.

**I**T is hoped that what has been said has supplied the reader with all desirable information with regard to the scope and bearing of our Art. We now propose to say something in refutation of the arguments intended to discredit Alchemy in the eyes of those who suppose themselves to be learned.

*Refutation of the First Five Objections.*

The fact is that, in producing gold, the Art of Alchemy does not pretend to

imitate the whole work of Nature. It does not create metals, or even develop them out of the metallic first-substance ; it only takes up the unfinished handiwork of Nature (*i.e.*, the imperfect metals), and completes it (transmutes metals into gold). It is not then necessary that Nature's mode of operation, or the proportion of elements, or their mixture, or the proper time and place, should be so very accurately known to the Artist. For Nature has only left a comparatively small thing for him to do—the completion of that which she has already begun. Moreover, our Artists do not, as a matter of fact, set to work without having first investigated Nature's method of procedure. Nature herself is set upon changing these metals into gold ; the Artist has only to remove the cause which hinders this change (*i.e.*, the corrupting sulphur), and then he can depend upon Nature for the rest. This matter will, however, be more clearly explained below in our chapters on the generation of metals. As to the brief space of time

required for the conversion in our Art, it must not be thought that we bring this about by exposing metals in the furnace to the sudden operation of fierce heat. If we did so, their metallic moisture would, of course, be destroyed and dried up. But we only just melt the imperfect metals over the fire, and then add to them the Philosopher's Stone, which, in a moment of time, imparts to them the form of gold, thus changing and ennobling their nature, and conserving their own proper metallic humour. It would not be possible for us to evolve gold and silver out of the metallic first-substance ; but with the help of our Stone, in a fire sufficient for liquefaction, preserving the moisture and removing the superfluity, do we generate that volatile Stone which we seek, to which we unite our fixed Red Stone, and then we can very easily hasten and facilitate an inward action which Nature has already set going, which alone has been brought to a standstill by the presence of impure sulphur.

It is a frequent cause of error to

reason about some particular fact or facts in vague and general terms. Where particulars are concerned, you ought to confine your syllogism to the same category, or we may be logically compelled to admit what we know to be nonsense. Now, if you look at the five first arguments directed against our Art, you will find that they are all couched in the most indefinite language; and, therefore, until our opponents descend to matter-of-fact particulars, we cannot consent to regard their arguments as deserving of a refutation.

*Refutation of the Sixth Objection.*

In our Magistry there are two things to be taken into account—the action of Nature, and the ministration of our Art. In respect of the first consideration—the indwelling natural agent—the whole work from beginning to end is, of course, brought about by it, and by it alone: the digestion, conjunction, generation, and formation of our Blessed Stone are due to it. Nevertheless, there is another point of view, in which

our Magistry may be termed an artificial process ; without its aid the action of Nature could either not go on at all, or would not be accomplished with so great rapidity. But the moving principle in our Art is undoubtedly natural, and the same must be true of its products. In a word, generation and combination are natural, but the ministration is the work of art, being in Alchemy even as in the cooking of food.

*Refutation of the Seventh Objection.*

In this argument of our opponents the conclusion is invalid because the form, which is the perfection of a thing, is twofold, one in so far as it is mixed, and one in so far as it has the principle of life and development, or has such a principle introduced from without by means of the quintessence, or in some other way. In the case of animate objects, the nobler part of the composition is often this vital principle ; with inanimate objects, indeed, the reverse is naturally the case. For this reason we cannot form a lion, a goat, or a man ;

for though we might know the exact composition of their bodies, yet it is impossible for us ever to understand the evolution of the soul. In like manner, though we are familiar with the generation of some minerals, vegetables, and animals, yet we are ignorant of their specific forms. But in the generation of gold, we know the specific form or composition, separated from the perfectible matter, and the methods of perfection and conjunction, according to Nature. The specific form of the common metals is, as a matter of fact, the same as that of gold and silver. There is no need for us to create metals; we only remove certain impurities which stand in the way of their development, and they then become commuted into gold and silver of their own accord.

*Refutation of the Eighth Objection.*

This objection is not conclusive because the metals, as has been said, differ not specifically, but only accidentally. But this objection will be more irrefragably refuted below, when we deal at



some length with the argument advanced by Aristotle.

*Refutation of the Ninth Objection.*

It is true that the generation of some earthly things is dependent on the influences and movements of heavenly bodies, for the introduction of their form, but it is not needful for us to know of them, nor indeed is it possible, except in a confused way, as, for example, in the seasons of the year which are caused by the movements of the sun, and determine the sowing and the growth of plants, with the sexual commerce of horses, asses, hawks, falcons, etc., which are capable of producing offspring only at certain periods of the solar year. But the rule does not apply to men, pigeons, and fowls. If we wish to generate worms in a putrefying body, we need not attend to the season of the year, but only to certain conditions of warmth, etc., which it is easy for us to bring about by artificial means. In the same way, a certain degree of equable warmth will always hatch the eggs of the domes-

tic hen. The same principle may be observed in the generation of lime, vitriol, salt, and so on. To operations of this kind the heavenly influences appear to be always favourable; and all Sages are unanimous in saying that our Magistery belongs to this class, because it may be performed at any time or period of the year. It is only indispensable, says Rhasis, that all other necessary conditions should be properly fulfilled, and then the stellar influences will not be wanting. And this dictum is substantially confirmed by Lilius and others. So also Plato states that the celestial influences are poured down according to the value of the matter. Wherever, indeed, it is necessary to infuse a new accidental form, the sites, aspects, and conjunctions of the heavenly bodies must be carefully observed. But as the Art of Alchemy makes no demand of this kind, the knowledge required for such an operation is not needed.

*Refutation of the Tenth Objection.*

Forms are either natural or artifi-



cial ; and natural forms are either substantial or accidental. The substantial form is that which makes a thing what it is, and differentiates it from all other objects of the same genus. It is also called the specific form. The accidental form embraces all the proper manifestations of the substantial or specific form, such as the active and passive qualities of any given object, and its colour, smell, taste, and shape. Artificial forms are entirely accidental, and are nothing but the shapes and qualities imparted to anything by art through the will of the artist, such as the shape of a house, or ship, or coin. Some of these artificial accidents are permanent, as, for instance, a house or a ship ; some pass away with the act in which they consist, as, for instance, dancing and singing, and all successive actions. The generation of the Philosopher's Stone is brought about through the mediation or agency of Nature, using the natural instrument of fire, with the natural colour, smell, and shape thereof, which are its accidental

forms, following its determined substantial form, but at the same time by means of the artist's aiding hand. Its form is necessarily natural and substantial, and is known by its natural accidental qualities, like everything else in the world. Some assistance is indeed given to the development of the inherent principle; but the inward agent is natural, and the form which is brought into existence by it is also natural, and not artificial, as is falsely asserted by our opponents. Hence the gold which is obtained by means of our Stone, differs in no respect from natural gold, because its form is natural and not artificial.

In order fully to understand the refutation of this tenth objection, we should further consider that natural forms are evolved in two ways. Either Nature supplies the substance and works it up into a given specific form in the absence of any aid from without, or natural substances are combined and prepared in a certain way by art, and then attain to perfection by means of a

natural operation. To this latter class belong most chemical compounds. Though here Nature cannot herself prepare and combine the requisite ingredients, yet the result could never be brought about by a merely artificial operation, and is due to Nature alone. Health is restored to the body by Art, but the real agent is Nature, Art only supplying the necessary conditions under which Nature is to work. There is all the difference in the world between an artificial product of this kind and a real artificial product, such as a house, a ship, and the like. Natural products admit of but little variety, and the gold which is produced by Nature, either in the one or the other of the ways indicated above, will always be the same gold. Hence the gold of Alchemy, which is due to a natural process, rendered possible and assisted by Art, is evidently not wanting either in the specific form or the accidental properties of gold found in mines. The principle of Art is Nature, and, after all, the works of

Nature are the operations of Supreme Intelligence, and natural conditions may be established by the intelligent mind of the Artist.

*Refutation of the Eleventh Objection.*

Our assailants say that it is easier to destroy than to construct. But Geber tells us that what is difficult to construct is also difficult to disintegrate; the stronger the composition of anything, the more difficult is also its decomposition. The making or construction of a thing may be considered in a twofold aspect. There is the initial development of a thing out of its first principles, as, for instance, the blood in the uterine veins of the hen, out of which the egg is formed; then the development of the chicken out of the egg by subjecting it to the warmth of the hen for a certain period, when all necessary conditions of this development already pre-exist in the egg. We may also distinguish a third operation, viz., the laying of the egg by the hen. The change brought about by Alchemy is of

the second description. For in the common metals all the necessary conditions of gold are already found, just as the chicken is already contained in the egg. It is not the business of the Alchemist either to know or to put together the component elements of gold. Rather, we may say that he has them in an unfinished state, and commutes them into gold by a process similar to that which changes an egg into a chicken. The twelfth and thirteenth objections are already met by what has been advanced in our previous arguments.

*Refutation of the Fourteenth Objection.*

To the fourteenth objection, which asserts that it is impossible that the same thing should operate in two contrary ways, we answer that this is true of the same thing, but not true of different things; and this diversity depends on the thing receiving rather than on the thing received. In the human body, for instance, the same agent changes very different foods into the chyme and

blood of exactly the same composition, hard food being softened and soft food hardened. Galen tells us that both cold and warm foods ultimately produce animal heat in the body. Considered as foods, all these substances are different, yet they are all turned to the same use by the one agent which we call the vital power. In the same way, the common metals, which are dug out of mines, differ from each other as to the hardness or softness of their composition, and the degree of their purity, etc. ; yet they are all subject to the same natural digestion and the inherent action of the same specific form is developing them all in the same direction. In this case, too, through the operation of one and the same force, the hard substances are softened and the soft substances rendered hard, so that both are reduced to one intermediate degree of consistency. Would it not be absurd to say, as is nevertheless asserted by some who are wise in their own conceits, that it is impossible for our Stone to change both



copper or lead and iron into gold, because the one is hard and the other soft. It is the digestive power of metals, and it deals with them as the digestive power of the human stomach is able to deal with food. There is, then, as Geber says, in our Magistry only one thing which changes all metals into the same precious substance, viz., the Red Tincture, and this assertion involves no contradiction in terms, as has been supposed on account of the diversity of the common metals. This one medicine hardens that which is soft, and softens that which is hard, fixes that which is fugitive (or volatile), and glorifies them all with its own magnificent brilliancy and splendour. The true artist knows the causes of the hardness of metals, as well as of their softness, the causes of their fusibility, whether that process be quickly or slowly accomplished, and the causes of their fixation and volatility; he is acquainted also with the causes of the perfection of metals, and of their corruption, of all their defects and

superfluities; and, therefore, has all the knowledge which our Magistery requires and presupposes.

*Refutation of the Fifteenth Objection.*

The refutation of this argument is sufficiently patent from what has already been said.

*Refutation of the Sixteenth Objection.*

It is advanced that common metals are perfect in their own species, and that it is, therefore, impossible to bring them to any higher degree of perfection, just as a horse can never be perfected into a man. But there is such a thing as specific completeness which, nevertheless, admits of a higher development. An egg, for instance, as far as it goes, is specifically complete in itself; and yet it is not perfect as regards the intention of Nature, until it has been digested by means of natural heat into a bird. It would be absurd to say that an egg must always remain an egg, because as such it has certain well-defined properties and a substantial form of its own. The same holds good with regard to the seeds of



plants, which are specifically complete as seeds, yet Nature nevertheless designs them to be perfected into living plants. In the same way, tin, lead, and iron, are perfect in their own species, yet in another sense are not perfect, are at once noble and ignoble, and still have not yet achieved the highest possibilities of their nature. The delay in their development is caused by Nature for the sake of man, because the common metals can be turned into uses for which gold and silver could not be employed.

*Refutation of the Seventeenth Objection.*

The solution of this difficulty is patent from that which has already been said.

*Refutation of the Eighteenth and  
Nineteenth Objections.*

Here, too, we may partly refer the reader back to what has already been proved, and partly we must ask him to wait until we deal with the five arguments of Aristotle.

*Refutation of the Twentieth Objection.*

We are told that the subject matter

of this Art must be contingent, and dependent upon chance rather than upon the strict sequence of natural causes and effects, because the Sages themselves admit that it has never become known to any very considerable number even of its most diligent students. Hence it is asserted that our Art cannot aspire to be a science, and can never, at the very best, be more than a system of haphazard guess work. But it is a mistake to suppose that that which happens only seldom, must therefore necessarily be subject to chance. If our objectors only knew our Art, they would readily admit that it is governed by as rigid a system of unchangeable laws as the most exact science in the world.

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*We will now proceed to answer the Five Arguments of Aristotle.*

As to the first, it has already been met by our proof that the transmutation of metals in Alchemy is brought about by a natural process.

The same remark holds good of the second objection. A solution of his third difficulty has also been given when we proved that it is not necessary for the artist to be acquainted with the exact composition, or substantial and pre-existent form, either of the common metals or of gold and silver, since the necessary process of change is brought about, not by the artist but by the inward natural principle, which strives to fulfil the intention of Nature with regard to it. It is enough to be acquainted with their accidents, properties, and passions, which are the consequence of their form. When any transmuted metal is found to have the properties and passions of mineral gold, without superabundance and without deficiency, we conclude of necessity that it has also the form of gold. It is, of course, impossible, and always will be impossible, for any one to know things by means of their forms, because they do not fall within the cognisance of our senses. That which does the work, and performs the

functions, of an eye is an eye, but nothing else really deserves this name ; hence a stone or a wax eye is not an eye, but only the similitude of an eye, because it does not perform the functions of an eye. I affirm, notwithstanding, that, among composite things, the form of gold and the Stone of the Philosophers alone can be properly known through the perfect knowledge or cognition of the immediate matter which underlies the visible accidents, which, if the same do not subtend, then is the form unknown and inoperable, as in other composites. There is, however, no need for us to know the forms of common metals ; for us it is sufficient to be aware that all metals are in course of development into gold, through the properties and accidents in the immediate first matter, and are capable of being endowed with the form of gold. Whosoever is ignorant of the form in a given matter is ignorant of the possibility of its transmutation, and must judge by his knowledge of accidents and qualities ; and, seeing that the gold

of the mine and the gold produced by alchemy have precisely the same properties in appearance, and endure the same tests, we conclude that they are both real gold, and are impressed with the same form. The fourth objection of the philosopher has already been met by what has been said above concerning the proportion in which the elements are mixed in any given thing.

*We will now attempt to answer the Fifth Objection of Aristotle.*

Aristotle obliges us to confess that metals differ not only in their accidents, but specifically, and therefore his argument requires to be answered at some length. Now, there is this difference between potentiality and actuality, that the one is related to the other as non-existence to existence. The potential becomes the actual, the imperfect the perfect, and substance becomes form; but the process is never reversed. Seed is never potentially blood, nor blood potentially food, nor food potentially the four elements. Not everything that is

changed into something else is called the substance of that other thing ; a living body is not the substance of a corpse, nor wine of vinegar. In the generation of metals all common metals are potentially what gold is actually, they are imperfectly what gold is perfectly ; they are substantially what gold is formally. This is evident from the fact—which shall be proved later on—that Nature changes all metals into gold, while gold is never changed into any of the other metals. Hence, if our Art is to succeed it must follow the course of Nature, and do as it is taught by Nature.

It must be further distinguished that in this connection potentiality is of two kinds disposition towards the form and the faculty of receiving form. The first may be divided into approximate, remote, and remotest. The second is also duplex. Now, complete goodness or perfection is one, and amongst the metals there is only one which is good and perfect, namely gold, and gold does not need to go through any change to



make it good and perfect. To be perfect is for anything to have realised the ultimate intention of Nature concerning it; the common metals have not yet realised this ideal; hence it still remains for them to be changed into gold. And, as that which is nearest to perfection is the best among imperfect things, silver comes next after gold, then bronze, then tin, then copper, then lead, then iron—as appears from what has been said above.

Gold alone among metals has, therefore, reached the highest stage of actual perfection. All other metals are only potentially perfect. Some of them, however, have left behind the more remote grades of potentiality, and the change they require to undergo is inconsiderable, because their distance from the highest stage of metallic actuality is not very great. We do not affirm, with other writers, that the intention of Nature has been frustrated or arrested in the imperfect metals. We affirm that they are produced in accordance with her intention, and that they are in course of

development into gold. This operation is performed either by Nature in the bowels of the earth, or, in an infinitely shorter space of time, by our most glorious Magistry.

There are also three kinds of perfection and imperfection:—(1) Among things which have the same substantial form; (2) among things which have different substantial forms; (3) among things which are in course of development into the same form. The first kind of perfection belongs to a man who has the complete use of all his organs, senses, and faculties; a man who suffers from any defect in these particulars is not so perfect a specimen of humanity. The second kind of perfection is comparative, when we place two things, which are complete in their own species, side by side. So, for instance, a man is a more perfect creature than a horse, and a horse is more perfect (or noble) than an ass. The third kind of perfection we find only amongst those things of the same kind which are in different stages



of development towards a certain highest point. This is the species of perfection we refer to when we speak of metals. Each metal differs from all the rest, and has a certain perfection and completeness of its own ; but none, except gold, has reached that highest degree of perfection of which it is capable. For all common metals there is a transient and a perfect state of inward completeness, and this perfect state they attain either through the slow operation of Nature, or through the sudden transformatory power of our Stone. We must, however, add that the imperfect metals form part of the great plan and design of Nature, though they are in course of transformation into gold. For a large number of very useful and indispensable tools and utensils could not be provided at all if there were no copper, iron, tin, or lead, and if all metals were either silver or gold. For this beneficent reason Nature has furnished us with the metallic substance in all its different stages of development, from iron, or the lowest, to

gold, or the highest state of metallic perfection. Nature is ever studying variety, and, for that reason, instead of covering the whole face of the earth with water, has evolved out of that elementary substance a great diversity of forms, embracing the whole animal, vegetable, and mineral world. It is, in like manner, for the use of men that Nature has differentiated the metallic substance into a great variety of species and forms.

Nevertheless, the great process of development into silver and gold is constantly going on. This appears from the fact that miners often find solid pieces of pure silver in tin and lead mines, and also from the experience of others who have met with pure gold in metallic veins of iron—though this latter occurrence is more rarely observed, on account of the great impurity of iron. In some silver mines, again, quantities of solid gold have been discovered, as, for instance, in Servia; at first, the whole appears to be silver, but in the

refiner's crucible the gold is subsequently separated from the less precious metal. Thus it is the teaching of experience that Nature is continually at work changing other metals into gold, because, though, in a certain sense, they are complete in themselves, they have not yet reached the highest perfection of which they are capable, and to which Nature has destined them—just as the human embryo and the little children are complete and perfect as far as they go, but have not yet attained to their ultimate goal of manhood. Gold is found in different forms, either mixed with a coarse rocky substance, or in a solid condition, or amongst the sand in the beds of rivers, being washed out of the mines by water. Golden sand is also found in the deserts of India, where there are no rivers. Silver is never found mixed with the sand of rivers, but mostly in the shape of ore in mines, or like a vein running through a rock. Lead and tin occur mostly in the shape of ore, and sometimes they are mingled with

earth. The same facts have been commonly observed with regard to iron and the other metals. When different metals are discovered in the same mine, the less pure of the two will generally be found uppermost, because in the digestion of the metallic substance the impure elements have a tendency to ascend and leave what remains more force to develop in the right direction. The difference between metals, then, may be called specific ; but it is not the same difference as that which exists between a horse and a man ; it is rather a difference of development, or of the degree of digestion. The common metals have the same metallic form as gold ; but the digestion of gold is complete, while that of the others is still more or less imperfect. Thus, there is nothing left for us to do except to continue the digestive process until gold is reached, and so finish it : there is no need for us to reduce the common metals to their first substance, to revert them to the principle of digestion, or to accomplish any other

difficult feat of the kind. If, indeed, a horse were to be changed into a man, it would be necessary, by corruption and disintegration, to convert the lower animal form into the first substance, and from this first substance to evolve human seed. Such an operation is, of course, impossible, and to attempt it would be to court failure. Art, therefore, follows Nature in that which it would accomplish after the manner of Nature, and it extols Nature wonderfully, not by violating Nature, but by governing her. But far different is the case of metals, which are all naturally in a state of transition and development into gold. In our Art the metals are not, indeed, changed back into their first substance ; but by the juxtaposition and influence of the Blessed Stone, and its subtle mingling with all, even the smallest, parts of the base metal, the Stone, which is the substantial form of gold, impresses this form on every atom of the lead or copper, and thereby transmutes it into gold. This mingling cannot take place, however,

without a preliminary melting or liquefaction, which renders the base metal accessible in all its parts to the subtle influence of the Stone, and to the transmuting power of the transmuting medicine. The form which is thus introduced is not accidental, but substantial; and, therefore, the gold which results is not artificial, but natural and real.

Even if it be true, as is generally assumed, that all things are evolved out of the four elements, this theory in no way conflicts with the claims of our Art. For this first substance is not available for any special purpose, unless it has first been changed into a suitable and specifically differentiated form. Thus it is impossible for us to generate a man out of the four elements: for this purpose we must have them in the more specific form of human seed. But where there is human seed, a man may be generated from it without first changing it back into the four elements; rather, the digestion of those four elements, which



has already begun, must be continued until the substance assumes the human form. So we cannot produce metals out of the four elements; we must have a viscous, heavy, intermediate water mingled with subtle sulphureous earth, which is the special metallic first substance—that is, quicksilver. This substance, then, through the agency of the sulphur, is developed into gold, or into some common metal, and then into gold. In order to effect this ultimate change, there is no need to reduce the common metals to their first matter, for they already contain that proximate first matter, which may, by comparison, be called the seed of gold, which also has in itself the principle of ultimate development into gold. In the working of Nature there is no regression; we cannot change the embryo back into the seed, nor the seed into the four elements. The common metals are a substance intermediate between gold and silver, on the one hand, and quicksilver and sulphur on the other. Seeing, then, that

the middle must always be nearer to the end than is the beginning, therefore the imperfect metals are nearer to gold than is the first matter ; and, consequently, it must be easier to obtain gold from the common metals than from a more remote, or less developed substance, like quicksilver and sulphur.

If we say that the common metals are an intermediate substance, and represent the different stages of transition from quicksilver to gold, this remark must be understood to apply to the natural aspect of the process. As far as our Art is concerned, there is a difference both in the arrangement and in the time. Our Stone perfects the quicksilver of the common metals by purifying and partly eliminating their sulphur ; and this process of digestion, which may occupy ages in the bowels of the earth, is accomplished by our Stone in a moment of time, on account of the high degree of digestion possessed by our Stone. This elaborate discussion of the arguments for and against our Art was composed



by Master Peter Bonus, of Ferrara, in the year of our Lord 1338. The Master was at that time residing in Pola, a township of Istria.

## PHILOSOPHY OF ALCHEMY.

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*Now we have established the truth of this Art, we must see to which part of Philosophy it belongs, and how Art and Nature differ and agree.*

**T**HERE are three parts of Philosophy: that which deals with matter in motion, or physics; that which is concerned with matter at rest, or mathematics; and that which abstracts from both matter and motion, or metaphysics. Alchemy belongs neither to the second nor to the third of these departments of science; consequently, it takes its place in the first department, or that of physical science, for it deals with real being joined to motion and matter, and not with metaphysics, which are divine, and have regard to real being separated from

motion and matter. Each physical science deals with a certain division of matter, and so does our Magistry.

Science is possible by means of the fact that the universe is the work of an Intelligence to which our reason corresponds. The Divine Intelligence has subjected all natural and supernatural phenomena to the rule of certain laws, which laws our reason was created capable of apprehending, and this state of things is the preliminary condition of all science whatsoever. Our reason is either practical or speculative, according to the class of mundane relations with which it deals ; and thus we have speculative philosophy, or science, and practical philosophy, or art. Our Magistry is speculative in so far as it teaches us the nature and relations of metals ; it is practical in so far as it teaches us how to utilise this knowledge for the production of the Philosopher's Stone, and the transmutation of common metals into gold and silver.

As a department of physical science,

our Art must deal with a certain determinate division of matter ; and if our gold is to be identical with that of Nature, it is clear that our Art must follow Nature in this respect, and that it must be concerned with the same matter which Nature employs in the production of gold and silver ; otherwise our gold would be specifically, or even generically, different from that of Nature. Now, according to all natural philosophers and all alchemists, this matter is quicksilver ; consequently, Alchemy must be concerned in the elaboration of the same material ; and, as no matter forms or perfects itself, but is developed and moulded by its own proper agent, so this quicksilver is digested, developed, and moulded, in Nature as in Art, by an inherent agent of its own which we call sulphur, and by which the generation of metals and of gold is accomplished. This sulphur coagulates the said quicksilver and digests it, by its inherent virtue, and by means of its own natural mineral heat. This process of digestion produces a given metal

as an intermediate result, but the ultimate aim of the digestive process is gold. In our Art we must have the same quicksilver and the same digestive sulphur as that which brings about the perfection of metals in Nature. But the mode of action, and digestion, and information is different in our Art from that employed by Nature; while, similarly, there is a difference in the local and temporal conditions, but the end is identical. Those, then, who are at work on minerals which are not metals, or on vegetable or animal substances, are spending their labour in vain; for none of these things possess that aptitude and predisposition to become gold which is inherent in all metallic substances.

From all these considerations we see that our Art is in perfect accordance with Nature, and that in most of its conditions it imitates Nature. Hence our gold is fully identical in every essential respect with the gold of Nature, and abides all the tests to which it can possibly be subjected. It contains no

impurity of any kind, but its perfect quality is made evident by the examination of fire, whence it follows that it is gold true and natural, form for form and quality for quality. As a fact, it is purer and more precious even than natural gold.

We must now proceed to discuss the first principles of metals, both generally and with particular reference to our Art, and to the procreation and transmutation of metals. The student should remember that, while poring over the pages of Alchemistic books, he should not neglect the practical side of our Art, because it is practice which both explains the difficulties of speculative truth and corrects any speculative error that may happen to arise.



## THE PRIME PRINCIPLES OF METALS.

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*Namely, of the first substances of metals in general, and of their generation and mutual transmutation according to Nature; and how and by what methods Art can follow Nature.*

**A**LL metals are proved to belong to the same species by their coagulation, by their one mode of commixtion, and by their capacity of retaining their specific properties both when they are melted and when they are coagulated. Hence their matter is one, viz., a humid and watery matter, and it is natural for such a substance to go on in its development till it is completely fixed. As water quickly evaporates over the fire, while the humidity of metals is capable of enduring great heat without evaporation, this humidity cannot be water only, but is

water mixed with, and modified by, other elements. Moreover, there must be something else which gives to this viscous and unctuous water that humidity and consistency which we observe in metals, viz., the modification introduced by their earthy ingredients.

Thus, in the generation of metals, we distinguish two kinds of moisture, one of which is viscous and external, and not totally joined to the earthy parts of the substance; and the same is inflammable and sulphureous; while the other is a viscous internal humidity, and is identical in its composition with the earthy portions; it is neither combustible nor inflammable, because all its smallest parts are so intimately joined together as to make up one inseparable quicksilver: the dry and the moist particles are too closely united to be severed by the heat of fire, and there is a perfect balance between them.

The first matter of all metals, then, is humid, viscous, incombustible, subtle, incorporated, in the mineral caverns,



with subtle earth, with which it is equally and indissolubly mixed in its smallest particles. The proximate matter of metals is quicksilver, generated out of their indissoluble commixtion. To this Nature, in her wisdom, has joined a proper agent, viz., sulphur, which digests and moulds it into the metallic form. Sulphur is a certain earthy fatness, thickened and hardened by well-tempered decoction, and it is related to quicksilver as the male to the female, and as the proper agent to the proper matter. Some sulphur is fusible, and some is not, according as the metals to which it belongs are also fusible or not. Quicksilver is coagulated in the bowels of the earth by its own proper sulphur. Hence we ought to say that these two, quicksilver and sulphur, in their joint mutual operation, are the first principle of metals. The possibility of changing common metals into gold lies in the fact that in ordinary metals the sulphur has not yet fully done its work ; for if they were perfect as they

are, it would be necessary to change them back into the first metallic substance before transmuting them into gold; and this has been admitted to be impossible.

Nature, then, has two ways of producing gold; either it changes the quicksilver at once into the precious metal, or it develops it first into iron, lead, copper, etc., and then into gold. Art follows Nature in adopting her second method; but as regards the first, it is impossible for our Art to imitate Nature. These two methods are the mediate and the immediate; but the mediate must become the immediate before it is available for the purposes of our Art. Our Art thoroughly purges the common metals of all the impure and corrupt sulphur which they contain, so that the development of the quicksilver can go on unhindered. If any Artist had such cunning as to change back animal and vegetable substances into their first elements, it might be possible for him to evolve gold in this way: but

this feat necessarily lies beyond the reach of human ingenuity, and, therefore, the Artist who is busied with animal and vegetable matter, is wasting both time, money, and trouble. Geber, towards the end of his chapter on medicines of the first order, tells us that all alterant medicines are derived either from quicksilver, sulphur, a mixture of the two, or of some things possessing their nature, and no change can be encompassed without their agency. For this reason we must depend on them, and on them alone, for bringing about the conversion which we contemplate as desirable. The perfection of philosophical quicksilver is the purification of its agent (or sulphur) from all corrupting influences by means of our Art; and so the two together perform what each by itself was unable to accomplish—because each was separated from the other, and hindered from doing its work by certain deadly impurities. Art imitates the method of Nature in bringing about this purification, both in the generation of

the Philosophical Stone and in the perfecting of metals. The exact way in which the purification is accomplished is different, especially because it is much shorter ; but the principle is the same. If Nature did not change common metals into gold, all the efforts of the alchemist's Art would be vain.

*Now we can give a solution of the  
difficulties suggested in Objections  
Nos. 18 and 19.*

Nature cannot accomplish the work of our Art, *i.e.*, the production of the Philosopher's Stone. Art, on the other hand, cannot follow as closely as many have thought in the footsteps of Nature, though it accomplishes the same work of perfecting metals. But both Art and Nature are governed by an equally prevailing principle, and the results are the same in both cases, though there may be a difference in the intermediate stages of the two processes. This is our answer to the eighteenth objection. The answer to the nineteenth objection is equally obvious, because the genera-

tion of gold according to Nature and of this gold according to our Art is, in substance, one and the same process, consisting in the purification of the active sulphur. Though the processes preceding the ultimate change are different in our Art from those employed by Nature, the ultimate result itself is identical in both cases. Thus, even if the same change which is produced by our Stone could be produced by some other medicine, the result would still be pure gold. Only this is impossible, for all Alchemy pleads aloud in favour of our Stone as the only possible Alterative Remedy of the mineral world. For there is no real connection between vegetable and animal sulphur, etc., and metallic or even mineral substances.

It should be noted that the sulphur hidden in the quicksilver is that which imparts the form of the gold, by virtue of the heat of the mineral gold and the external sulphur; hence the gold colour, which we observe in some other metals, does not justify us in calling them gold.

There is, indeed, a kind of gold which has been made of silver, reduced to the density of gold, by some pretending to a knowledge of Alchemy, which also endures all the ordinary tests, except that it is not sufficiently soft to be malleable ; that it is devoid of the true fusible quality ; that it has not the clear ring of gold ; and that it does not absorb quicksilver with sufficient rapidity ; moreover it is not possible to aureate metals therewith. But this observation shews that the ordinary tests of the assayer are delusive, and that there is such a thing as a substance which an assayer would pronounce to be gold, which yet is not real gold. This remark, however, does not apply to the gold of the alchemists, for it not only endures all the ordinary tests, but is like other gold in all respects whatsoever. The matter would wear a very different aspect if we attempted to prepare our Stone from some vegetable substance, because no vegetable substance could possibly be the means of producing real gold.



## THE GENERATION OF METALS.

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*Of the First Principles of Metals in particular, and of their Generation according to the intention of Nature; of the signs of this Generation, shewing how Art must follow Nature in having similar outward signs, and the same First Principles, in the generation of the Philosopher's Stone. Herein is contained the whole Secret of Nature.*

**I**F two things generally belong together, and if one of them is sometimes found apart, the other will also be sometimes found apart. For instance, that which is moved and that which moves form a pair; if that which is moved occurs by itself, that which moves must also be found by itself. We have seen that quicksilver and sulphur are the first principles of metals, and that the former is developed by the latter. When the sulphur has done its work for the

quicksilver, it is separated from it, so that the quicksilver remains by itself. It follows that the sulphur must also be by itself. If, at the end of the digestive process, the sulphur remains mixed with the quicksilver, the result will be one of the base metals. Art, following in the footsteps of Nature, takes the same substance, and as Nature, at the end of her work, separates off the sulphur, and imparts to the quicksilver in an instant the form of gold, leaving the sulphur on one side, so Art must, in all essential points, follow the guidance of Nature. When the artist sees the quicksilver in a separate condition, he knows that the sulphur is also by itself. This separation must take place if the Philosopher's Stone is to be evolved, and then the substance will receive its form at its own proper time, as assigned to it by Nature. *Note that we have here the whole Secret of Nature and the Art.*

Every solid substance, like wood, stone, etc., is bounded by its proper limits, because its solidity gives it power



to retain its own shape. But water, oil, and all liquids are bounded by something else. So our metallic humour is at first bounded by something else ; but when it becomes perfectly solid and fixed, it also is bounded by its own limits.

*Note with regard to the Quicksilver,  
etc., etc.*

When quicksilver is first used in our Magistry, it is bounded by something else ; but if we would retain it, we should take care to enclose it within its own limits, *i.e.*, to coagulate it with its earthy parts, and not with foreign substances.

*Note in regard to the Conversion of the  
Elements.*

Then the elements are changed one into another, water into earth, and air into fire. For its earthy parts are nothing but the hidden gold of the Sages, also called the "Body," or "Ferment," or "Poison." Moreover, when digestion is complete, it is made evident by the separation of all superfluous and corrupting sulphur, at which point the operation should finish.

*Note with regard to the superfluous  
Sulphur, etc.*

At the beginning of the process of digestion there were two kinds of superfluous sulphur, of which the first was subtle and combustibile. By means of the evaporation in the sublimation this sulphur is separated from the quicksilver. But there is another gross, earthy, and feculent sulphur, which sinks to the bottom of the vessel, over which is the pure, volatile substance. For as in the digestion of must and blood there is separated therefrom a subtle and a gross superfluous substance, and the pure liquid is between the two, so, in our work, there is a fiery and subtle, and a gross and earthy, sulphureous superfluity. This separation is brought about by digestion or coction, supervised by Art, which prevents the volatile elements from escaping. So long as the sulphur remains joined to the quicksilver the work is imperfect, just as metals are imperfect under the same conditions, that is, in comparison with gold. This

substance is the quicksilver of the Sages; and it permits of being united with glass; in other words, with its body, ferment, poison, or salt. This is that which imbibes glass as a thirsty man drinks cold water; this is the medium of union between Sun and Moon; the same is the electrum of Nature. It is also the fugitive slave, and blessed is he who can overtake him, for his nature adapts itself to all things. This also is called Virgin's milk. The same substance is meant by all these expressions. The colour which appears when the first coction is complete is whiteness; then we know that the quicksilver is fully separated from the sulphur; hence we observe at this stage the brilliant splendour of the quicksilver.

It should, however, be noted that the white colour is easily affected by all other colours in turn, seeing that it readily receives their nature and composition. This susceptibility of the white colour to even a small portion of some other colour may be observed in the dyeing of wool and silk. For

whiteness is the element and foundation of all other colours. White substances are equally open to modifications of taste and scent, as, for example, the facility with which the insipid flavour of water may be itself changed by the addition of some more savoury substance. The same rule holds good with the simple atmospheric air, which very easily becomes contaminated by odours. In the case of metals this rule does not obtain, for a small quantity of quicksilver whitens a large portion of gold or copper.

*Note as regards the Digestion of  
Quicksilver.*

When by means of our alchemical digestion we obtain quicksilver from the principles of the metals, then is manifested a full and homogeneous whiteness, but we must take care to remember that the orange colour of gold, and the final redness, are both hidden beneath this whiteness. The same will persist till the quicksilver has been overcome, after which the orange and red will replace it. The quicksilver assimilates everything

else to its own colour, so long as it is in a liquid state ; but its colour is changed as soon as it is coagulated. It is coagulated by the perfecting agent within itself, *i.e.*, that divine sulphur, which appears white so long as the quicksilver is liquid, but imparts to the quicksilver its own red colour as soon as it is coagulated. This divine sulphur is of the nature and form of the Sun (gold), while the quicksilver is of the nature of the Moon (silver). When these two waters are combined, coagulation takes place with a colour of the whiteness of snow ; and this whiteness signifies the eternal peace and concord of the elements, and the accomplishment of the Great Work of Alchemy.

*Two Secrets: How far also Art is more sublime even than Nature.*

Hereby two secrets are revealed to us in our Art. The first is the mode of operation ; the second is the material, which is so secret, that, though it be very clearly described, men cannot find it. In Nature there is only one coction ;

but as it is necessary to elicit from the white matter the red colour which lies hidden beneath, it is necessary also to have two magisteries, coctions, or digestive processes, in our Art. A mistake is often made in attempting to imitate too closely the exact methods of Nature, instead of following the great principles of Nature only. The form of gold must be imparted to common metals from within, by development, and not from without, by infusion. Those metals which have a larger admixture of sulphur, partake more of the nature of sulphur, while those which have a larger admixture of quicksilver, partake more of the nature of quicksilver. But as sulphur does not mingle with gold, the substance of gold must consist entirely of quicksilver; and since the Philosopher's Stone is the form of gold, and is required to inform the other metals, it must be generated from quicksilver alone. The form of a thing is more noble than the thing itself, and our Stone is, for this reason, more precious



than gold. For the form is that which makes a thing what it is.

*Of the Form and Matter we obtain a Compound ; this Matter is Quicksilver and the Common Metals, and the compound is Gold.*

The result of our Magistry is the form of gold. This form by itself would be nothing, because it is unable to manifest its virtues and operations, unless it be combined with some matter, and form a compost therewith ; but as it is the form of gold which makes gold what it is, so when our Stone impresses itself upon any common metal, it subtly pervades it with the said form of gold in every smallest part, or, in other words, turns it into gold. Here the substance is quicksilver and the common metals, the form is our Stone, and the resultant compound is gold.

Thus there is only one Stone, both white and red, as all Alchemy testifies ; for as the form of all individuals of the same species is one and the same, it follows that the form of all gold is the

same, and that there can be only one Stone, because Alchemy sets itself to turn all metals into gold. Notice also that in most metals you find neither quicksilver by itself, nor sulphur by itself, but a mixture of the two which has the power of development into gold. This is the metallic First Matter, and only an ignorant person will look for it in the vegetable or animal world.

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#### EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSION.

*Shewing why the Philosopher denied this Art, and how he subsequently admitted the Secret of Gold-making.*

In his fourth book of *Meteorology*, Aristotle explains why he apparently denied the truth of Alchemy. It was this form, he says, which induced the ancient Sages to speak of a form apart from its substance.

He alludes to the Platonists and Pythagoreans, who spoke of forms or ideas as if they existed somewhere in the air, apart from their concrete mani-



festations, and were imparted from without to combinations of matter disposed in a certain suitable way. This view is opposed by Aristotle, though it seems that Plato spoke figuratively, and was thinking of the operation of our Stone. In the passage which we have quoted, Aristotle certainly appears to understand him in that sense. But in his *Metaphysics*, Aristotle was anxious to uphold his own view with regard to forms in general, and therefore he spoke as he did. He opposed Plato according to the literal sense of his words ; but he never for a moment intended to assail their occult and mystical meaning. In his old age the secret became known to him, and therefore he recanted in his last work the opinion which he had apparently set forth in his earlier writings. When he wrote against our Art he was a young man, and was reasoning in a general way ; but in his old age he gave the deliberate verdict of his experience, and spoke from particular knowledge. No one is really qualified to pass judgment

upon any art or science who knows nothing about it, and is only reasoning from general or universal premises : for nothing is more deceptive than such reasoning, and there is no more frequent or fruitful source of error. Moreover, the opinion of an old man is infinitely more valuable than the haphazard talk of youth, since young men—according to Aristotle himself—are not wise, while wisdom is an attribute of old age. As an old man, Aristotle agreed with the ancient Sages, and was heartily willing to admit that this Art is true, and according to Nature, as he has set forth at length in his *Epistle to King Alexander*.

A DEMONSTRATION OF ALCHEMY AFTER  
ANOTHER MANNER.

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*Here follow the reasons shewing, by a different method from that employed above, that the Art of Alchemy is true, and that the Gold of the Stone is purer and more perfect even than Natural Gold.*

THE gold and silver produced by our Art are better and purer than those developed in the ordinary way, because alchemical gold is perfectly purged of all sulphureous dross, while natural gold is still blackened, corrupted, and rendered more perishable by the presence of a sulphureous remnant, for which reason also it is somewhat diminished in the fire. Natural gold is still capable of a higher degree of perfection, but our gold is the highest perfection of the

metallic substance. Art might give to gold a more intense colouring than Nature, but refrains from doing so, in order not to transcend the bounds of Nature. If the artist knows the two first substances employed by Nature, and Nature's mode of operation, it will also be possible for him to elaborate real gold.

Now we will mention the chief reasons which prove that our gold is, to say the least, as good as the gold of Nature; these arguments will also establish the truth of Alchemy, and its claims.

Every undigested thing capable of digestion, and every impure thing capable of purification, can be digested and expurgated. Now this is the case with iron, lead, copper, tin, etc.; consequently, they can be completely digested, and for any metal to be perfectly pure and digested is to be gold or silver; hence all metals can be changed into gold. As in every digestion there is some superfluity, it must be separated from the substance by means of di-

gestion, because heat brings together things homogeneous and separates things heterogeneous. Outward heat aids the inward or natural digestive heat, and in this way the digestion is accelerated and perfected – as food is better digested if the inward animal heat be aided by warm baths. In the case of fruits, we see that when there is a deficiency of outward heat, they are not properly ripened. This want of inward heat we meet with in all metals except gold; and, in comparison with gold, this is true even of silver. Complete digestion is also called optesis or elixir, while its opposite is described by Aristotle as scatesis or assation. In the case of assation the inward heat is not so completely drawn out by means of moisture as in the case of those metals which are subject to optesis. By digestion, or optesis, as the philosopher informs us, a new metal is formed out of common metals, because the digestion of the substance is now complete. That which begins to generate by means of digestion,

must also complete what it has undertaken by means of digestion, because it is the same agent which predisposes to a certain form and imparts the form itself. This agent is Nature, either by herself, or with the aid of Art. Do we not see lead, and gold, and all metals, generated by Nature in mines out of their first principles, viz., quicksilver and sulphur? But this generation is not brought about without a transitional substance intermediate between the softness of quicksilver and the malleable hardness of the metals. This intermediate substance is coagulated, but not purified, and according to the different conditions of digestion, time, place, quality, etc., becomes either gold, or a common metal with a predisposition to be developed into gold. This intermediate matter is that on which our Art sets to work; and it strives to purify and digest it into the form of gold, which can change all other metals into that precious substance. Thus the digestion of our Art is different not in kind but in degree, place, and



time, from that of Nature, being as much more perfect as the form of gold is more perfect than gold itself. But if our digestion, and our place, or artificial organ, are at least equal in power to those of Nature, it is clear that, the Art of Alchemy is possible, as far as the conditions of place and digestion are concerned. Moreover, our Art must attain better results than Nature, because it can bring a well-regulated supply of outward heat to bear on the material, and this outward heat powerfully aids the inward action. But the very question whether our Art is able to change back gold into one of the common metals is absurd: certainly Nature never attempts anything of the kind. Nor does our Art endeavour to change one imperfect metal into another, since for such a course there is no precedent in Nature. We might indeed change each imperfect metal into the next higher, as Nature may be supposed to do, if we only knew the exact mixture of quicksilver and sulphur required for such

a purpose ; but as we do not, and shall never know, we can only change imperfect metals into gold, in which, as we are aware, there must be a total absence of impure sulphur. It is quite possible, however, as Geber says, that this change of one imperfect metal into the one next above it may sometimes take place accidentally, through the failure of an attempt to commute them into gold. Another difficulty is propounded by those who fully admit the possibility of imitating the digestive process by which Nature effects the transmutation of common into precious metals ; but as Nature requires so many years for that purpose, they do not see how our elixir can bring about the change in a moment of time. We answer that the digestion of gold and of our elixir are alone complete ; but whereas gold is a compound, and is only sufficiently digested for its own purposes, the elixir is the form of gold, and its digestion suffices not only for itself, but is so exuberant, and capable of such indefinite multiplication,



as to make up in a brief space of time for what is wanting in the common metals. The digestion itself does not take place in a few moments, but has been brought about by the preparation of the Elixir in our Magistry, and is now simply transferred to the common metal in a few moments ; moreover, we must not forget to reckon the amount of digestion which has already taken place in the common metal.

And if it be further objected that quicksilver is not half digested like the other metals, but quite crude and undigested, we answer that all the perfection of metals consists in their quicksilver, and that when common metals are perfected, they are cleared of all corrupting sulphur, and only their quicksilver is perfected into gold ; as soon as the quicksilver is thus purified, it is of the same nature with the elixir, and can receive some of its exuberant digestion. It is thus very well possible for our Art to imitate Nature in the generation of gold and silver. The whole process is admirably

illustrated by Aristotle's remarks in regard to *atramenta*, in the fourth chapter of his *Meteorology*, and we cannot do better than refer the learned reader to that passage. We are here at least convinced that there is no natural process which Art cannot imitate by simply following in the footsteps of Nature and availing itself of every short cut which may be suggested by the opportunity of the case. The chief reason why it is not so easy for Art to imitate Nature lies in the fact that it is sometimes difficult to find the first substance employed by Nature, as Aristotle says in his first book on *Heaven and the World*. The want of material is the chief cause in anything why something like it is not generated. Hence, if Art is to generate the same things as Nature, it must succeed in discovering the exact substance with which Nature works, and must then deal with it according to Nature's methods. Since, then, our Art has found the substance of gold and silver, it is proved to be possible, as far

as the substance is concerned. And as our Art possesses also the form of gold and silver, and the combination of the substance and form of anything will produce that thing, it is clear that the Art of Alchemy must possess the secret of producing silver and gold. Moreover, the substance of anything is never found by itself, but always in combination with its form. From this very fact it would follow that if alchemists are really in possession of the substance of our Stone, they must also be able to evolve its form. It is, then, the business of the alchemist to consider the form of metals, both perfect and imperfect, and the two are ultimately found to be both the form and the substance of gold. The proper method of procedure in the proper substance causes the generation of the form in that substance. The substance of common metals is the same as that of gold; if, then, the form of gold, or the elixir, be added to them, they must become gold. As the common metals become gold and silver by means of

a natural process, it is quite possible that the same result should be brought about by means of the alchemist's art.

*Second Argument.*

Whatever has the same causes as some other thing, has also the same accidents, or, in our case, the same composition. Now, the causes of all metals are the same, consequently they all have the same composition. For their matter, their form, and their ultimate destination are the same. They are all equally fusible and malleable, which is not the case with any other substances, and shews that they are all destined to the same ultimate form. There are some substances which resemble metals in all other respects, but are wanting in these two qualities.

*Third Argument.*

Things which agree in matter are easily changed into each other; now metals answer to this condition, consequently they are mutually transmutable. The reason why they are easily changed into each other is that they are all not

very remote from their common first matter, which admits of division into the four elements. Moreover, they all consist of the same matter, viz., quicksilver and sulphur, which again facilitates their mutual transmutation. Amongst metals there is only one that is quite perfect, and represents the highest stage of metallic completeness, namely, gold, and all the others have a predisposition to be changed into it. Hermes Trismegistus says that the inter-generation, transmutation, and conversion of the metals is like that of the elements. If, then, elements are changed into each other, though each is perfect in itself, how much more must this be the case with metals which are all, except gold, in a state of transition towards a more perfect state, especially as metals all have the same matter digested in the same way, which is by no means the case with the elements. Again, when two metals are mixed, the compound still retains all the metallic accidents and properties; but this remark does not hold good with

regard to the elements ; for their compounds differ very considerably from their simple essences ; nor do they mix so easily as metals. Thus it is patent to everyone that the metals must all be classified together, for they only represent different stages of the same thing. The reason that Art imitates Nature is that Nature is governed by a Supreme Intelligence, which has its earthly counterpart in the human Reason, the presiding genius of our Art, as of all Arts. Art brings about new natural conditions, which are not found in Nature, and thus achieves wonders which Nature cannot, or, at any rate, does not, accomplish.

*Fourth Argument.*

Whatever is in an intermediate stage of development towards something may become that something if its development be not hindered, or if the hindrance be removed. But the imperfect metals are in this state, consequently, etc. An intermediate substance may much more easily attain to perfection than a first substance ; for it is already



nearer to the final stage of perfection. Aristotle says that there are two ways in which one thing may be developed out of something else ; either that thing may be in an intermediate stage, and attain to perfection, *e.g.*, a man may be developed out of a boy, or one extreme may pass into another extreme, *e.g.*, water may become air. The former change is more naturally accomplished than the latter.

*Fifth Argument.*

Fifthly and lastly, whatever is on the way towards a certain goal may naturally be made to attain that goal ; this is the case as regards common metals in respect to gold ; consequently, they may be developed into gold. This proposition is clearly established by the fact that all metals are potentially gold.

These reasons, which prove the truth of Alchemy, may be deemed sufficient. As to the rest, it is far easier to forge arguments against anything than to prove the falsity of those arguments, especially in dealing with such a mysterious Art as that of Alchemy.

AN EXCELLENT INTRODUCTION  
TO THE ART OF ALCHEMY.

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FOLLOWING CHAPTERS.

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- Chapter VI.—The coagulum, the milk, the male and the female of the Stone.
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and bronze, by means of the Stone. Special attention should be paid to this solution, as it is of great importance.

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These chapters, with the arguments previously determined, are faithfully and diligently compiled from the treatise of Master Peter Bonus, of Ferrara, a concordance of all ancient and modern Sages, forming an excellent introduction to the Art of Alchemy. By him it is named the Precious New Pearl.

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Bonus tells us that as beginners we are apt to consider this an easy Art; but as we get to know more about it, we find that we were grievously mistaken in our first impression. On every side we are confronted with so many doubts, difficulties, and apparent contradictions, that we are apt to wonder, after a time, at the youthful rashness and foolhardiness with which we began the study. But in the following chapters we hope to set all difficulties at rest.

## CHAPTER I.

*The Matter of the Philosopher's Stone.  
The Matter of the Metals, and its  
causes, properties, and qualities.*

THE great Geber tells us that metals are substantially composed of quicksilver and sulphur ; though sulphur is their active principle rather than part of their substance. Their differences are generally traceable to a difference in the sulphur, which is found white, yellowish, red, saffron-coloured, green, and black, while the quicksilver, considered by itself, is always the same. Sometimes, indeed, the quicksilver has an earthy appearance, but this is owing to an admixture of lead, and can be remedied by a process of purification. Now, as sulphur, which is the proper coagulum of quicksilver, varies in its colour, while quicksilver is always white, it follows that the quicksilver

receives its colour from the sulphur, and the sulphur causes the peculiar colour of the different metals. Everything else that is found in metals is more or less impure, and does not really belong to them. It should be noticed that, when metals are mixed, the quicksilver readily combines with quicksilver, because it is the same substance in all metals. But this cannot be said of the sulphur, because it is not the same in all metals.

*Note.*

Hence, fixed sulphur retards fusion and liquefaction in metals, and entirely prevents it where its quantity exceeds that of the quicksilver. The latter is the case in iron, and the said metal is, therefore, not fusible. This fact we are taught by experience, for when we desire to make fixed sulphur, we must calcine it, and that which is calcined is not susceptible of fusion. But sulphur which is not fixed accelerates fusion, as we see in the case of arsenic, which is of the nature of sulphur, and brings about the fusion of red-hot iron. That it is

sulphur which prevents fusion, we see from the fact that when miners smelt ore, there ascends a sulphureous vapour before fusion takes place, and if we collect this substance in a vessel, it is found to resemble orpiment. But both its smell and its properties shew that it consists largely of sulphur. In the same way, fixed sulphur is said to be the cause of the hardness of metals, as we see in iron and brass. Therefore, also, sulphur is the cause of fixation in metals, Sulphur, which is not fixed, on the other hand, is the cause of metallic softness, and of volatilization under the test of fire, as we see in lead and tin. But quicksilver, whether fixed or not, is the cause of metallic fusion. Whatever substances are fused with great difficulty are quickly coagulated (on account of the sulphur which they contain) and *vice versa*.

Sulphur easily adheres to iron and brass, and readily mingles with silver, which has a proportion of combustible sulphur, and also with lead, the latter

because lead contains many parts of sulphur which is not fixed. It does not mingle well with tin because of the large quantity of quicksilver which the latter contains. With gold it does not mix at all, because gold is purged of all its sulphur. Quicksilver, on the other hand, enters gold very readily, as it also does silver, and—in a less degree—tin and lead, because of the large quantity of undigested quicksilver contained in them. Brass will receive it with difficulty, and iron not at all, except by an artifice. To tin it adheres on account of its undigested state, and on account of its large quantity of quicksilver. To gold it adheres most easily of all, because gold abounds in quicksilver. The fixed fusible quicksilver, then, is the cause of perfection in metals, and the less fixed it is, the further it is from perfection. Sulphur, on the other hand, whether fixed or volatile, is the cause of corruption and imperfection, so long as it remains in metals. Hence, we conclude that our noble Stone consists of quicksilver ex-

clusively without any trace of external sulphur. This we see from the fact that quicksilver takes to nothing in the whole world more kindly than to gold; nothing, on the other hand, is more unlike gold than sulphur. Whoever denies that quicksilver is the true substance of metals, is like one who says that snow is not white. And because the Stone must enter the metals in all their parts, it is clear that it must consist entirely of quicksilver. Our assertion is borne out by the authority of Rhasis, Alphidius, and Geber. Rhasis, in his *Seventy Precepts*, affirms that Mercury is the root of all things, it only should be prepared, and from it is derived a good tincture, and a strong and conquering impression. Alphidius declares, on the evidence of all the sages, that the work of wisdom consists solely in quicksilver. So also Geber says, in his chapter on the procreation of iron: Let us praise the Blessed, Glorious, and most High God, Who created quicksilver, and gave it a substance, and imparted to its substance



properties which no other substance on earth can possess. It is the perfection of our Art, it is our victory which overcomes fire, and is not overcome by it, but delights in its heat, and gently and amicably reposes in it, etc. Though in his book on *The Coagulation of Mercury by Precipitation* he says that this medicine is elicited from metallic bodies with their sulphur and arsenic, he really means the same thing, but he expresses himself somewhat obscurely. We do not, however, need the testimony of the ancients to convince us that quicksilver without external sulphur must be the substance of the Stone, which, as has been said, is the form of gold. The fact is brought home to us with sufficient force by the evidence of our eyes, if, indeed, we have ever observed the facility and amicable readiness with which quicksilver joins itself to gold.

*Query: Is sulphur a material part of gold and of our Stone?*

But it may be objected that our argument proves too much, and that

sulphur must actually form a material part of gold and of the Stone of the Philosophers. If quicksilver must be the matter of the Stone, because it readily unites with gold, we may say with quite as much justice that sulphur must form part of this matter, because it very easily mingles with quicksilver, and especially because sulphur is the proper coagulum of quicksilver. If any one, says the philosopher Aristotle, would coagulate quicksilver so as to change it into gold or the Stone, he must do so by means of sulphur, for whenever sulphur is withdrawn from the quicksilver it becomes liquid as before; unless, therefore, the sulphur remain permanently with the quicksilver, it cannot become gold or the Stone. Moreover, quicksilver is white, and the Stone is universally admitted to be red—hence sulphur must form part of its substance. Yet we answer as before, that quicksilver alone is the whole material cause, and the whole substance of the Stone.



You should, however, know that quicksilver in its first creation has many parts of an earthy, white, sulphureous matter mingled with it, which are most subtle and belong to its own material substance, and without which it would have no consistency. These particles cause first its white and then its red colour in the operation of the Magistry. Thus Aristotle calls quicksilver a water mingled with a certain subtle sulphureous earth. A hint to the same effect is thrown out by Geber in his chapter on the nature of quicksilver. There is an inward sulphur as well as an outward, he tells us, and this internal sulphur forms part of the substance of the quicksilver, and is the true agent in coagulating it. At least, both are not fixed, and both are instrumental in coagulating the Mercury. But when the quicksilver with its own inward sulphur is fixed and coagulated, and has received from it either the white or the red colour, then the external sulphur can no longer combine with it, because they have

become dissimilar. Hence it may be urged that it cannot form part of the substance of our Stone.

Here we come upon the great secret of our Art, that quicksilver is coagulated, not by any mixture with anything else, but is both coagulated and coloured unto perfection by its own internal sulphur, while it is coloured and coagulated to corruption by external sulphur. If the quicksilver could be coagulated by any other substance, whether mineral, vegetable, or animal, it would be a foreign coagulum, and the coagulation would not be that which we require. We see, then, that this external sulphur, though it be active in metallic generation, cannot itself form part of the substance of our Stone; and the task before us is to get the quicksilver by itself, and to coagulate it without the contaminating influence of the outward sulphur, since that which generates cannot be part of the substance generated.

## CHAPTER II.

*Explains the Dictum of the Ancient Sages  
that "Sulphur alone is the matter  
of the Stone and of Gold."*

THOSE who superficially skim the writings of the Sages might arrive at the conclusion, that sulphur alone is the substance of our Stone. So Rosinus says that incombustible sulphur, which has prevailed against fire, is that which the Sages are in search of, and, elsewhere, that no tincture can be obtained except through pure water of sulphur. Again, the precious colour of the philosophers is derived from sulphur. So, also, Solomon, the son of David, calls sulphur the Stone which God has placed above all other stones, which is prized by those who know it, and thought vile by the multitude. Bulus, in the *Turba Philosophorum*, asserts that the pure water is obtained from sulphur, yet not from one

sulphur only, but from several things which make up one sulphur. And Anaxagoras exclaims : “ Know that the perfection of this work is the water of sulphur.”

To this question we, nevertheless, answer, as above, that the perfection of our Magistry consists in quicksilver alone, which contains in its composition dry, sulphureous particles, which tinge and colour it white in actuality, and red in potentiality, and are that which gives to it perfection and form. But, as this internal sulphur cannot be active without some outward impulse, Nature has added to it, in all metallic ore, a certain external sulphur which stirs it into action. Our Magistry, of course, imitates Nature in this respect. Because of this inward sulphur, which coagulates the quicksilver, and forms part of it, and is unknown to the multitude, the ancient Sages have spoken of quicksilver as sulphur, and this hidden sulphur is made manifest in the Magistry of our Art by a grand artifice. Our sulphur, say they, is not

the sulphur of the multitude, because common sulphur burns with a black smoke and is consumed ; but the sulphur of the Sages burns with a white smoke and is perfected thereby. It is this sulphur which whitens and imparts the red colour, and coagulates and perfects the quicksilver into the substance of gold in Nature, and of the Philosopher's Stone in our Art.

It should be observed that, as everything is composed of matter and form, and is what it is by virtue of its form, a thing has the more being the more it possesses of the form. Quantity does not enter into the definition of form, since quantity and passivity belong to matter. When the substance is small in proportion to the form, there is much activity, much virtue, with great intensity of being, because there is proportionately much form. Concentrated force is more powerful than that which is divided. If this be so, we may say that, as the red luminous sulphur hidden in the quicksilver is the form of gold, it is that

which tinges and transforms every kind of metal into gold. For this reason, the tincture is said to be derived rather from the quality and form, or sulphur, than from the quantity, or quicksilver. The intense redness thereof approaches black, or the colour of liver and of aloes, as declared in the *Book of Three Words*. Since one part of it tinges and forms a thousand parts of any metal into gold, according to the concensus of the philosophers, it must have much strength, a concentrated entity, and much form, or, rather, itself is the pure form of gold. Hence, on account of its redness, its operation can be extended to a great quantity of any kind of metal, so as to tinge and perfect it into gold. When the Stone is brought into loving contact with common metals, it purges away the external corrupting sulphur; thus they become white, and of the nature of pure quicksilver, and the form of gold being added to its substance, of course they become gold. This tincture, by means of which the perfecting process is



brought about, is the sulphur of the Sages, the divine sulphur, and the Stone of the Philosophers, the secret sulphur with which all things are aureated and beautified. It is the precious substance which the Sages call by so many mysterious names : the Shadow of the Sun, the coagulum of quicksilver, that which flies with things flying and rests with things at rest, the gold of the Philosophers, that which is sought of many and found of few, the Quintessence, the salt of armonia, the Vinegar of the Sages, the Golden Tree, of whose fruit whosoever eats shall not hunger again ; that which is nourished and generated in the fire, and delights in it as in its native element ; that which, like man, is a microcosm or little world. It is the second sulphur which is joined to the first sulphur, producing a third sulphur, of which it is said that sulphurs are contained in sulphurs.

*Note concerning the Water and the Oil of Sulphur.*

The water of sulphur, or oil of

sulphur, is quicksilver extracted from this composite sulphur. It is a living water, and that which the sages call the Virgin's Milk, the pure, heavenly, and glorious water. It is sometimes referred to as the flying bird, which is substantially identical with the said sulphur, but diverse from the vulgar kind.

*Is Sulphur alone the whole Material  
of Gold?*

Some have said that gold is a substance which is digested in the bowels of the earth out of a most pure orange-coloured sulphur alone, with an admixture of quicksilver just sufficient to give it brightness and malleability. But they say that gold receives from sulphur its substance, colour, fusibility, and all the rest of its proper accidents. We answer that the ancient sages had some good reason for connecting each of the seven metals with one of the seven planets, as the heavenly influence from which it derived its peculiar properties. Thus, lead was assigned to Saturn, tin to Jupiter, iron to Mars, gold to the



Sun, copper to Venus, silver to the Moon. But to Mercury they assigned no metal, because only these six have attained to coagulation, with fusibility and malleability. In the seventh place, however, they did place Mercury, not as a metal, but as the First Matter of all metals. If they had thought that this place belonged to sulphur, they would have associated sulphur, and not Mercury, with the seventh planet. Hence, it must be concluded that quicksilver, and not sulphur, is the origin, matter, and substance of metals.

The question now arises as to what Aristotle meant by refusing to identify the material of a thing with its form, as was done by the Platonists and the Pythagoreans. It is clear from his words that he did not take the meaning of the ancient Sages. The material of Alchemy—the first matter, or chaos, according to the ancients, is that in which everything exists in a confused state, *i.e.*, the quicksilver of the Sages in its primary condition, generated by

a kind of preliminary digestion. This is the Stone which they seek, concealed from the senses, but manifested to the mind, the form and flower of gold. The knowledge of this material is more important than anything else in Alchemy. For it opens up the knowledge of all other causes, properties, and conditions, and, finally, of the form itself. But if we do not know the right material, it is simply impossible for us to know anything about it. Hence, this question : What is the material?—must be the first problem solved by the student of Alchemy.

This material is, of course, by its very nature, disposed to receive its own proper form, just as the grain of wheat has in it the disposition to become wheat. Thus, if we define matter as that in which the form inheres, there is, after all, not so much difference between material and form, but that, in our Art at least, we may confidently identify them. There could be no such thing as a substantial form, if there were no

material possessing a capacity of being developed in a certain direction. If anyone, then, would know the form of gold, he must first know the material of the Stone. Hence, we see that real insight into the nature of a thing depends on an accurate knowledge of its material.

### CHAPTER III.

*We must now proceed to enquire what are the Elements of the Stone, and how they are the same in gold as in all composite substances, not only on earth, but also in the heavens.*

WE affirm that all elements of the Stone must be first purified, and then evenly mixed in the right proportions, so that the resultant compound may be permanent. Hence it is necessary to say something about the elements. There are many persons at the present day, even as there were some in the past, and will be others in the future, so long as investigators abide by the literal words of the Sages, who know not the meaning of our Art, and are endeavouring to extract the Philosopher's Stone from all sorts of fantastic animal and vegetable substances. These substances they have subjected to all the processes

described in our orthodox treatises, and have obtained in the end something white, and something red, which, however, have none of the blessed properties of our Stone. These persons do not know that every form must be extracted from that proximate matter in which it is potentially contained; that is to say, the material and the form must both belong to the same natural genus. If we wish to understand the nature of a man, we shall not waste our time in studying the essential properties of a tree or of a stone; for then we should never get beyond these substances, which, however interesting in themselves, are quite foreign to our subject. Alchemy sets itself to transmute metals into gold; hence we must study the essential properties of gold and of the other metals, and we must look for our first substance among metals, and not in the animal or vegetable world. Know, then, that a knowledge of the essence and nature of a thing is obtained from a knowledge of its first principles, or proximate causes.

We cannot understand the changes of bodies, or even of quicksilver itself, if we have no radical knowledge of its essential properties. The principles of being and of knowing, says Aristotle, are the same—as things are, so they must also be understood and known. If we understand the substance of our Stone as it is, there is nothing left to study but the method of treatment, and this method will be suggested by the knowledge we already possess.

Every compound consists of a mixture of four elements, two of which are enclosed, viz., fire and air, while two enclose them, viz., earth and water, whence we see that in every composite there is a superabundance of earth and water. Fire and air are the formal and moving principles, the two others are the material and passive principles. The virtue of fire and air can appear only in earth and water, as the virtue of the form can appear only in the substance. For even as the form is included or hidden in the matter, so are fire and air concealed in



earth and water. Rhasis calls fire and air the occult, water and earth the manifest, principles of a compound. Since, then, the strong are enclosed by the weak, the compound is easily corrupted, and the formal principles by their exhalation give to the others form, colour, taste, smell, etc. ; but so long as the material principles remain, they are not wholly deserted by the formal. If, on the other hand, the compound is not easily destroyed, it is on account of the strength of the enclosing principles. If both are weak, the whole compound is very perishable, *e.g.*, camphor. If both are equally strong, every smallest part of the compound coheres in a permanent union with every other. When the humid and the dry, and the hot and the cold, are so evenly balanced that there is an equilibrium of the elements, they are perfectly united, and the compound is indestructible.

The elements of our Art, then, are the humid and the dry, *i.e.*, water and earth. In water there is enclosed air,

and in earth fire. But the radical element from which all others are derived, is humidity, or water, that is, liquefaction, or, according to others, earth. We may reconcile the two views by stating, on the authority of Empedocles, that when water is thickened, it becomes earth: earth floats upon the waters, and is founded upon the waters, as we learn from Morienus and Hermes. When wax is in a liquid state, it is like water; when it becomes coagulated, it is dry, like earth; and yet its weight is the same in both cases. Alexander sets forth, in his *Epistle*, that all the Philosophers apply the name of fire to everything that is hot, of water to all that is fluxible, and of earth or stone to whatsoever is coagulated. But neither water nor any other element by itself is of much use to us in this Art. They must all be first separated and severally purified, and then recombined in even proportions—that is to say, when the water has been purified, we must add to it the purified earth, and then we shall



have all the four indissolubly united, and the work will be perfect. If they are not so united, the fire resolves the water into steam, together with the earth, and the whole compound perishes. If, then, you would succeed in mixing elements, you must know their nature and properties. Convert the elements, says Alexander ; make the humid dry, and the volatile fixed, and you have what you seek. Know that, then, all elements are actually converted into earth, and the other elements are, and remain, with it potentially and virtually. Hence, Hermes says that earth is the element out of which everything is made, and into which everything is converted. In the composition of the Stone and of gold we have a perfect equation of the elements. This well-tempered substance can neither be destroyed by the violence of the fire, nor vitiated by the impurity of the earth, nor spoiled by an excess of water or air. The Stone and gold are thus generated in the fire, and, like everything else, flourish in their native

element. They are, therefore, indestructible by fire, and are rather perfected and improved by it than otherwise.

These remarks, in the opinion of the ancient Sages, had a direct bearing upon the constitution of the heavenly bodies. They, like the Philosopher's Stone, are composed of such an evenly balanced mixture of the elements as to be indestructible. The active and passive elements are so accurately matched in their composition that the formal cannot be separated from the material principles. Hence, Nature has placed nearest to them the sphere of fire, which conserves rather than destroys them. For elementary fire is related to the heavenly bodies as material fire is related to gold and our Stone. It is through this wise natural arrangement that the heavenly bodies may be said to be practically indestructible and eternal.

There are, then, four elements, by reason of the four primary qualities; and they are mutually convertible, because every one is potentially in every other,

and they are constantly generating and destroying each other. In substance, there is from the beginning of the world only one element, or First Matter, out of the conflicting qualities of which the four elements are generated by division. Similarly, there are in the first substance of this Stone four elements potentially, which by our Art are separated, and then again combined. Moreover, we believe our Stone to be incorruptible, not only through the equation of its elements, but also through the addition to it of the fifth element, just as the great world is composed of four corruptible elements, and an incorruptible one, which is the quintessence. It is this quintessence which, in the small world of our Art, holds the four elements together in indissoluble union, which also, according to Alexander, is neither hot nor cold, neither moist nor dry. This soul of our Art is the divine incorruptible sulphur. Other elements are the body, soul, and spirit, the dry and the humid, the fixed and

the volatile, the white and the red. As of all elements earth alone is fixed, and as the elements at the end of our Magistery must become fixed, it is clear that they must all be converted into earth, or the fixed state of the philosophers.

#### CHAPTER IV.

*Of the Ferment, and the modes, conditions, properties, and conversion brought about by it.*

**O**F the ferment, which is the great secret of our Art, and without which it cannot attain its goal, the Sages speak only in the very obscurest terms. They seem to use the word in two senses, meaning either the elements of the Stone itself, or that which perfects and completes the Stone. In the first sense our Stone is the leaven of all other metals, and changes them into its own nature—a small piece of leaven leavening a whole lump. As leaven, though of the same nature with dough, cannot raise it, until, from being dough, it has received a new quality which it did not possess before, so our Stone cannot change metals, until it is changed itself, and has added to it a certain virtue which it did not possess

before. It cannot change, or colour, unless it have first itself been changed and coloured, as we learn from the *Turba Philosophorum*. Ordinary leaven receives its fermenting power through the digestive virtue of gentle and hidden heat ; and so our Stone is rendered capable of fermenting, converting, and altering metals by means of a certain digestive heat, which brings out its potential and latent properties, seeing that without heat, as Theophilus tells us, neither digestion, operation, nor motion are possible. The difference between ordinary leaven and our ferment is that common leaven loses nothing of its substance in the digestive process, while digestion removes from our ferment all that is superfluous, impure, and corruptive, as is done by Nature in the preparation of gold. It is because our ferment assimilates all metals to itself, just as common leaven assimilates to itself the whole mass of dough, that it has received this name from the Sages. Hence it appears that quicksilver (being



of the same substance with the metals), when fermented and changed into the same substance as the ferment, transmutes into its own nature every fusible substance of its own kind, and, as its nature is that of gold, it converts all metals into gold.

It is true the action of this ferment is not quite analogous to that of leaven. For leaven changes the whole lump of dough into a kind of leaven ; but our Stone, instead of converting metals into the Tincture, transmutes them only into gold. Our Stone rather changes all metals into a kind of intermediate substance, such as is the substance of gold, between that which they were before and the alterative ferment. The colour, too, of gold is intermediate between the blackness of iron, the redness of copper, the livid grey of lead, and the whiteness of silver. The degree of digestion which is obtained is also intermediate between that of copper and iron on the one hand, and that of tin and lead on the other. Its fusibility further repre-

sents the golden mean, since copper is melted with difficulty, iron with more difficulty, while tin and lead are melted with the greatest ease, and silver and gold not so readily as the latter, but more readily than the former. The same intermediate quality of gold is noticeable also in its ring, that of lead and tin being dull, while that of iron and copper is sharp, and that of silver and gold moderately clear. To this middle state all metals are reduced by our Stone. For, though the virtue of our Stone is great, yet, on being mixed with common metals, its action is slightly affected by their impurity, and does not change them quite into its own likeness, but only into gold.

More difficult is the second sense of the ferment, which is the truly philosophical ferment, and wherein is the whole difficulty of our Art, for in this second sense it signifies that which perfects our Stone. The word ferment is derived from a root which denotes seething or bubbling, because it makes the



dough rise and swell, and has a hidden dominant quality which prevails to change the dough into its own nature, rectifying and reducing it to a better and nobler state. It is composed of divers hidden virtues inherent in one substance. In the same way that ferment which is mixed with our quicksilver makes it swell and rise, and prevails to assimilate it to its own nature, thus exalting it into a nobler condition. In itself quicksilver has no active virtue, but if it be mortified together with this ferment it remains joined to it for ever, and is thenceforward changed into the nature of the Sun, the whole being developed into ferment, which in turn develops all things into gold.

The ferment of which we speak is invisible to the eye, but capable of being apprehended by the mind. It is the body which retains the soul, and the soul can shew its power only when it is united to the body. Therefore, when the Artist sees the white soul arise, he should join it to its body in the very

same instant; for no soul can be retained without its body. This union takes place through the mediation of the spirit, for the soul cannot abide in the body except through the spirit, which gives permanence to their union, and this conjunction is the end of the work. Now, the body is nothing new or foreign; only that which was before hidden becomes manifest, and *vice versa*. The body is stronger than soul and spirit, and if we are to retain them, we must do so by means of the body, as the *Turba* and Plato agree. Without this hidden spiritual body the Stone can neither ferment nor be perfected. Of course, the body, soul, and spirit of our Stone are only different aspects of the same thing, and according to these aspects the Sages call it now by one name, and now by another. The soul, says Plato, must be reunited to its own body, or else you will fail, because the soul will escape you. And Hermes insists that it must be its own original body, and not one of an extraneous or

alien nature, as attempted by some who are ignorant of this arcanum. Rhasis says that the body is the form, and the spirit the matter; and rightly, because as no substance can exist without form, which is its real being, so the soul, through the mediation of the spirit, cannot be in the Stone except by the body, because its being and perfection depend on the body. Hence, the body is their bond and form, though they are the same thing. As that which imparts its form to the Stone and to gold, is something fixed, and a body, while Mercury is that which receives fixation and a form, it follows that the body is the form.

The body, then, is that which is the form, and the ferment, and the perfection, and the Tincture of which the Sages are in search. It is also the Sol and gold of the philosophers. It is white actually and red potentially; while it is white it is still imperfect, but it is perfected when it becomes red. The Sun, says Rosinus, is white in appear-

ance, and red by development. Anaxagoras teaches that the Sun is an ardent red, but the soul to which the Sun is united by the bond of the spirit is white, being of the nature of the Moon, and is called the quicksilver of the philosophers. Hermes tells us that without the Red Stone there can be no true Tincture. The red slave, says Rhasis, has wedded a white spouse. We now see the truth of the saying that there are two kinds of gold, one white and one red; but the one must be in the other. This white gold is, according to Rhasis, a neutral body, which is neither in sickness nor in health, and it is, of course, quicksilver. Geber say that no metal is submerged in it except gold, which is the medium of conjunction between the tinctures. That it is the true ferment, Hermes tells us in his seventh book, when he says: Note, that the ferment whitens the compound, prevents combustion, holds the tincture together, preserves bodies from evaporating, and makes them enter each other and

remain in union, etc. So also Morienus affirms that the ferment of gold is gold, as the ferment of dough is dough.

From these considerations we see clearly how silver and gold are of the same nature, and that silver precedes gold, and is predisposed to gold, while gold is hidden in silver, and is extracted from its womb. Hence, Senior says that the rising sun is in the waxing moon. Know, ye students of this Art, cries Zeno in the *Turba Philosophorum*, that unless you first make it white, you will not be able to make it red, because the white potentially contains the red. If there be too little gold in the compound, says Dardanus, the Tincture will be brilliantly white. Alphidius says: Know that the dealbation must come first, for it is the beginning of the whole work, and then the rubefaction must follow, which is the perfection of the whole work. Since the entire substance, viz., the soul united to the body by the spirit, is of the pure nature of gold, it is clear that whatever it converts, it must con-

vert into gold. At first, indeed, the whole mass is white, because quicksilver predominates; but because gold is dominant, though hidden, in it, when it is ferment, the mass in the second stage of our Magistery becomes red in the fulness of the potential sense, while in the third stage, or the second and last decoction, the ferment is actively dominated, and the red colour becomes manifest, and possesses the whole substance. Again, we say that this ferment is that strong substance which turns everything into its own nature. Our ferment is of the same substance as gold; gold is of quicksilver, and our design is to produce gold.

The Ancients gave the name of body to whatsoever is fixed and resists the action of heat; moreover, it has the power of retaining in a compound that which is essentially incorporeal and volatile, and attempts to volatilize the body, viz., the soul. Spirit they called that which constitutes the bond between body and soul, and, by abiding with the



body, compels the soul to return to it. And yet body, soul, and spirit are not three things, but different aspects of the same thing. As bond between body and soul, the spirit is said to prevail during the Magistry from beginning to end; so long as the substance is volatile and flees from the fire, it is called soul; when it becomes able to resist the action of the fire, it is called body. The force of the body should prevail over the force of the soul, and instead of the body being carried upward with the soul, the soul remains with the body, the work is crowned with success, and the spirit will abide with the two in indissoluble union for ever. Since, then, the body perfects and retains the soul, and imparts real being to it and the whole work, while the soul manifests its power in this body, and all this is accomplished through the mediation of the spirit, it has been well said that the body and the form are one and the same thing, the other two being called the substance.

But how are we to understand

Plato's remark that he who has once performed this work need not repeat it, as his fortune is made for ever? The words do not mean that he who has once prepared the Tincture can multiply its quantity indefinitely, just as he who has once struck fire out of a stone can always keep himself provided with fire simply by adding fuel to it. The authority of Plato is supported by that of Rhasis, who speaks in a similar fashion. They should be interpreted, however, not according to the letter, but according to the spirit. He who has once succeeded in preparing this Medicine need not any more go through the experience of all his failures and mistakes: he now knows how to perform all the processes of our Magistry properly, and, therefore, if ever he should need a fresh supply of the Medicine, he will be able to provide himself with it without much trouble.

When the Alchemist, in the course of his decoction and putrefaction, has reached the end of the first part of our



Magistry, in which is seen the simple white colour, before the appearance of any other colours, then he must straight-way set about the second part of the work, and this second part is the ferment and the fermentation of the substance. Then, if all elements are evenly combined without being touched by hand, the artist is a rich man, and has no need thenceforth, in repeating the work, to repeat all his former mistakes. But, if he does not combine the elements evenly, the whole substance will vanish into thin air, and the Alchemist will have lost his hoped-for riches. If, says Haly, you do not find this Stone, when it germinates, no other will arise in its place. Beware, says Plato, lest in the fermentation you come to a bitter end. If there be any hindrance or obstacle in the solution, there will most likely be corruption in the augmenting. The right moment must be seized here, as in all other things. When you are baking bread or sweetmeats, or any other solid substance, the moment will arrive when they are

perfectly done ; and if after that moment you leave them in the oven ever so short a time, they will be marred, burnt, and destroyed. Haly compares the preparation of our Stone to that of soap, which is spoiled if boiled beyond a certain point. Hence the artist must be extremely watchful, and as soon as the substance has reached its most subtle stage, he must put an end to the digestive process ; if he pushes it any further, the combined forces of the fire and the volatile part of the substance overcome its fixed part, and the whole evaporates. He who knows how to pacify and assuage the hostility of the elements will be successful in our Magistry, but no other.

The object of what has been said is to shew that at the close of the perfect decoction and putrefaction, Nature, by the ministration of our Art, generates a bare simple matter, not united to its form ; this matter the Ancients called first matter, on account of its resemblance to the first matter of the world, before it

received its form. This matter needs to be united to its form, which form is the ferment, and is hidden in its womb. This conjunction must take place immediately the matter is born ; the same will then become durable and imperishable. Nature, unassisted, cannot effect this union, because it is irrational, and its operations go on for ever in successive renovation and destruction ; but the Artist can watch the proper moment, and preserve that which the fire has generated. Now, when the conjunction has taken place, the substance has nothing more to fear from the fire. If one only knows the right moment, the conjunction is a very easy process ; and when it takes place, there are many wonderful phenomena, as Morienus testifies. It is brought about by a well-tempered fire, the action of which is stopped in time by a watchful artist. And this conjunction accomplished, it is open to the artist to rest. Socrates, in the *Turba Philosophorum*, says that what follows is woman's work and

child's play. Rhasis says that nothing but vigilance is requisite, for as the ablution and depuration of the elements are accomplished by the presence of fire, so are the conjunction, perpetuation, and fermentation of the purified matters performed in the absence of fire.

*Concerning the Time of Fermentation.*

It should further be noticed that the time for fermenting the substance is the moment when the Stone germinates, germination being the revival of a seed after apparent death. The quicksilver first melts through the digestive action of the fire, and is then coagulated with its ferment or body: this process is that which we call germination. What a man sows, says Rhasis, that shall he also reap. Seeds can only spring up after their kind, and bear fruit after their kind. So minerals do not become something else, but return to that from which they arose.

Yet, how can Nature generate a simple substance not united to its form? This is, nevertheless, a fact according

to the ancients, but in a metaphorical sense. Aristotle says that as the reason comes to man from without, so the vegetative and sensitive soul comes from within. There is in seed the soul and the body, but there is added to it from without the rational spirit. In the same way we are to understand the metaphorical dicta in our Art.

Again, the action of heat in itself is not determined in any particular direction, or towards any particular end; but for the attainment of any such purpose it has to be used and regulated by an intelligent mind. When I say heat, I mean the elementary fire which is generated in all things, both animals, and vegetables, and metals. This natural fire, without which there is neither growth nor generation, is the instrument of the mind, and is regulated by the Artist, in respect of quantity, quality, and time, for the attainment of a certain well-defined end. If the heat be continued beyond a certain point, the form which it had generated is again

destroyed. The action of fire in itself only tends to combustion, but man may regulate it so as to effect many other objects. Hence, Pythagoras says that man is the measure of all things. Nature is blind and its action indefinite; it follows all the influences which are brought to bear on it, in this or in that direction; but the will of man is free, and can regulate and modify the working of Nature so as to bring about its own ends. If the will of man follow Nature, Nature will go beyond the proper point, and spoil everything.

The object of Nature in all things is to introduce into each substance the form which properly belongs to it; and this is also the design of our Art. When, therefore, the quicksilver of the Sages has been generated by the skill and wisdom of the artist, the form must be added to it, and then the work stopped at once, since its end is reached, and anything more can only spoil it.

If the Mercury were coagulated by some foreign (non-metallic) sub-



stance, it would not be of the slightest use, since in Nature only homogeneous things will combine. The coagulation by means of arsenic and common sulphur, though they are mineral substances, tends only to corruption.

## CHAPTER V.

*What is theriac, and what is called the poison in the Philosopher's Stone?*

THE Ancients have mentioned, as component parts of this Stone, theriac and poison. Like the ferment, they are either the perfect Stone, or that which perfects it. In the first sense it is improperly, in the second more properly, so called. Because theriac has remarkable cleansing properties, and poison possesses considerable medicinal virtues, they may mean the Stone, which cleanses common metals from all impurities, and converts them into gold. The four corrupt metals suffer from four different kinds of leprosy, and, therefore, each needs this poison for its cure. Iron is affected with leprosy from corruption of the bile, copper from corruption of the blood, tin from corruption of the phlegm, and lead from simple melancholic corruption, which is also



called elephantiasis. All these corruptions are due to the presence of impure sulphur, which is removed by our poison, or washed away by means of our theriac. Silver suffers from a phlegmatic leprosy, because it contains a proportion of combustible sulphur. But wise Nature in the generation thereof has combined a certain theriac therein, and when the sulphur has been purged off by the Stone, gold immediately results. Gold alone is free from impurity and is perfectly healthy, like pure blood in a sound body. In its correct sense, theriac or poison is that which is properly termed ferment. If the Artist stops at the right moment, all will be well; otherwise, the process of fermentation will go too far, and everything will be spoiled. Hence Hamec says that at this stage the ferment may become poison, and the Artist must very carefully beware of its smell, for, if he inhale it, it will prove fatal to him. He means to say that if it be allowed to evaporate, the Artist will be ruined. This Stone, says Morienus,

heals the infirmities of metals, as theriac cures the diseases of the human body ; hence it is sometimes called poison, on account of its medicinal use.

*Note.—Of the union of Soul and Body with their Spirit.*

At the close of our Magistry, when the soul seeks its body, we should see that it is able to unite itself to it, and receive life and activity. This union and composition take place through the operation of the spirit. When the soul is united to the body, it lives with its body for ever. The conjunction occurs at the moment of the soul's resurrection: for, though it existed before, yet it could not manifest itself in the body, on account of the defilement and impurity of the body. Hence it lay like a thing dead and useless, and, as it were, buried with its body. But when it is purified and made white by means of our Magistry, it rises clean and white, and finds the body from which it had been separated also clean and pure, and so it seeks its body, and longs to be united to it, in

order that it may live for ever: for it cannot be united to a strange body. If, therefore, the Artist does not take care, it will seek to escape with its body, and carry it upward, when the whole work will be annihilated, and the end of the experiment made void. Hence the body is called the theriac of its soul when the soul is saved by it and is beatified with it; it is called poison when it is the cause of the eternal death of the soul, through a failure in conjunction by reason of the Artist's folly. But if he seizes the right moment to stop the heat, the union is perfected and is rendered indissoluble. In this conjunction the body is spiritual, like the soul itself. Thus they unite, as water unites with water, and body, soul, and spirit are now the same thing, nor can they be separated for ever. Because of the insight which their Art gave to them, the Ancient Sages knew all about the resurrection of the body and the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, as also about the Trinity in Unity, and all the other verities of our

faith. I am firmly persuaded that any unbeliever who got truly to know this Art, would straightway confess the truth of our Blessed Religion, and believe in the Trinity and in our Lord Jesus Christ. Such was the experience of Hermes, Plato, and other ancient Sages.

But we will now return to the point. We were speaking of theriac and poison. When this Stone is born in the coction, it is in the likeness of brilliantly white quicksilver, and is called the quicksilver of the Sages. This quicksilver, to be of any utility, must be joined to its body and mortified; it is killed by its body, and therefore the body may be called poison, in the second and proper sense. And as this death tends to healing and glorious restoration, it is, in the same way, designated theriac. So it is with men: death is the means of giving to them a more glorious life. Our poison, or theriac, is thus identical with the above-mentioned ferment, and is the key of the whole work, the form of the Sun, and the flower of gold. Hence it

is advanced by Zeno, in the *Turba Philosophorum*, that no body is more precious and pure than the Sun, and that no tinging poison can be generated without the Sun and its shadow; whoever thinks otherwise errs grievously, but he who tinges the poison of the Wise by the Sun and its shadow; the same attains unto the great arcanum. Without this theriac and poison our Magistery cannot be accomplished; though, of course, they are not added from without, but form an integral part of our substance.

## CHAPTER VI.

### *The Coagulum and the Milk in the Philosopher's Stone, and its male and female agents.*

THE terms used in the superscription are some of the most secret phrases of our Art, and if we do not know their meaning, we know nothing about Alchemy. Some suppose that this Stone, when perfect, is related to Mercury, as a coagulating substance to milk. For, as a moderate quantity of a coagulum clots a large quantity of milk, so a small particle of this Stone, when projected upon many parts of Mercury, converts them into silver or gold. This view, however, is a great mistake. If it were true, of what use would the Stone be for the conversion of metals which are already coagulated by Nature?

We say that the coagulum of the Sages is that which, in the preceding



chapters, has been called the ferment, or the body, or the poison, or the flower of gold, which is hidden in the Mercury of the Sages when it arises, and that Mercury is called the Milk. The coagulum is that which coagulates the Mercury, and the two are one and the same in substance, *i.e.*, Mercury coagulates itself, and is not coagulated by any foreign substance, as you may also see in the case of wax when it is coagulated. Moreover, as coagulum is made of milk alone, but receives the power of coagulation by means of a certain digestion and decoction, so this coagulum which arises in the Mercury of the Philosophers by means of certain digestion and decoction, receives power to coagulate the Mercury in which it is; and as the coagulum changes a large quantity of milk into its own nature, so it is with the coagulum of Mercury and its substance. Mercury, thus coagulated, is no longer volatile, but has become the gold of the Sages, and their poison.

Know that this coagulum is the Key of the Sages, because when it coagulates the spirit, it at the same time dissolves the body, the coagulation of the spirit and the solution of the body thus being the same thing, whence the philosophers have laid down that the spirits cannot be detained except with the waters of their bodies. Our gum coagulates our milk, says Rhasis, and our milk dissolves our gum, after which appears the morning redness. When I saw water coagulate itself, says Senior, I was sure that all I had been told was true ; this coagulated water they call the male, and they espouse it to a female, whose son he is, and is also his root and coagulation. Female they call the milk which is coagulated, and male that which coagulates ; for activity belongs to the male, and passivity to the female. The first is the fixed part of quicksilver, and the second its liquid and volatile part—out of their mixture arises the Stone. The male and the female, being joined together, become one body. Venerate,



says Alexander, the king and his queen, and do not burn them. The male is under the female, and has no wings ; the female has wings, and desires to fly, but the male holds her back. Hence the philosophers say : make the woman rise over the man, and the man rise over the woman. So also Rosinus : The woman is fortified by the man.

I must repeat that the male and the female are the same in the same subject, and yet have different and even contrary qualities. It is like the male and female principles in any vegetable seed, or the active and the passive principle in an egg. Thus, when the Stone first comes into existence, it has in it a mixture of the male and female principles, but at first it is liquid, fluent, volatile, bright, and capable of coagulation, *i.e.*, female. The coagulum in its womb is solid, permanent, fixed, and produces coagulation in the other, *i.e.*, is male. The female that flees is passive, white, and easily caught by the male ; the male that pursues is red, and seizes

and holds the female with great strength.

Similarly, the Sages have compared the two principles in our substance to an old and a young man, because the colour of old age is white, while that of youth is ruddy and bright. Hence Rhasis : The stone of our science in the beginning is an ancient and in the end a boy, because it is first white and afterwards red.

They have also given geographical names to this substance, calling the humid principle the Egyptian, and the dry principle the Persian ; Egypt the house of humidity, and Persia the house of dryness. The Egyptians, says Melvescindus, need the help of the Persians. All putrefaction takes place in humid substances, but the end of putrefaction is dryness and incineration. The putrefaction begins in Egypt, but its end is in Persia. They have also described our substance by saying that the white female has the red male in her womb, and is in the travail throes. The coagulation will

then be the accomplishment of the birth ;  
that which was within now coming out,  
and that which is fluxible becoming fixed.  
Such are a few metaphors under which  
our substance has been described.

## CHAPTER VII.

*This is a chapter of the different similitudes of the Generation and Birth of the Embryo out of the Menstrual Blood, and of a chicken out of an egg—considered as analogous to the Birth of Gold out of Sulphur and Quick-silver.*

WE will now proceed to illustrate our meaning still further by the help of some analogies. The first analogy we shall select is the generation of the foetus in the mother's womb. The generation of the foetus is brought about by the male sperm, in conjunction with the female menstrual blood. The latter is the substance, the former the active principle. As soon as the form is generated, the sperm is purged off. In generation, the male contributes the form and the active principle, the female contributes the substance and the body. The sperm is to the menstrual blood what the car-

penter is to the wood in producing a bench, hence the sperm is not part of the thing generated. So gold is caused by sulphur as the efficient or active means and by quicksilver as the substantial or passive means. And as the sperm informs with a form similar to itself, and not foreign, so is it in like manner with sulphur. The outward sulphur acts by digestion upon the inward sulphur which is latent in the quicksilver, and causes it to inform, coagulate, colour, and fix the quicksilver into the form of gold or of the Stone of the Philosophers.

It should also be observed that the sperm generates out of the substance first the heart, thus impressing upon the heart the generative virtue which belongs to it as part of the living body. Then the sperm is separated from the heart, because now the heart is able of itself to form the other members by means of the generative power imparted to it by the sperm. When the sperm has generated the heart, its work is done, and all that remains is performed by the heart. The

same principle holds good in the germination of plants. When the seed, in which all the generative force is at first inherent, has sent forth the germ or shoot, the seed itself withers and decays, as something which has henceforth become useless, and the power of generating the rest of the plant is now inherent in the germ or shoot. When the germ has once been formed, it no longer needs the seed, but produces leaves, flowers, and seed out of itself. Thus the germ is, like the heart, generated and then separated from its sperm.

In the same way, we declare that the outward sulphur generates out of the quicksilver a certain sulphur which is like the heart, and to which henceforth belongs all the generative force of the outward sulphur. Thus, the outward sulphur, being no longer needed, is purged off. The sperm, which in our case is the sulphur, having introduced the form into the quicksilver, by means of the internal sulphur, having done its work, is no longer wanted.



You should know that since it is unnecessary for the moving principle continually to keep in contact with that which it moves, provided it has once touched it, as you may see from the case of the archer and the arrow, so the sperm, and the heart generated by the sperm, need not always keep up their connection. In the same way, as soon as the outward sulphur has touched the quicksilver, and generated or created another sulphur out of the quicksilver, which now possesses the power of generating and imparting the form of gold, it is not necessary that the outward sulphur should remain any longer in contact with the quicksilver ; it is sufficient that it has touched it in the past. Hence it is fitting that what is extrinsic should be separated, as something corruptible from what is incorruptible.

Again, in human generation, if the sperm be sufficiently powerful, and has sufficient heat to assimilate the whole of the menstrual blood to itself, the sperm, coming as it does from a male, will

naturally produce a male in the mother's womb. But if the sperm have not sufficient heat or strength, it will not be able to digest the female substance; the latter will, therefore, prevail, and a female will be the result. The consequence of this arrangement is that females have not so much natural heat as males. It is the same with our sulphur and quicksilver. If the inward sulphur has sufficient heat to digest the whole of the quicksilver, it assimilates the quicksilver to itself, and the whole is changed into gold. In the contrary case, the quicksilver will prevail and change the whole substance into silver. Hence gold is yellow like sulphur, and silver is white like mercury. But the yellowness and whiteness in quicksilver are not of double origin; both are of the quicksilver, just as the white and yellow of an egg are both the product of the female bird. In other metals, the sulphur has not yet been able to digest the quicksilver because of its want of heat, as in lead and tin, or it has burnt the quicksilver by



means of its excessive heat, as in iron and copper.

For the heat of the sulphur may be in excess as well as too little, and thus digestion may be prevented in two opposite ways. When heat is too great it dries up the humidity of the substance, and when it is too small it is choked by this humidity. Too much fire will spoil the food, and too little will not be sufficient to cook it. Gold alone, of all the metals, is properly digested by temperate heat, and silver in the same way ; but all other metals suffer either from excess or defect of heat.

But, after all, we should remember, with Aristotle, that the real motive principle in sperm is not the sperm itself, but the soul of the person who generates with the sperm, as with an instrument. It is the soul of the workman which uses his arm as an instrument to shape the timber or to fashion the sword. The intelligent soul of man, through the medium of the spirit or blood, moves the hand as an instrument,

and the hand moves the outward substance. So the soul of the person generating uses the seed or sperm as an instrument, and acts on the substance or menstrual blood indirectly through the sperm. It is the same with sulphur and quicksilver in the generation of metals; sulphur is not the principal agent, but the occult mineral virtue, or chief intrinsic agent, which acts with the heavenly bodies, and makes an instrumental use of the sulphur; which, then, in its turn, moves the quicksilver, as a substance proper for the generation to which it is moved by the first agents. In this Art, the soul or intelligence of the Artist, wherein are the species and the knowledge, is the real, extrinsic, moving cause, and imparts its purpose to the digestive and liquefactive mineral virtue, which again, in its turn, moves directly the outward sulphur, and indirectly the inward sulphur and the quicksilver. Liquefaction, coagulation, and other accidents, are brought about by cold and heat, but the form is produced by the

movement of instrumental forces which are themselves set in motion by the intelligent mind of the Artist, who modifies, tempers, and aids the action of natural conditions.

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*The Analogy of Common Quicksilver.*

As the egg of the hen without the seed of the male bird can never become a chicken, so common quicksilver without sulphur can never become gold, or the Stone of the Philosophers, because without sulphur it has no generative virtue; again, sulphur without quicksilver can never become gold, or the Stone, because it is like the seed and sperm of the male, and there is no generation without the menstrual blood of the female, which is the substance and nutriment of generation. The generation of gold is of quicksilver, and its nutriment (like that of the chicken in the egg) is of the yellow substance, namely, sulphur. Hence the Stone is generated of the white, *i.e.*, quicksilver, and the nutriment of the yellow, *i.e.*, its hidden sulphur digested

by the action of the outward sulphur through the regulative power of our Art. Nature has wisely mingled the sulphur and common quicksilver, the male and the female substance, in metals, for the purpose of their generation. And as everything attains to growth and development by the same principles to which it owes its generation, so gold and the Stone must be perfected by the action of homogeneous substances, and not by substances foreign to them. So, also, if imperfect metals are to be changed into gold by means of the Stone, even this agent can make use only of that substance in them which is identical with that of gold, while all foreign corruptive elements must be purged off; this means that only out of quicksilver can gold be generated by the mediation of the Stone, for which reason the sulphurous elements which are in the common metals are heterogeneous, and must be removed, because they will not amalgamate with it. Those, again, who attempt to prepare our Stone out of non-metallic sub-

stances are grievously at fault, and spend their labour in vain.

The artist who would prepare the Stone, must take for his substance neither common quicksilver alone, nor common sulphur alone, nor yet a mixture of common quicksilver and common sulphur, but a substance in which Nature herself, who is the handmaid of Art, has combined quicksilver and sulphur. The two substances of which we speak are really one substance, and are never found apart. They are capable of developing into gold, and this development actually takes place under favourable circumstances. For as we see that geographical situation has an influence in either elevating or degrading animal and vegetable forms, we may conclude that the same probably holds good in the case of metals. Local influences may sometimes be favourable to the development of sulphur and quicksilver into gold, or they may cause the process of development to stop short at one of the imperfect metals. Again, the imperfection of the

common metals may be owing to a corrupt state of the surrounding earth, or to an excess of bad sulphur.



## CHAPTER VIII.

*Refutation of some objections. It is said that copper and iron cannot become gold and silver. How this is possible.*

*The difficulty solved.*

MANY admit that those common metals which are still in a crude and half-digested state can have their digestion completed so as to become gold. But, they say it is different with iron and copper, which, through the excessive quality of their digestive heat, have already passed the proper point of temperate digestion, and, therefore, can never be brought back to the intermediate state indicated by gold. Food which is insufficiently cooked, may be cooked till it is done; but there is no means of restoring food which has been burnt to a right condition.

It should, however, be observed that there are in all varieties of metal,

except gold, two kinds of sulphur, one external and scorching, the other inward and non-combustive, being of the substantial composition of quicksilver. The outward sulphur is separable from them; the inward sulphur is not. The outward sulphur, then, is not, in any real sense, united to the quicksilver: hence the quicksilver cannot be really scorched by it. If this be so, it follows that when the quicksilver is purified by the removal of the outward sulphur, it is restored to its original condition, and can be transmuted into gold and silver, whether it be found in tin and lead, or in iron and copper; and we may justly conclude from these considerations that when the Philosophers' Stone is projected upon iron or copper in a liquefied state, it mingles in a moment of time with all the particles of quicksilver existing in them, and with these only, as they alone are of a nature homogeneous with its own, and perfects them into the purest gold, while all particles of external sulphur are purged off, because they are



not of a nature homogeneous with that of the Philosophers' Stone. For quicksilver always most readily combines with any substance that is of the same nature with itself, and rejects and casts out everything heterogeneous. It does not matter what are the other constituent parts of a metal; if it be a metal, and contain quicksilver, that quicksilver can be changed into gold by means of the Philosophers' Stone. So we see that, in the case of milk, the coagulum clots only those parts of the milk which are of a nature homogeneous with its own. The scorching to which our objectors refer, has taken place only in the sulphur of iron and copper; the quicksilver is not at all affected by this adverse influence, as any experimental chemist will tell you. If we burn or coagulate quicksilver with sulphur, and make from their sublimation what is called uzifur (that is, cinnabar from sulphur and mercury), after the magistry of sublimation, we may separate the substance of the quicksilver from the uzifur, pure and clean,

which shews that the quicksilver did not undergo combustion, but the sulphur only. It is the same in the cases of iron and copper, and in this manner the difficulty is settled.

This is the end of our Golden Investigation, extracted from the works of Bonus of Ferrara by Janus Therapus Lacinius, the Calabrian Minorite friar.

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*We hereunto append a letter written by Bonus to a friend with reference to this Magistery, which may serve to throw still further light upon the subject of our investigation.*

HERE FOLLOWS THE EPISTLE OF BONUS  
OF FERRARA, A LEARNED DOCTOR OF  
MEDICINE AND OF THIS ART,  
TO ONE OF HIS FRIENDS.

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**Y**OU ask me to tell you the matter of the Stone which so many Sages have sought. Of course, any one who does not know this matter himself cannot impart the secret to others. But I have good reason to think that I know something about it; and I may speak to you out of the fulness of an experience gained through many bitter disappointments and failures. Nor do I think it sufficient to make a statement; I also desire to furnish you with the grounds of my belief. I will now reveal to you all that I have said at great length in the *New Pearl of Great Price* and in my *Tract against those who are at work upon a*

*wrong matter*, addressed to Brother Anselm the Monk, in a private and confidential manner ; and may God help me to speak clearly and in accordance with the truth of our Art !

You do not enquire after our method of procedure, which is the arcanum and glory of the whole world, as the philosophers testify, but you desire to have the matter of our Art made known to you ; and this knowledge is in itself an inestimable boon to a beginner.

Know, then, that our arsenic or auripigment is composed by Nature of sulphur and quicksilver, as it is found in its original natural state. When arsenic is sublimed, it often happens that there comes out of it quicksilver in small globules like grains of millet, as every experimental chemist will tell you. This quicksilver is identical with ordinary quicksilver, which may be seen from the fact that it alone of all metallic substances will mingle with quicksilver, while the quicksilver retains all its own peculiar properties and qualities. Hence

we conclude that in the composition of arsenic there is quicksilver. In the same way, we call sulphur the tincture of redness properly and by virtue of its own nature ; quicksilver is the white tincture, as all Sages tell us. But if we project arsenic or realgar upon liquid copper, it will tinge that metal with a white colour like the whiteness of the Moon ; this colour shews the presence of quicksilver. In all properly purified metals we find the nature of coagulated quicksilver rather than of sulphur ; for sulphur exists in quicksilver in an occult manner.

Common sulphur is specifically different from arsenic, but belongs to the same genus. Similarly, all sulphur, and everything that belongs to the same species with sulphur, has the property of coagulating quicksilver ; and sometimes succeeds in imparting to it a red colour, and sometimes fails to do so.

We said above that when arsenic is sublimed it gives out globules of quicksilver like grains of millet, which is identical with ordinary quicksilver. For

this reason the Sages have endeavoured, by a congruous digestion, to coagulate the same quicksilver with itself, even as gold is coagulated by its intrinsic power. Arsenic, says Geber, has the two metallic first principles, sulphur and quicksilver, combined, and by their means may itself be designated as the first principle of Nature, in virtue of their properties and qualities. In the same book he says that the fetid spirit and living water, which is also called dry water, are the first principles of Nature. There can be no transition from the softness of quicksilver to the hardness of metals, except in some intermediate substance. Hence neither quicksilver by itself, nor sulphur by itself, is the first principle of Nature, but some intermediate matter which contains both. The quicksilver extracted from sulphur and arsenic is, however, more proximately the substance of our Medicine than the same sulphur and arsenic while they remain as they are.

If there be a third nature which con-



tains our quicksilver and sulphur in the most highly purified condition, and without any admixture of other elements, this substance may be regarded as most proximately the first principle of our Medicine.

The arsenic to which Geber refers as the third principle of Nature in the generation of metals is a compound of quicksilver and sulphur, and possesses the virtue and power of both. It cannot be properly called sulphur, nor yet quicksilver, and thus it is true that there are only two principles of Nature. Nor is this arsenic, which has quicksilver for its matter and sulphur for its active potency, in any sense a thing superfluous, but is a sufficing principle of Nature in the generation of metals. Hence the quicksilver of which we speak is not common quicksilver, nor is our sulphur common sulphur; but there is in our quicksilver an occult homogeneous sulphur, and it is by means of this inward sulphur that all our changes are accomplished.

Therefore, do not suppose that any compound but the one I have mentioned is the right substance of our Art, and forbear to spend your labour in vain upon magnesia, marchasite, tutia, antimony, or any other heterogeneous material. Our sulphur is the vital agent which digests and perfects our quicksilver; but the sulphur of marchasite, for instance (as Geber tells us), is only degrading and combustive; in the separation thereof the quicksilver of marchasite is left dead at the bottom of the vessel, and must afterwards be sublimed by fire. Again, we do not find in the composition of gold, or of the other metals, anything that in the least suggests or resembles marchasite. Though arsenic and marchasite are generated from nearly the same elements, their diversity of form has combined and developed those elements in a widely different manner, since the same substance, if differently digested, receives a different form. This is sufficiently patent from the fact that different limbs are generated from the



same substance. As with marchasite, so it is with tutia, magnesia, and all other like substances. Thus, through many mistakes, and by a process of elimination, we at length, through the grace of God, arrive at the substance which we firmly believe to be the right one. This short exposition must suffice for the present.

## EXTRACTS MADE BY LACINIUS

FROM THE WORKS OF ARNOLD DE VILLA NOVA,  
IN WHICH THE COMPOSITION OF OUR  
STONE IS PRACTICALLY AND  
LUCIDLY SET FORTH.

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**W**E have learned all that Bonus could tell us about the first principles of metals and their generation. We will now proceed to consider, practically and theoretically, the composition of our Stone, since practice and theory are mutually helpful: practice is informed by theory, and theory is corrected and checked by practice. Now, as Arnold de Villa Nova has, in his Rosary, given us a practical treatise on the Philosophers' Stone, I will arrange some of his remarks in chapters according to the following plan :

CHAPTER THE FIRST shews that there is one Philosophers' Stone, because there is one essence, and one method, both in

the red and white Medicine. The red Medicine is merely a further development of the white.

CHAPTER THE SECOND shews whence is the Stone extracted. Observe well the answer.

CHAPTER THE THIRD shews the chief difficulty of our work to be the discovery of the first matter of metals.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH shews our first physical object must be to dissolve the Stone into its Mercury, or primal matter of all metals. Hence the philosopher says that we must first be at pains to dissolve and sublime the two luminaries, because the primal grade of operation in our Art is to reduce them to quicksilver. Unless the bodies lose their corporeal nature, and become spiritual, we shall make no progress with our work. The solution of a body takes place through the operation of the spirit, and is attended with the coagulation of the spirit. Then the body mingles with the spirit, and the spirit with the body.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH shews the four principal methods in this Magistry: Dissolution, Purification, Reduction, Fixation. To dissolve is to make the gross subtle; to purify is to make the dark bright; reduction is of the humid into the dry;

fixation is by resolution and coagulation of the spirit into its own body, or solid substance.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH shews the dissolution of the Stone, and its inhumation, which are the first regimen. Dissolution is brought about by purified Mercury. This is done in order that we may have sulphur and Mercury of that matter whereof gold and silver are developed beneath the earth.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH shews the second regimen: Ablution and purification of the black, corrupt, fetid matter, so that it may become exceeding bright, clear, and spotless—which ablution is performed by division of the Stone into its four elements and the cleansing of each element.

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Arnold tells us truly that all metals are generated from quicksilver and sulphur, which coagulate the quicksilver by means of its heat or vapour; since every dry element naturally drinks up its humid element. Quicksilver in its essence is a compound of very subtle, white, sulphureous earth, with bright water, so as to make up one substance,

which finds no rest upon a plane surface. It is homogeneous in nature, and is either wholly fixed, or else wholly evaporates in the fire. By constant sublimation it is purified, digested, and thickened, and so gradually coagulated into white and red sulphur. This process of constant dissolution and coagulation is performed by Nature in not less than a thousand years; but Art, through the mediation of Nature, accomplishes it in a very short time. If, then, we would prepare the medicine, we must both accelerate and imitate Nature.

Quicksilver is the matter and element of all metals alike; all of them when melted are converted thereto, and it also combines with them; at the same time, in some it is more and in some less pure, on account of its corruptive external sulphur. But quicksilver is coagulated by virtue of its own inward, non-combustive sulphur. The philosopher tells us that white, incombustible sulphur congeals mercury, and is the best thing that can possibly be used for conversion

of mercury into good silver. If the sulphur be pure, good, but, on the other hand, of a red brilliancy, containing the gentle heat without the combustive violence of natural sulphur, it is the best thing that can possibly be used for converting Mercury into the Sun. The result of good quicksilver and impure combustive sulphur is copper. Porous, impure quicksilver and impure sulphur produce iron. Tin has good, pure quicksilver, but its sulphur is bad and ill mixed. Lead has gross, bad, ponderous, and earthy quicksilver, and bad, fetid, and feeble sulphur. So, at least, Aristotle tells us.

The common outward sulphur, then, is the cause of the imperfection of metals. There are two kinds of sulphur in every metal except gold, the outward combustive and the inward non-combustive, which belongs to the substantial composition of the quicksilver. The outward sulphur is separable, and is removed by calcination; the internal sulphur is inseparable from the quicksilver by calcination in fire. The latter the quick-



silver retains, nor can it ever be taken away, as being homogeneous with it: the former it spurns and rejects, and exposes to the action of the fire, which consumes it. It is the property of this external sulphur, always either to be burned in the fire, or in its composition with quicksilver to burn, corrupt, and denigrate. It is quicksilver, then, which perfects bodies, and saves them from combustion, because the more bodies are of the nature of quicksilver, the less are they liable to combustion. And as quicksilver prevents combustion, so it is the cause of metallic fusibility, and it is that by means of which the tincture pervades the metals, since it receives the homogeneous tinctural influence in all its smallest parts. Quicksilver adheres most readily to quicksilver, then to gold, then to silver, because these two metals are most homogeneous to it. It is not so with the other metals, till they are purged of their corruptive sulphur.

Those are, then, the most perfect bodies which contain the largest propor-

tion of quicksilver, while those which contain less are less perfect. It contains in itself its own good sulphur, by means of which it is coagulated into gold and silver, but by different methods of digestion. If the sulphur be white, it will digest the quicksilver into silver; if, on the other hand, it shew a red brilliancy, and have a noble but not destructive fire, it will coagulate the quicksilver into gold, and the elixir of gold is composed from it. Observe that both white and red sulphur are in reality the same metallic matter; but they are more and less powerful because of the different degree of their digestion. Hence the philosopher says that all gold has red sulphur, and all silver white sulphur. But this sulphur is not found upon the earth, as Avicenna assures us, otherwise than in these two; hence we most subtly prepare these bodies, that we may have red sulphur and quicksilver of the same matter on the earth of which gold and silver are made under the earth: for these are lucent bodies, whose rays



tinge other bodies with true white and red. Thus the red tincture is obtained from gold, and the white tincture from silver.

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CHAPTER I.

*Shewing that there is but one Philosophers' Stone.*

Arnold de Villa Nova says that there is but one Philosophers' Stone, and there is but one Medicine, to which nothing foreign is added, and from which nothing is removed, except that which is foreign to it. Its external sulphur of vulgar quicksilver is foreign to it; its inward sulphur belongs to its own nature, and into this it must be converted by our magistry. Do not introduce into it, then, any powder, or water, or any other foreign substance, because no heterogeneous material can possibly enter into its composition. If any foreign matter be added to it, it is straightway corrupted, and does not become what you desire. The Stone itself, in order that it may enter the common metals, must attain a

state of great fixation and subtleness, that it may become a medicine for corrupt bodies.

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CHAPTER II.

*Whence the Physical Stone is extracted.*

Our physical Stone, or Medicine, may be obtained from all metals ; but it is found in the highest perfection in gold and silver. Without the Sun and its shadow, the Moon, we can have no tinging quicksilver, and he is foolish who attempts to accomplish our Magistry in their absence. On the other hand, he who knows how to tinge quicksilver with the Sun and Moon is in possession of our arcanum, which may become red sulphur, but at first is called white sulphur. Gold is the father, and silver the mother of the proximate substance of our Stone, for out of these bodies, prepared with their sulphur or arsenic, is our medicine elicited. It may, indeed, be possible to derive it from other bodies, but it is found nearer to the hand, and more easily, in quicksilver, which is the

father of those lights and the root of all metals. Of this were they all made, and into the same all of them return. That which is now our Stone is not quicksilver, but once formed part of it, and it is this which imparts to it its brightness, preserves it from combustion, and is the cause of its perfection. Do not work with anything except Mercury and the Sun for the Sun, and Mercury and the Moon for the Moon.

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### CHAPTER III.

*It is impossible for the Stone to be perfected by the substance of metals only.*

As water cannot rise above the level of its spring, so the wonderful Tincture, which is to transmute all common metals into gold and silver, cannot possibly be perfected out of the substance of metals only, not even of gold and silver. The elixir must be far more purified and digested than these. If gold and silver gave of their perfection to other metals, they themselves would become imperfect.

The tincture which is to impart perfection to all other metallic bodies must itself possess a superabundance of digestive perfection and matured excellence. Most of our Alchemists leave off with the substance with which they ought to have begun, and consequently nothing comes of their projection.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

##### *On the first Operation of our Magistry.*

Our first business, according to Arnold, must be to dissolve our Stone into its Mercury or first matter. Species can be transmuted only by the reduction of their matter to the generic First Matter. Hence we must reduce our Stone to quicksilver. By the projection of our Tincture, the species, or properties of the species, are not changed, but only individual quantities of metal belonging to the species. Silver as a metallic species is never changed into gold, which has immediately

its own species, but individuals of this or another metallic species may well so change. Your first step, then, must be to bring about the dissolution of gold and silver into quicksilver. Hence the Sages say: Unless the bodies become incorporeal, and the spirits corporeal, no progress will be made. The true beginning, then, of our work is the solution of our body, because bodies, when dissolved, become spiritual in their nature, and are yet at the same time more fixed than the spirit, though they are dissolved with it. For the solution of the body means the coagulation of the spirit, and vice versa; each gives up something of its own nature: they meet each other half-way, and thus become one inseparable substance, like water mixed with water.

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CHAPTER V.

*On the Perfect Investigation of the  
Physical Stone.*

It is clear, then, that the operation of our Stone is the operation of Nature.

As ice is water because it is dissolved into water, so our Stone, which is dissolved into quicksilver, is thereby proved to be quicksilver. Our operation is a conversion of the elements, an amicable conjunction of the humid with the dry, and of the cold with the hot. But the dry becomes humid, and the cold becomes hot, only by means of an intermediate substance. If, then, the dry be converted into the cold, and the cold into the humid, and the humid into the hot, and the hot into the dry, then you have the whole Magistery. The four stages of our work, then, are solution, purification, reduction, and fixation, the significance of which terms has already been explained. Solution is of the gross into the subtle; purification is of the dark into the bright; reduction is of the humid into the dry; fixation is of the volatile over its own body. Let the Stone, therefore, be dissolved with best Mercury, purged from its terrestrial and humid nature, by means of sublimation, and afterwards reduced. With this let



it be twice pounded, and then placed in the *Balneum Mariæ*.

*How Mercury is Cleansed.*

Sublime your Mercury once or twice with vitriol and salt, till its substance is very white and brilliant. When it is in a volatile state, plunge it into boiling water, till it once more becomes quicksilver; remove the water, and proceed to use it for our Magistery. Pound it, soak it in its own water, and digest it in S. Mary's bath; distil it through a filter. Watch for a black oil appearing on the surface, which is the true sign of the dissolution being completed. Watch it well, I repeat, lest it evaporate into smoke, and what you do with the white, do also with the red. The difference between the Solar and the Lunar Medicine is this, that the Solar includes the Lunar, but the Lunar does not include the Solar, the Solar having in addition a reddish or golden colouring substance. Be patient and do not attempt to extract the Tincture in a hurry; haste burns up, instead of maturing and digesting, our

substance. Bear in mind that the chief error in this Art is haste, which ends in the combustion of everything. Much fire at the beginning is to the detriment of the tincture, and consumes the medicine.

Pound and cook with patience, and reiterate the process again and again, because that which is soaked with water is softened. The more you pound the substance, the softer it will become, and the softer it becomes, the more the gross parts are subtilized, till perfect union of body and spirit supervenes. For by means of pounding and softening and digestion, the parts held together by the viscosity of the water in bodies are separated. Bodies that are dissolved, are reduced to the nature of spirits, and their union is thenceforward indissoluble, like that of water mixed with water: for Nature rejoices when the bridegroom is united to the bride. Things which cannot be dissolved are devoid of subtle or soft parts. I pray you, therefore, labour in the dissolution of the Stone, disintegrating the grosser parts that the gross



may be rejected and the work performed with the subtle.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### *On the Inhumation of the Stone.*

When the Stone is dissolved, expose the whole of it to gentle heat, for its better putrefaction and digestion, and for the consummation of the connubial rite, during the space of a month of the Sages, *i.e.*, of thirty days, since the danger of combustion is removed by digestion and inhumation. Let all be boiled together over a gentle fire, till the whole substance resolves into its first matter, and becomes truly like quicksilver. The sign that the solution is complete, is a blackness, which appears after a certain time, which also we denominate the Raven's Head.

When the Stone is fully dissolved in S. Mary's Bath, it should be passed through a filter. The blackness is a sign that the process of volatilization is accomplished.

*Recapitulation of the First Regimen.*

Sublime the Mercury, and dissolve it ; then subject the whole substance to coction, till it is reduced to its first nature, *i.e.*, till we have sulphur and quicksilver, of the same matter which in mines is digested into gold and silver. And he that has this Magistry has an everlasting treasure.

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CHAPTER VII.

*The second Regimen, or that of  
Purification.*

The second regimen of the Stone is its ablution, that is to say, the removal of all that is black, corrupt, and fetid in it, whereby it is rendered very brilliant, and clear, and pure. This is brought about by the division of the elements, the distillation of the waters, and the solution of the Stone, because there are two dry or stony, and two humid or watery elements. The dry elements are fire and earth, the aqueous are air and water. Fire purifies water by distillation,

and thus all the elements cleanse and become assimilated to each other. So is our Stone divided into four elements, that it may be the better subtilised, and cleansed from stains, and afterwards more firmly conjoined. But nothing ever was born, has grown, or is animated, except after putrefaction and digestion. If there be no putrefaction, there can be no melting and no solution, but if there be no solution, then nothing is accomplished.

*Division of the Stone into four Elements.*

Take the Stone in its putrefied state, cleanse it by the cleansing of the four elements, by distillation, by a light and equable fire. Take the water. Then increase the fire a little, till all the air is mixed with fire, and that which remains at the bottom, in a burnt state, is dry, black earth. The water is cleansed in the bath of S. Mary, but air and fire are distilled through the ashes, and the grosser parts of the earth remain below, while the more subtle parts are carried upward. Earth desic-

cates and fixes, water purifies and cleanses. Air and fire tinge, and cause fluidity; hence it is necessary to have much water and air. The quantity of the Tincture will be in proportion to the quantity of air. Seek, therefore, my dearest, in all thy works to overcome Mercury in commixtion, that thou mayest have enough of air; and if thou art able to perfect this by itself, thou will be the explorer of the conquering potency which resides in the highest perfection of Nature. After this operation it is still necessary for the Medicine to be matured and nourished over the fire, as the child is nourished at the breast.

*On the Ablution of Water.*

When you have separated the elements of the Stone, cleanse them; cleanse the air and water by a seven-fold distillation. The fire and earth, on the other hand, must be well calcined. Distil the air and water separately, for the air is more precious than the water. The air tinges the earth, and infuses into it life and the sensible soul. Air and

water must be guarded from excessive heat, or they will be dried up. This is brought about by inhumation. When the purification is complete, the whole substance is wonderfully white and brilliant. The sediment of the water in distillation must be carefully removed and set apart with the blackness of the earth, already mentioned. Set also apart the seven times distilled water, for the same is the Medicine and the Water of Life which washes the Laton. As you do with the white water, so do also with the red; there is no difference between the two, except that one tinges white, and the other red.

*On the Ablution of Air.*

Separate the air from the fire by distillation, viz., through the ashes. That which is distilled is most pure air; that which remains at the bottom, is dry fire. The air is the oil and tincture, the gold and soul of the Sages, the ointment by means of which the whole Magistry is effected. Fire and air must be distilled together because

they are of the same nature. If you mix the Stone with fire, it will be red, and have all the virtues of the Red Tincture.

*How oil is extracted from all things.*

Place over the body, whence you wish to extract oil, sufficient purified Mercury to cover it completely, that is, to the height of four inches, or better if more ; then put it over a slow fire. The oil, or air, will soon begin to bubble up through the quicksilver. Collect it carefully, and, if necessary, that is, should the quicksilver begin to diminish, add more pure and warm quicksilver and continue the coction till all the oil has been obtained. This oil must then be purified by inhumation and sevenfold distillation through the alembic, till it be brilliantly white. It will float on the surface of our water. Set it apart, for it is the Oily Tincture, the Golden Soul, and the Unguent of the Philosophers, which colours, tinges, fixes, and makes fluid. A thin plate of metal steeped into it, will be changed into silver if it be of the white, and into gold if it be of the red grade.



But do not mix the oil of gold with the oil of silver, or the reverse; for each has its own special purpose, one to tinge white, and the other to tinge red.

*Difference between Water and Oil.*

Water only cleanses, oil tinges and colours. If you dip a rag in clean water, it will become cleaner than it was; but the water will evaporate. If you dip it in coloured oil, it will be saturated with the colour of the oil, and you will be able to remove this colour only by burning the whole rag. For oil is thicker and more intense, and yet, at the same time, lighter than water. Nevertheless, it is by means of water, and from water, that we obtain this oil. The water is the spirit, which retains the oil, or soul, as the soul retains the body. Through the oil our coagulation is effected, because it retains the volatile substance. Sow the soul in white flaky earth, for it will retain it: since, when it has ascended from earth to heaven, and descended to the earth, it will have received the strength of things above, and of things below.

*The cleansing of Fire and Earth.*

Collect the impure sediments obtained from the cleansing of the oil, and place them with the fire, since they are fire, and have blackness and redness which must be pounded with the first water, and gently burned till they become a dry powder, without any of the humidity of air. So, also, the sediment of water must be combined with earth, and thrice calcined till it becomes white and dry. Calcine fire with fire, and earth with earth, till they are pure and free from blackness; what ascends from the fire is the red oil; what ascends from the earth is the white precious oil. Perform all these processes, and preserve each part carefully by itself.

*The cause of ablution according to Plato.*

According to Plato, you should to the fullest extent of your ability effect the separation of the elements: cleanse water and air by distillation, and earth by heat and calcination, till nothing of the soul is left in the body, *i.e.*, when nothing more evaporates from it, if placed on a



red-hot metallic plate. In no part of our operation do we need any water but our white water, nor any oil but our white or orange-coloured oil, nor any fire except our red fire, nor any earth except that which is pallid or slightly white. But if you thus prepare the elements, the earth will be ready for solution, the water efficacious for digestion, and the oil, in which is the fire, eminently fitted for tinging. If the end of your process should not present you with such elements, this is an indication of error ; set about the correction thereof, for it will be easier than beginning again. Keep each element carefully sealed up in a well-stoppered jar, write upon each its own name, and a record of its properties, for it would be fatal to mistake one for the other.

*On the third Regimen, which is that of  
Reduction.*

The third regimen consists in bringing back the humid water to the dry earth, that it may recover its lost humidity. Since fire and earth are

both dry elements, they must first be combined before this restoration can take place. Then the dry elements will be in a condition to drink up more moisture than they had before, for calcination disintegrates a body and so empties it of all moisture, that it will imbibe its aqueous humidity very greedily.

Arnold here places a chapter on the albification and sublimation of the earth by frequent pounding, imbibition, and digestion of the Mercury. When this process is fully accomplished, that is, when it ascends white as snow, we have the good, flaky, brilliantly white earth, or the white incombustible sulphur. If you wish to obtain red sulphur, dissolve this white sulphur in red water, by means of pounding, and saturation, and good decoction; coagulate it alternately into a stone and alternately dissolve what is coagulated in the red water. After the third time, sublime the whole in a fierce fire, and that which rises upward will be snowy white sulphur, while that which remains at the bottom will be red, like

scarlet. Hence you see that while there are two different stages of our magistry, there is in reality only one Stone.

*The true method of bringing back the  
Water to the Earth.*

Pour at first upon the earth (which you have carefully pounded) one-fiftieth part its own quantity of water; for it is necessary at the beginning to give the earth little water, just as an infant has to be given at first little nutriment, and then gradually more. This should be repeated over and over again, with great patience, more and more water being poured over the earth each time, but not more than the earth can conveniently drink up; after each trituration and effusion, the whole should be subjected to thorough coction for eight days at a time. Without constant, patient irrigation the earth cannot bring forth fruit. Continue the trituration and as-sation until all the water has been absorbed and dried up, while the earth has become white. The water is to be administered temperately after each cal-

cination ; too much of it will produce a tempestuous condition ; too little will convert the matter into glowing ashes. The degree of heat applied should be that of horse dung. After imbibition, it should be inhumed for seven days. There are three colours, marking the three stages of this process. The black colour shews that the substance is still imperfect : after its appearance the heat of the fire should be slightly increased. By constantly repeating the process you will soon make the earth white ; and then you should behold the orange colour. The more limpid the water, the more limpid the earth will be ; the more the earth is washed, the whiter it will become.

Things are sublimed either by themselves, if they are spirits, or, if bodies, they are sublimed by means of some spiritual substance. Our earth is not sublimed in its condition as calx, unless it be first subtly incorporated with mercury. Hence you should pound the earth, saturate it with mercury,

and digest them till they become one body. This must be repeated over and over again, or else the sublimation cannot take place, because the earth will not be properly incorporated with the mercury. Sublimation is contingent upon the reduction of the body into a subtle matter and nature. By means of this sublimation bodies are freed from their grosser elements, and reduced to their first matter, which can then be perfectly developed. If you wish to develop the sublimed substance into silver, both earth and mercury should be white: if you wish to develop it into gold, they should both be red, and the powder should be incrated. When Mercury is sublimed for the Moon, nothing else should be mixed with it, for the colour of the Sun does not enter into the Moon, nor that of the Moon into the Sun. Do not mix that which ascends and that which remains below. That which remains below should be again pounded and saturated, till the whole is sublimed or incorporated with Mercury. In the

sublimation of Mercury you will see a most white earth, like snow, and, as it were, a dead powder adhering to the sides of the aludel. Reiterate sublimation thereon, without the fæces remaining below, Soon that which ascends will settle in the shape of a white, flaky powder. These are the superior ashes, while that which remains below is the foul sediment, and should be removed. In this way the white sulphur or white tincture is perfected.

*The fourth Regimen, which consists in Fixation, and for this purpose we need a certain Ferment.*

The fourth operation is to fix the white and red sulphur over a fixed body, *i.e.*, silver and gold respectively. Without a proper ferment the Moon cannot become the Sun, but the substance, having nothing to prevent it from doing so, will again revert into water. It must therefore be incorporated with the body from which it was first prepared, *viz.*, the Moon or the Sun. It is necessary, in fact, to unite it to its own proper body. For



this purpose mix it with the ferment (either white or red), which will completely assimilate it to its own nature. Do not mix the ferment of one (white) sulphur with another (red) sulphur: the result would be disappointing. The ferment of gold is gold, and the ferment of silver is silver, and there are no other proper ferments in all the world, because nothing fixes which is not itself fixed.

*The weight of the Ferment must exceed,  
or at least be equal to, the weight  
of its Sulphur.*

The quantity of volatile sulphur in any ferment must not be greater than that of its body. If there be a preponderance of the body, says Plato, it will quickly change the volatile sulphur into a powder of its own colour, *i.e.*, either that of gold or of silver. The sulphur cannot enter the bodies except through the medium of water, the intermediate substance between the sulphur and the ferment. Therefore put first the earth, then the water, and then the air (Avicenna). If you wish to obtain the red

Tincture, put in the fourth place fire, since the white Tincture needs only three elements, but the red Tincture needs fire as well. Open, therefore, and seal, solve and coagulate, wash and dry, for water is the medium which joins the tinctures of oil, air, and fire. If you first take oil and then earth, the oil will mortify in the earth, for the water will enter. If you first take water and then oil, the oil will float upon the water. But if you first take water and afterwards earth, the water will outweigh the earth. Fix, therefore, the water with the earth till it adheres to it. If one of the four be destroyed, all will die; if one have more soul than another, it will be worthless. The ferment is the soul, see that you arrange fermentation so as to produce a calcined, dissolved, and indurated dust. If the fermentation be not rightly performed, the whole Magistry will fail.

*The practical uses of dividing the elements.*

If you do not divide the Stone into its four elements, the soul cannot well be



united to the body. If you do not mix of the body with that over which you desire to make the projection, the body will not love the spirit. If you do not combine the ferment with the elixir, the body over which the projection is made is not properly coloured. If you do not sublime all you put into the elixir, it will be rough gold and silver, and if the whole be not prepared, it will not sustain the fire. Finally, without pains in softening and hardening, the gold and silver will want ductility in operating. The earth which is put into the elixir must be sublimed, in order that the whole may be completely united. If you wish to project the elixir, make earth of that substance whose body you wish to change, and put in the ferment (as above), if it be gold, of gold, and if it be silver, of silver. You must combine the ferment with the body on which you desire to project the elixir. The body and the ferment which are combined in the elixir must be a powder twice or thrice sublimed. Each sublim-

ation will intensify the virtue of the elixir, namely, one upon a hundred, a hundred upon a thousand, and so on to infinity.

*We must be careful about the proper quantity of each substance.*

If you wish to prepare our Stone, you should know how much water, and air, and fire, and earth it contains when it is calcined, when it is dissolved, and when it is reduced respectively. In the first case, there will be greater dryness, greater heat, less moisture, less cold. In the second, there will be greater cold, less heat, more moisture, and less dryness. In the third, there will be greater heat, less moisture, more dryness, and less cold.

*How the Elements are improved, and how the Fusion of the Medicine is affected.*

In the conjunction of the Stone, expect three principal colours, first the black, then the white, then the red. Take care that the tincture does not become red before it becomes black, for then it will perish by combustion, and that none of the colours appear before their

proper time, or out of their proper order. Should the red appear before the black, or before the white, decoct the whole in white-water till the proper colour is restored. Note also that decoction by inhumation obviates the error of combustion, and restores lost humidity. If the medicine does not combine properly, correct by dissolution. The purification and dissolution are brought about, not by common, but by mercurial water. We calcine the medicine that we may the better dissolve it, that it may the better be cleansed, fixed, and melted, and that the bodies may receive a better impression therefrom, and may be more fully permeated thereby. Towards the end of the Magistery, it is a good plan to dissolve the body of the ferment, whether white or red, in order that it may amalgamate all the more readily. Not all the parts are separated in dissolution, but the separation is sufficiently complete to ensure the removal of all impurities. If the metal which is to be changed by means of the Medicine, have

not sufficient colour, more of the Medicine should be added ; if it have too much, the dose should be smaller. If the Medicine be not sufficiently fixed, the remedy lies in repeating the dissolution and coagulation several times. If it be too firm, more of oil, that is, the air of the Stone, should be added ; and observe, as a general rule, that for fixation you must have more of the cold and dry, and less of the hot and humid elements.

*Of the quantities to be observed in  
Fixation.*

All Nature is ruled by ratio and proportion ; hence, in the fixation of our Stone, we must know how much we need of water, air, earth, and fire. If the right proportions are not observed, your whole work will be a failure. Either too much or too little of earth, air, fire, and water would entail some corresponding defect. I speak here of elixirs in general, but fire is not introduced as an element of the white elixir. The heavy elements in our substance

and the ferment are called earth : those which rise upward are described as air and water. For fixation into earth, in the case of the white Tincture, there should always be more of earth than of the other elements. If there be  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of air, and 2 ozs. of water, there must be  $2\frac{3}{4}$  ozs. of earth, and thrice as much of the ferment of earth as there is of white sulphur. If there be 1 oz. of white sulphur, there must be 3 ozs. of the ferment. Add 2 ozs. of water,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of air, and the elixir will be complete. For the solar Tincture, which is of hotter quality than that of the Moon, we need 2 ozs. of earth, 3 of water, as many of air, and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of fire—for if there be much water and little fire, the fire will be extinguished. The heavy elements, like earth and water, are more useful for the purpose of producing fixation and rest ; the lighter elements, viz., air and fire, are more useful for the purposes of fusion and of the Tincture. Do not eat what you do not drink, neither drink what you do not eat, but eat and drink one after

the other according to the requirements of our art.

*On the Fixation and Composition of  
the White Elixir.*

No body which has not first been purified can possibly retain its soul. Let there be drinking after eating, not *vice versa*. Fix well, mix well, tinge well, and you have the whole Magistery. Pound three parts of pure powdered silver well with twice its quantity of white quicksilver in a mortar of porphyry, till the Mercury has drunk up all the silver, and the compound is of the consistency of butter. Purify it with vinegar and common salt, till the vinegar comes out pure and clear; then wash away the salt with clean, sweet water, and dry before the fire. Pound it with one part of the white sulphur till the two become one body, incerate it with one part of its white water, and sublime little by little over the fire, till all that is volatile in it has ascended upward; take it out when cool and collect the particles which have settled on the sides of the vessel; then repeat



the process of pounding, saturation, and sublimation—constantly reducing that which ascends upward to that which lies fixed below; till all is fixed, which is naturally brought about by the coagulative virtue of the fixed sulphur. In short, study Nature, and supply her with all necessary outward conditions: then you may trust to her to do the rest. When your earth is impregnated you may expect a birth in Nature's own good time; when the birth has taken place, nourish and strengthen it to support the fire, and you will be able to make projections.

*Of the Reduction of Air upon the White Elixir.*

When the water is fixed with the earth, pound it, saturate it by sprinkling with one part of its air, sublime it with a gradually increasing fire, till by constant sublimation the whole is fixed. Then expose it to a good fire for twenty-four hours, to a still fiercer fire for another day and night, and to a very fierce fire, proper for melting, on the third day

and night. The air will then be fixed with the earth and water.

*Inceration of the White Elixir.*

Take one drachm of the crystal plate which you find at the bottom of the vessel; pound it, and drop on it slowly, in a thin crucible, over a gentle fire, some of its white air, till it becomes liquid, like wax, without any smoke. Test upon a hot plate, and if it melt swiftly like wax, the ceration is complete. If not, complete the process by dropping its white oil gradually thereon, till it becomes like smokeless melted wax. Continue the sublimation until the whole substance is fixed. That is, when by sublimation you have fixed the purest part of the earth, reiterate the sublimation upon the unfixed part over the fixed part, until all is fixed. Try its fusibility over a good fire; if the result be satisfactory, the sublimation need not be continued. If not, continue sublimation in respect of the unfixed part. Then let it cool, and you have a priceless Tincture, one part of which—with salt dissolved in vinegar—



will transmute 1,000 parts of Mercury, or common metal, into the purest silver, better than that of the mine.

*The Composition of the Red Elixir.*

The Red Elixir—for changing metals into gold—is prepared in the same way as the White Elixir, gold being in this case substituted for silver. For every white thing substitute a red thing of the same kind ; in the place of powdered silver put powdered gold, and the water of Mercury made red with the fire of the Stone. Sublime the substance again and again till all the quicksilver has become fixed. When three-quarters of the red water are fixed, place the whole for twenty-four hours over a very gentle fire, that it may be the better cleansed and fixed. Remove it subsequently, and cerate in a crucible, also over a very slow fire. Drop upon it its red oil, till it becomes liquid as wax without smoke. One part of this Red Tincture projected upon silver, or purified quicksilver—with salt and vinegar—changes 1,000 parts of either into the purest gold, better than

that of the mine, and withstanding every test. Hence the Sages say that their gold and silver are not as the gold and silver of the multitude, seeing that they are distinguished by infinitely greater purity.

*On the Multiplication of the Medicines.*

If you dissolve those medicines, after their fixation and saturation, with their white or red oils, till they flow like wax, and then in their white or red Mercury, till they look like clear water, and afterwards coagulate them by gentle digestion, and again make them liquid with their oils over the fire till they flow very swiftly, their virtue in projection will be doubled. If, when they are dissolved, you distil them once, their powers are multiplied an hundred fold. To multiply the medicines, dissolve the spirit of each respectively in its water by inhumation, separate from each its oil by distillation, then their water, then their fire, and the earth will remain below. Reduce the water by sublimation over the earth, till it is fixed with the earth; then saturate

it with the oil, or air, and the tincture till it is fixed and liquid like wax ; its virtue will then be multiplied tenfold ; repeat the operation, and its virtue will each time be enhanced 100, 1,000, 10,000 fold, etc. The oftener the Medicine is dissolved, sublimed, and coagulated, the more potent it becomes ; in each sublimation its projective virtue is multiplied by ten.

*What do we mean by Dissolution and Sublimation ?*

When I speak of solution, you must not think that the elixir is to be altogether resolved into water, but is only to be subtilized as far as possible to have its parts divided, that which is dry in it made humid, and that which is gross made simple, since dissolution is practised for the work of subtilization only, but not sublimation, and for the purpose of uniting the body and the spirit. The subtilization of bodies is the dissolution into water, because distillation or dissolution educes the Stone from potentiality into effect, in which the body and the

spirit meet each other halfway, and are thus inseparably conjoined. The confirmation of spirits with bodies takes place when bodies are subtilized, for not otherwise will these retain the spirits. I have not said too much ; but if there be anything in my remarks which you do not understand, read then over again and again, until you have become completely possessed of my meaning. What we have said is the strict rule of truth, and you must not depart from it either to the right or to the left, or you will go wrong. If you do not understand my meaning, do not blame me, but your own ignorance.

*How to make the Projection.*

Now, seeing that it is a matter of some difficulty to melt a million parts together, when you wish to make projection proceed as follows : Take a hundred parts of Mercury, cleansed with vinegar and salt ; place it in a crucible over the fire ; when it begins to bubble up, add one part of your Elixir, and project the whole upon one hundred

other parts of boiling purified Mercury. Then project one part of this entire mixture upon one hundred parts of purified Mercury, and the whole will be turned into our Elixir. Then project one part of this last, coagulated, upon hundred parts of purified Mercury, and it will become the purest gold, or silver, according as the Tincture is red or white. And this is the Rosary of the Philosophers, bearing fragrant roses, both white and red, the essential extract of many books, having nothing superfluous, omitting nothing needful, for the infinite production of true Sun and Moon. Our Medicine has also power to heal all infirmity and diseases, both of inflammation and debility ; it turns an old man into a youth. If the illness be of one month's standing, it may be cured in a day ; if of one year's standing, it may be healed in twelve days ; if of many years' standing, it may be healed in a month. Hence this Medicine is not without reason prized above all other treasures that this world affords.

*Recapitulation of the whole work.*

First sublime the substance, and purge it of all corrupting impurity ; dissolve also, therewith, its white or red additament till the whole is as subtle and volatile as it can possibly become. Then fix it by all methods till it is able to stand the test of the fire. After that, sublime the fixed part of the Stone together with its volatile part ; make the fixed volatile, and the volatile fixed, by alternate solution and sublimation ; so continue, and then fix them both together till they form a white or red liquid Tincture. In this way you obtain the priceless arcanum which is above all the treasures of the world. Give yourself wholly to this study ; meditate on it day and night ; and, above all, check the truth of your theoretic notions by constant reference to practice. You will not find in all the books of the Sages anything clearer and plainer than what I have told you. Praise to the Trinity and glory to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

END OF THE COLLECTANEA OF ARNOLD.



EPITOME OF THE WORK OF RAYMONDUS  
LULLIUS, BY LACINIUS THE  
CALABRIAN.

**I**F I could do what my kindly feelings towards the students of this work prompt me to do, I would copy out all the works of Raymondus Lullius. As it is, I must be content with giving you an abridgment of his letter to King Rupert, which is as lucid and clear as it is short. This treatise is an epitomised summary of all his works, as he himself calls it, and is therefore both brief and weighty.

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LETTER OR EPITOME OF RAYMONDUS  
LULLIUS.

Since this art is beset with a possibility of error and misunderstanding on every side, I have striven as far as possible to express myself so clearly and accurately as to preclude all risk of mis-

apprehension. I do not doubt that you, King Rupert, have read all my books, and pondered them well, but you ask me to provide you with an epitome of everything that I have said, in order that you may the more readily carry it in your mind, and I gladly comply with your request. I received your letter at Vienna. But not till after my arrival at Salerno do I find myself able to attend to it. If you are not satisfied with my method, you must needs seek one that is shorter.

[Raymondus is here speaking of the method of his master, Arnold. For Raymondus divided the elements, and subtilized spirit and body in a different way from that which Arnold delivered to him, though, of course, the substance of the Stone, and the substantial mode of procedure, were the same with both.]

You ask which of the three Stones is more useful, readily obtained, and efficacious : Well, the mineral method is long and full of risks. It consists in two waters, one of which makes the Stone



volatile without labour or danger ; the other fixes it, and is fixed with it, and this operation is attended with risk. This latter water is extracted from a certain fetid menstruum ; it is stronger than any other water, and the danger consists in the ease with which, in ablution, its spirit may escape.

The Animal Stone is far more difficult of composition, so that far greater knowledge is required for it ; yet it enables you not only to transmute metals into gold, but to change anything into any other thing, whence the potency of this Stone is infinite. The Vegetable Stone takes still longer to prepare, and has still more wonderful virtues than the Animal Stone. It should follow the Animal Stone as far as the rectification of elements, and, if thus prepared, its effect passes into the animal. Everything transmuted by means of the Vegetable Stone, far transcends Nature in excellence and size, because it is impregnated with the quintessence which performs so many wonderful things in the world.

All alchemical gold is composed from corrosives, and from the incorruptible quintessence which is fixed with the ferment by the skill of the artist. Such quintessence is a certain mortified and empoisoned spirit in the Mineral Stone. The Animal Stone may be the most miraculous medicine for the human body, just as if it were an extract of human blood. The quintessence which is in the Vegetable Stone restores youth, and preserves the human body from all accidental corruption. The spirit of the quintessence, as you know, is that which tinges and transmutes, if it be mixed with its proper ferment. The Vegetable Stone is more noble, and useful, and efficacious, than all the rest.

You ask me whether the work can be shortened; I tell you that all abbreviation diminishes perfection, so that the medicine which is composed by accurtation has less transmutatory power. There is, however, a multiplex accurtation of the Mineral Stone. In order to curtail its effect as little as possible, you

should after the first calcination and putrefaction, which is performed with the most limpid and clear first water during a space of twenty days, and not less, separate from the substance a red powder, and distil it with the second water so as to prevent the escape of the spirit. Take only the last part of this water, after rubefaction in the alembic. Dissolve therein the powders, by placing both in hot water in a sealed vessel ; then set over it an alembic, and distil as much as will ascend. This water pour away ; that which remains with the body coagulate in a well-closed vessel among hot ashes ; make other water and pour over it ; then distil and coagulate ten times. Thus the Stone will be made perfect. If you wish to increase its efficiency, you may go on distilling and coagulating it as often as you like, or until it is impossible to congeal the body further. This Medicine will change metals into gold, and may be completed in 80 days at the most.

In the case of the Animal Stone,

there is no possibility of abridgment, except, indeed, that the earth may be ruled with fire, and the water with air, when its efficacy will be the same ; this is called the accurtation of middle time. As to the Vegetable Stone, the same may be said. The following directions will be found useful in the preparation of this Stone.

Take the black which is blacker than black, and distil of it 18 parts in a silver vessel, and in the way suggested in my Testament. At the first distillation take only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  part, distil it again, and then its 4th part, which also distil a third time ; of this again take 2 parts for the fourth distillation, in which take a little less than the whole ; distil this 8 or 9 times. Then take a pair of equal sized vessels with narrow mouths, to each of which an alembic is attached. Let a cucurbite also be fitted to one of the alembics. Put in each mouth one pound of this water and one oz. of ferment ; place the vessels on a gentle fire, or a furnace the heat of which can be

properly regulated. The ferment will be dissolved. Wet sponges with cold water, and tie them over the tubes of the alembic. The ferment, when quite dissolved, will ascend with its water, and the contents of the two vessels communicating will be distilled from one into the other, twice every day, and twice every night, one pound remaining all the time in each vessel. For as much as ascends from one vessel enters it from the other. By this continual heat the body is subtilized, and the spirit condensed. The gentler the fire, and the slower the distillation, the more perfectly is the process performed. Continue this operation for 20 or 22 days, and the quintessence of this Blessed Water will then be so thickened as not to ascend any more, for then it is fixed with the ferment and changed into the Stone. Take out of the distilling-vessels and place in horse-dung, or the bath. Then dissolve and coagulate in the same night, and repeat this thrice or oftener. The Stone will then be most

precious in divine virtue and exalted power.

If you take the White Ferment, the quintessence will be coagulated in 10 days ; but it is not so easily dissolved as the Solar Ferment. This process is one of the most subtle in Nature or Art, though the Elixir has not the properties assigned to it by the Sages, viz., that if you mix this complete medicine with any metal, and the product with another metal, the whole will be turned, according to the first principle, into the Lunar Medicine. and if the Sun be added thereto, this also will be converted into the Moon. Such property is not found in our Medicine if prepared in the way described. The quintessence is fixed permanently in the ferment to which it is joined, and transmutes in accordance with the ferment. If, after the tenth distillation, you dissolve gold in our water ; then volatilize the water over a slow fire, and place the gold in a humid spot, it will be dissolved of its own accord in four days ; and this solution is



Potable Gold, which has such wonderful virtue in the conservation of human life.

If you add to this dissolved gold a paste of quicksilver seven times sublimed with vitriol (the proportion of the gold being one part to seven of the quicksilver), and continue to sublime the mixture over the fœces till fixation takes place, you will have a penetrant and tingent Medicine. If you put one oz. of this liquid gold by itself for eight days over a very gentle fire, with 100 parts of Mercury, it will coagulate the whole into gold. All these wonders are brought about by the spirit of the water which is indissolubly fixed with the gold, in the solution of the gold.

Distil the Vegetable Stone till there is no viscosity in the water. This is the case after the fifth distillation. You will then have the best transparent vitriol and the best cinaprium in equal parts, which combine, triturate, dry in the sun, and after upon coals, till all the aquosity has departed. Project your

water thereon. Distil it over a slow and gradually increasing fire: thus the spirit of the quintessence of vitriol, and cinaprium, or antimony, which mainly constitutes the Mineral Stone, is mixed with the spirit of our blessed ardent water, which spirit is the soul of the Vegetable Stone. Repeat the distillation ten times, always letting the bodies be dry before you add the water. Let the spirit remain, and by means of the fire be joined to the spirit of the burning water. When you have accomplished the 10th distillation, counting from the first distillation of the ardent water, add gold in the proportions explained above for the work of the Vegetable Stone. Place in the furnace. In ten days the fixation will be completed, whereas, in the ordinary vegetable process, twenty-five are required. This abridgment does not impair the virtue of the Stone for transmuting metals, but reduces its medicinal potency. Yet, of course, the Medicine will be better and more



efficacious all round, if it be prepared in the ordinary, more tedious manner.

When you have thus produced fixation, perform the dissolution in the bath, just as in the case of the Vegetable Stone. But this composite stone is not dissolved so quickly as the Vegetable itself; yet is it quicker dissolved than is the Mineral, namely, in nine days. A penetrating and well-fixed medicine is the best for all purposes; the more quickly it penetrates bodies, the more readily is it joined to them, and the more thorough is its action. Out of fine black lead of the Sages you may extract a certain oil of a golden colour, which if used for the dissolution of the Stone, whether mineral, composite, or animal, after its fixation, and solution for 3 or 4 days, will enable you to dispense with all other solution and coagulation. For this is the occult oil which makes our Medicine petretable, friendly, and capable of union with all bodies. If you know how to free this oil of its water; and treat it in the man-

ner suggested, you can evolve from it the Stone in thirty days. But in regard to the Vegetable Stone this oil is not needed, because there the processes are expeditious enough. From this brief epistle I must leave you to gather what you want. Farewell.

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NOTES OF LACINIUS ON THE EPISTLE  
OF RAYMONDUS.

Let me state, in explanation of Raymond's Epistle, that all his works are full of that Vegetable Stone, which he often calls Vegetable Mercury, the water of life, the menstruum, and the menstrual blood, and of which he says that it has the properties of a body, and is produced, as it were, out of the female seed: it is both generative and nutritive, and it causes the growth of gold and silver, educating them from potentiality into activity, and thus at length changing them into the Stone. If it causes gold, etc., to grow, it must be by its dissolution—hence it is that which dissolves bodies, which, however, must first be

calcined and volatilized. But this cannot be done by a vegetable product, as foolish persons suppose, but with things of a like nature. Raymondus distinctly discountenances such a view. He says that the whole mystery of the mineral way consists in two waters, one of which volatilizes the Stone (which is fixed), while the other water fixes it again, and is also fixed with it by the skill of the artist. The quintessence which composes the whole Stone is fixed and fortified according to the ferment joined to it, and performs transmutation accordingly. But it is possible to fix the quintessence over its own earth and join it with the metal; yet this method does not find favour with Raymondus, because when it is fixed upon another ferment, the work is performed quicker, its potency is greater, and it is more natural.—What Raymondus here alludes to as the quintessence, is by Rhasis described under the name of armoniac salt. With his menstruum, or salt, Raymond extracts from metals their souls, which he calls

sulphur of Nature. He causes them to ascend and cling to the sides of the vessels by means of fire. The extract he often terms the metallic sperm, from which again he extracts the four elements, with his circulatory celestial medicines, by the help of digestions and distillations. These elements he fixes, solves, and coagulates on his earth; and thus he composes the Stone.

For the present you may operate in the following manner. Make a water out of dry vitriol, saltpetre, and cinabrium. Sublime one pound of this water with half-a-pound of cinabrium three times, always adding fresh cinabrium. Then rectify it by itself that it may be well purified. Take that pure water, and mix with it as much acuated vegetable water with its sublimed earth; mix them gradually and carefully, and let them stand in a well-sealed vessel for twenty-four hours. Then distil all the water in a bath; pour it on again, and distil again, till the mineral spirit is well united to the vegetable spirit, and you will see them lying

at the bottom like a piece of ice. Pour away the distilled water since we need it no more. The strength of the ice, or spirit, you can intensify by repeated distillations in the bath, with more water. Put one pound of aqua fortis over one ounce of that salt—do the same with the water of life, which must be highly rectified, and you can increase the potency of the ice, or rather fire, almost indefinitely.

Take of this ice one pound, pound it with one ounce of volatile Sol, reduced to the nature of a spirit, by the mediation of menstrual water conformed to its nature. Now this water, which volatilizes the Stone, is not really water of life. But when you have gold or silver thus volatile or foliate, the same is disposed for dissolving or uniting with the ice. Distil for eight days in the bath, and the whole is dissolved into a liquid of a golden colour; make it circulate for twenty days in the double vessel; it will then coagulate as a ruby-coloured Stone; distil, dissolve, and coagulate, and you have the Medicine.

EXTRACTS MADE BY LACINIUS FROM THE  
LIGHTS OF LIGHTS BY RHASIS.

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**S**OLUTION is the root of Alchemy. Hence we must discover the natural solvents and coagulants. We will, therefore, proceed to speak of soluble and solvent mineral substances--of atraments and alums, of mineral spirits, of metals and precious stones—their nature, the method of solution and coagulation, etc.

*On atramenta.*

Atraments are either black, reddish, or green ; and they are all hot and dry. They are likewise secret and wonderful in their nature. The green atrament mixed with quicksilver coagulates it, and nothing else will bring about the same effect. It also very quickly sublimes quicksilver, mortifies it, and renders it liquid. Believe what I say, open your eyes, and try. The preparation of water



of atrament is as follows: Take of the green ultramontane atrament, shake it, place it in a jar, which you should close up with clay; plunge the jar in coals, and expose it to gentle heat for two hours. Quickened the fire with the bellows for two hours longer; then leave it till it goes out of its own accord; allow the jar to cool, open it, and you will find an atrament of an intense ruby colour. Place in a glass vessel; put over it a threefold quantity of clear boy's urine; keep it for eight days; distil with vinegar or sweet water, cover it up, and keep it for use.

*On alums.*

There are many species of alum. The Jamen variety is feathery, very white, and acid. This is well-suited for dissolving purposes. Hence the Sages have called it the Stone of Stones, because it is neither too hard nor too soft. It is not easily soluble, and is regarded as approaching a vegetable nature. There is another alum which is green, and in the form of a powder; one is of an orange colour, and one is whitish.

There is also a rock alum, like sal gemmæ. But the first is the most useful in our Art. Take of it as much as you want, pound it gently into a brazen mortar, place it in a brazen pot, pour over it six times its quantity of clear boy's urine, expose it to gentle heat: half the urine must evaporate; then remove it from the fire, strain it through a filter, place in a glass vessel, and keep for use.

Alum is prepared with distilled boy's urine, there being one part of alum to four of the urine, in which it must be dissolved after pounding. Then, in order that the operation may succeed, distillation by the filter and congelation must be repeated several times.

To prepare common salt, whence all salts originate, pour over it five times its quantity of sweet hot water; distil it, strain it through a filter, and coagulate. Repeat this operation several times till you have it in the form of snow-white crystals.

#### *Of salts.*

In armoniac salt are hidden all the



secrets of the Sages, and because of its soaring nature, they have called it the Eagle, or the Arrow. It is very hot and very dry ; yet it is nothing but condensed vapour collected from soot in baths. There is also sal gemmæ, which is more precious than other salts, and very efficacious in our Art. Other salts are saltpetre and common salt. The purer salt is the greater is its efficacy. One salt the Sages have essayed to hide. It is the salt alchali. If you can obtain it, you have all you want.

Take one part of common salt, pound it, put it in a pot, cover it well, place the pot in a potter's furnace all night, take out the salt, pound it, put it in a glass vessel, pour over it some of your water of atrament before referred to, if it be for the Red Tincture, or of the water of alum for the White Tincture. Let this water be twice or thrice the quantity of the salt. Leave it for eight days ; that which is not dissolved sinks to the bottom, the rest rises to the surface, floats there like oil, and is brilliantly

white. This latter they call the oil of the Sages or the water of wisdom, because none save a philosopher can apprehend it, being in appearance pure water, yet holding therein a crystalline vapour. When this water is coagulated, we obtain a brilliant Stone, which is called salt alchali. Take common salt, cook it, place it in a glass vessel, pour over it three times as much distilled vinegar or clear water, add half the quantity of alum zucharinum, and as much tartar of wine mixed with alum, pound them, put them in a glass vessel, pour over them three times as much distilled vinegar, or clear water; add two ounces of honey, leave it three days; then take what is dissolved, namely, what floats, having no fæces, over the clear and limpid salt, and place it in a small vessel, having a narrow neck. Add to it what floats on the surface of the lime and alum; place them in the same bottle, with the water of salt. See that you have no fæces, which will spoil the work. Coagulate the contents, and you have

a brilliant crystalline stone. What has been said of common salt applies to saltpetre and sal gemmæ. The oftener the salt is dissolved and refined, the better.

*Of salt armoniac.*

Pound it, put in a pot, cover same, expose to gentle heat, pound again, place in a glass vessel, pour over it twice the quantity of distilled vinegar, or clear water ; add water of atrament for gold, water of alum for silver, and leave it eight days ; skim off what floats on the surface and is limpid, being careful to take up none of the sediment ; put in a narrow-necked bottle, coagulate, then keep it and preserve it from dust, because it is clear and white. Afterwards pound it, place in aludel, having burnt common salt at the bottom ; close vessel with the lute of wisdom. Sublime in furnace. If this operation be begun at early dawn, the fire, which should at first be very gentle, should be slightly increased at the third hour, and so till noon. Remove it from the fire, and let it cool. You will find

the salt armoniac of a pure and brilliant white. It should be carefully shielded from dust.

*Of the spirits.*

There are three mineral spirits : quicksilver, sulphur, and arsenic. Arsenic is hot and dry, of great virtue and potency, yet lightly esteemed. It burns up all other bodies. There are two kinds of arsenic, one is of a pale white, the other red. The red is combustive, the white is solvent, and useful for the Tincture ; with quicksilver it makes silver. It has a fiery nature, and sublimes quickly. This spirit we strive to render corporeal and fixed, in order that it may permanently colour our substance. It has great affinity for vinegar.

This spirit must be cleansed, sublimed, and exalted ; then it will do what no man would think possible. Take pallid arsenic, pound well into powder, place in glazed pot, pour over it four times as much clear strong vinegar. When most of the arsenic is dissolved, after three days, place over a gentle fire,

steam off the liquid, take it out, place in a dish, wash well of all saltness with pure water, and dry in the sun. Place again in glazed pot, pour over it four times its quantity of water of alum, and let it evaporate over the fire. Put in an aludel, add twice its quantity of common purified salt, close the vessel, and seal it up carefully. Sublime over fire from morning till noon. Cool, open the vessel, and you will find in it a brilliant substance. Place it in a glass vessel, pour over it its own quantity of water of alum, and leave for eight days. Take up what floats on the surface, put it in a small narrow-necked bottle, coagulate, and you will find a crystalline stone ; keep until necessary to use, and see that it is free from dust. If you digest this arsenic with milk or oil of bitter almonds, and afterwards with water of alum, it will be very brilliant and beautiful in the sublimation ; and then it dissolves very easily. If arsenic be cooked with olive oil, and then with water of atrament, it will be found in the sublimation brilliantly red

and easily soluble. Red arsenic, when its ferment is added, makes glad the heart of the Alchemist ; but it is not so easily dissolved as white flaky arsenic. Hence you should use the latter for dissolving and sublimation. To sublime with quicksilver, cook in the manner described one pound of arsenic with one ounce of quicksilver.

*Of sulphur.*

The decoction of sulphur is the same as that of arsenic. But as sulphur has much air, as well as much hotness and dryness, it is not easily sublimed. To effect this purpose, cook it well, and dissolve it ; you will then be on the road to perfection. Without the three substances which I have mentioned, there can be no silver or gold, arsenic being best for silver, and sulphur for gold. Some say that if sulphur be mixed with living calx, it can be easily sublimed ; but I do not wish you to waste your labour. Know, however, that arsenic is more valuable in the Lunar, and sulphur in the Solar work. Sulphur is partially



white without, and partially red within. Of arsenic the opposite holds good.

If you wish to change white into red sulphur, dissolve in red water by pounding, saturation, and good decoction; coagulate into a stone, dissolve once more with red water, again coagulate, dissolve a third time, sublime over a powerful fire, and that which ascends in the shape of a white dust is white sulphur; what remains at the bottom is red sulphur, which transmutes quicksilver into gold.

*Of quicksilver.*

All sages have striven to make quicksilver remain firm in the fire; but it is impossible. Mix quicksilver with anything, and the fire will instantly separate them again, because it is a spirit, and has been called the cloud of clouds, the father that enriches the son, the eye of wisdom; the pregnant woman that conceives and brings forth in a day. It says to gold: I and sulphur have begotten you; and to silver: I and arsenic are your parents. I flee from the fire, and leave behind all that does not belong

to me in the shape of a sediment. I stand firm in the fire, and make all that belongs to me brilliant and pure; I, being coagulated coagulate, being dissolved dissolve. This seeming contradiction I will now explain, and tell you of its coagulation into the red, and its coagulation into the white, and of its dissolution. Let it first be cleansed with vinegar and salt, then sublimed or coagulated, then dissolved. Take it and an equal quantity of common salt, place in glazed pot (after pounding them well in a brass mortar), pour over it four times as much vinegar, and leave it over a gentle fire till all the vinegar has evaporated. Place in dish, having removed it from the fire, wash with pure water, rinse out salt. Take the same quantity of atrament or vitriol, pound together, place in an aludel, and make paste with pure water, or distilled vinegar. Dry over gentle fire, place in an aludel, and carefully stop up the mouth of the vessel with clay. Leave over slow fire from morning till



third hour ; let the fire be stronger from third hour till noon, or none. Cool, open the vessel, and you will find it full of a snow-white substance (like camphor in appearance). Pound, place in glass vessel, pour over it twice its quantity of water of atrament, and leave for eight days. Skim off what floats on the surface into a small narrow-necked bottle, coagulate, and you will have a clear red granulated substance. Keep it free from dust till needed. Item : Take 3 ozs. of olive oil in a glazed pot ; boil up over slow fire ; when it begins to boil, throw in  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of clear yellow sulphur, shake till sulphur melts, remove from fire, and cool. Add 1 oz. of quicksilver, put on fire, leave till all is dry, take out of pot, and place in a vessel well stopped-up with the clay of the Sages. Sublime over fire from morning till three p.m., and what is in the vessel will then be very red. Pound, place in glass vessel, pour over it twice as much water of atrament, leave for eight days, skim off what floats on the surface, place in bottle,

coagulate, and you will have a clear red granulated substance. Keep this also free from dust until needed. If you wish to coagulate quicksilver into the white substance, in order to make silver, take quicksilver and as much white lead (cerusa); pound in mortar, place in glazed pot, pour over it four times as much water of alum or of quicklime, leave over gentle fire from six till nine a.m. Take out of pot, pound, place in an aludel, stop up with the clay of the Sages. Put in glass furnace or baker's oven, or over fire, leave from morning till evening, cool, open, and you will find the lower part of the vessel full of ashes. Pound, place in glass vessel, pour over it twice its quantity of water of alum, leave for eight days, skim off oil of Sages, place in small bottle, and coagulate; you will find a white crystalline substance like ice; keep it, and you will soon know its use.

### *Of gold.*

The Sages call gold the product of the sun. When it is perfect, the fire

cannot hurt it, but rather intensifies its colour. If you wish to make gold, you must ferment it, or all your labour will be vain. Moreover, the ferment must be pure. Nevertheless, it does not require much purification, since it is in itself sufficiently pure, but it must be prepared so that it may be easily incorporated and fermented, and for this purpose it must be calcined as we will shew further on.

Beat pure gold into thin leaves; then take red arsenic, pound, add a third part of common salt (*i.e.*, one-third part of the arsenic), take seven ounces of steel filings, pound the three together; take a small, new, glazed pot, put a little of this powder at the bottom of the pot; over it place a plate of gold, cover the plate with more powder, and so fill up with alternate layers. Take another glazed pot, put in one pound of olive oil, boil over gentle fire, add four ounces of clear yellow sulphur; remove at once from the fire, stir with an iron rod till the sulphur is melted, and allow to cool. Add some of this oil to the contents of the other

pot : simmer over gentle fire, till absorbed ; add more, place again on the fire, and so on, little by little, till all the oil has been absorbed. Then leave it on the fire till quite dry. All this can be done in twenty-four hours. Stop up the pot with the clay of Sages ; next morning, place pot among the coals of a gentle fire, so that it is entirely covered, from six to nine a.m. Take pot, cool, break it, pound its contents ; afterwards pound the gold, place the whole in dish, add sweet and clear water, and stir about with your finger. When the powder has settled at the bottom, remove the water (for it is salt) ; add more water, till the powder has quite lost its saltness. Dry it in the sun, or by a fire, place in small pot, stop up with clay, place in furnace for the space required for baking bread. Then rejoice, for you have pulverized and fermented gold. Take that powder, pound well, place in glass vessel, pour over it its own quantity of water of atrament, taking care that it is neither more nor less ; leave for eight days, stirring

twice or thrice daily. Skim off the brilliant substance floating on the surface, and put in small bottle. It should be limpid and clear, and if it be so, happy are you. Take equal quantities of the water of quicksilver, as described in the chapters on quicksilver, of the water of salt armoniac, and of the water of gold ; mix the three waters in a bottle ; coagulate, plunge bottle up to neck in pot full of sieved ashes, place pot on tripod over fire from morning till evening, and that which is in bottle will be coagulated. Break the bottle after it has cooled, take the Stone which is inside, put half ounce of it on eighty ounces of silver, and it will be changed into the purest gold.

*Of silver.*

Silver, though composed in the same way, is not quite so pure or well digested as gold, and suffers from two kinds of humidity, sulphureous and phlegmatic, or evaporant. Yet silver may be properly purified by fire ; but if, being cooked with common salt and orpiment, it grows black, while there is no blackness

in the salt or the orpiment, this is a sign that it is suffering from the first humidity. The sign of the second humidity is diminishment in the fire. By purification and digestion it can be transmuted into gold, for its infirmity is of a negative kind.

The following is the best way of changing silver into gold. Between two layers of common well pounded salt, without extracting its humidity, place a thin silver plate in a strong earthen vessel; leave a small opening at the mouth, plunge among moderately red-hot coals for twelve hours. Take out, and you will find your silver plates corroded and diminished in size and weight. If they are white, it is a sign that their first humidity has been consumed, and that they are well calcined and brittle. If they are black upon the outside, some of the humidity remains. If they are not brittle, it is the second humidity which persists. The sign of the elimination of the first humidity is that the silver is not blackened by lead; of the second that it does not diminish in fire. When the



silver is well calcined, and freed of its sulphureous humidity, then expose it once more to fire, till it is soft and flexible like gold under the hammer, and is at the same time compact and ponderous. Take equal quantities of salt armoniac, saltpetre, and borax ; pound together, dissolve in a little wine, and let it dry. This will render the silver malleable.

*Proof.*

Rhasis tells us that copper and iron, being of a different and most impure substance, can no more be changed into silver or gold than an ass or a goat can become a man. But copper is of a strong substance, and easily transmutable in colour, of the same weight with silver, and readily mixed with good silver. But it easily turns black, and is very impure. Yet even Rhasis admits that it is easier to make silver out of copper than gold out of lead. If copper, he says, be calcined, cleansed, and dissolved, it will look like gold, but will never become real gold. Hence he calls all Alchemists fools who hunt for bears in

the sea, and angle for fish on dry land, as they will make gold of lead, or silver of copper, when they have made a wolf of an ass. Does not Rhasis here seem to characterize our whole Art as a sophistical invention? How is the difficulty to be solved? Well, if you wish to know all, read all—and especially what Rhasis himself says in his chapter on copper. There you will perceive that his meaning appears to be that the ferment of gold and silver cannot be obtained from lead or copper; but he does not really deny that lead and copper can be transmuted.

*Of silver (continued).*

Take thin plates of silver, five pounds of arsenic, three ounces of salt, and one ounce of steel filings; pound them well together. Take some of this powder, cover with it the bottom of a pot, over that place a silver plate, over that some more of the powder, and so fill the pot with alternate layers of plates and powder. Let there be powder over the top of all. Place on a slow fire, over



the coals, pour over it strong vinegar, and leave it from 6 to 9 a.m. Let the moisture evaporate, stop up with clay of Sages, and plunge pot among red-hot coals ; keep up a powerful fire for twelve hours. Then open the pot (after cooling), separate the silver from the powder, pound in mortar, wash with clean water in a dish. Dry in the sun. Add to the powdered silver equal quantities of salt armoniac, of sublimed coagulated quick-silver, and of white sublimed arsenic ; pound, put in a bottle, pour over it four times as much water of alum, and leave for two days. Plunge bottle up to neck, which should be narrow, in a pot full of ashes ; the bottle should be unstopped till its contents are coagulated. Then stop it up, and place over fire for twenty-four hours. Let it cool, and then break bottle ; if anything be sublimed up to the neck, combine all together ; pound its contents, place in glass vessel, pour over it twice as much water of alum, and leave for eight days, shaking it twice or thrice every day. Skim off what floats

on the surface into a small narrow-necked bottle ; evaporate the liquid from the remaining fæces, add  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of it to 20 oz. of copper, and it will become the purest silver. Coagulate the contents of the bottle in a pot full of ashes, then add  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. of it to 250 oz. of copper, 150 oz. of tin, or 50 oz. of lead, and you will witness a wonderful transformation. There is another way of carrying out this operation, but here is the most efficacious, and however the coagulated substance the preparation of which I have described may be obtained, it has the property of transmuting larger or smaller quantities of copper, tin, or lead into the most irreproachable silver.

*Of copper.*

The composition of copper is identical with that of silver, but it is very impure and ill-digested, burnt, hot, and dry. It is also very porous, and must be well cleansed of its prevailing sulphureous humidity. In its natural state it grows black in the fire, and is burnt and excoriated ; it also burns and

blackens other metals, on account of its sulphueity. When the purification begins, the flame is more yellow and less black. Its cleansing is accomplished in the same way as that of silver. Afterwards let it be extinguished with vinegar and fresh swine's blood. It should be calcined longer than silver ; and it should remain exposed to a powerful fire for three days. The saltness which persists after its calcination you may remove with hot lye.

*Of lead.*

Lead is generated in the same way as other imperfect metals. It consists of impure sulphur and dark impure quicksilver, of weak digestion and composition. Its blackness and impurity may be extracted by continued digestion. This purgation may be performed by melting and adding to it one-fourth part of Mercury ; then pulverise in mortar with an equal weight of burnt common salt, till the salt grows black. Then wash it out with water ; pound again with an equal weight of salt, and so add

salt a third time ; boil it all up in strong vinegar for the first day, till it is the more purified of sulphur and blackness. Continue the operation till the lead is quite pure.

*Of tin.*

Tin has white and partially impure quicksilver, with sulphur of great impurity. One-quarter of Mercury and a third part of lead will remove its porosity and toughness. But it must be imbibed with rectified oil, or with distilled swine's blood, till its moisture is removed. Its purification may also be carried out, like that of lead, with burnt salt and vinegar. But Rhasis says that gold and silver are evolved out of it with greater difficulty than out of any other metal.

*Of iron.*

Iron is composed, like other metals, of gross and impure sulphur and quicksilver. It may be changed into steel, but only with the greatest difficulty into gold and silver. It may be founded with ceruse, but is not malleable after

fusion. It is most useful in supplying that crocus which is of so great importance in our Magistery.

EXTRACTS OF LACINIUS FROM ALBERTUS  
MAGNUS, S. THOMAS, AND OTHER  
GREAT SAGES.

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**O**NLY to inexperienced and superficial readers can there appear to be any disagreement among the different exponents of this Art. From Hermes, who calls the dissolved body a perennial water which coagulates Mercury, down to the latest Sage, they are all in wonderful substantial harmony. The matter of which they speak is the flower of flowers, the rose of roses, the lily of lilies. Rejoice, then, young man, in thy youth, and learn to collect flowers, because I have brought you into the garden of Paradise. Make a wreath for your head, rejoice, and enjoy the delights of this world, praising God, and helping your neighbour. I will now open to you the fount of know-



ledge, and make you to understand the dark things of this Art.

Albertus instructs us, first, to collect the flowers, *i.e.*, purge the spirits, then to fix them by repeated sublimation in a closed vessel, then to dissolve, and then to coagulate. First we will speak in general

### *Of spirits.*

The transmutation of metallic bodies is brought about by the mineral spirits, whose abundant purity and digestion impart to them great potency of digestion and purification. By a spirit we mean that which has a natural potency in vivifying and rendering immutable. It is surely not surprising that a most highly purified and matured spirit should effect striking changes in the body of a metal. The quantity of the metal is indeed very much larger, but the qualities of the spirit are active, while those of the metals are passive, and so very little can produce a very great effect. In order, however, that spirits may have this power, it is necessary to purify and

digest them very highly, to introduce them into metallic bodies, and to make it impossible for them to leave such bodies.

The preparation of spirits is sufficiently exemplified for us by the way in which metals are naturally procreated. In the natural generation of gold, the spirit is sublimed by the mineral heat of the earth. The dry earth, when heated, heats the impurities, drinks up the superfluities, and retains the grosser parts. The watery, aerial, and igneous parts, being more subtle and volatile, ascend upward. By imitating Nature, Art has invented a sublimation through which we purify spirits by means of the dry element that consumes their superfluities. Nature prematurely sublimes some quicksilver and sulphur in the bowels of the earth by premature coagulation into iron, for her own purposes. I, however, who wish to purify the sulphur and the quicksilver, can put off the coagulation until the spirits are freed from all grossness and humidity by



reiterated sublimation. Nature, when aided by man, is much more powerful than when left to herself.

*Of the purification of the spirits.*

The purification of spirits consists in the removal of all superfluities, but without the corruption of essentials. There are three kinds of spirits, mineral, vegetable, and animal. The mineral spirits, again, are properly three: sulphur, quicksilver, and arsenic, which operate naturally in metals, and to which metals, prepared by Art, are naturally joined. Of these, sulphur is the great active, quicksilver the great passive principle, while arsenic represents the secondary operations of quicksilver—but all three unite in the composition of the Elixir.

Sulphur is an oleaginous body composed of subtle earth, strongly saturated with water, and a fat, unctuous, airy humidity, capable of fusion by heat, and of coagulation by cold. It has three humours, two of which are superfluous, while one is necessary. What we have to do is to purge out the superfluous

humours, leaving the third indissolubly united to the purified earth.

Take pure and brilliant sulphur, pound small, incorporate with an equal quantity of common salt, cook over gentle fire for two hours, stirring it well all the time, till the mixture becomes a black mass. Allow to cool: take good strong lye, made of plain water combined with quicklime and vine ashes. Pulverize sulphur and salt, boil with lye water over a fierce fire, stirring often, till all the salt is extracted, with the unctuousity thereof. Dry the sulphur, add more salt in the same proportion as before, and repeat the last operation. Reiterate three times, and then sublime in the following way: Boil alum in an earthen pot over a strong fire for half an hour, when it will be calcined. Add an equal quantity of iron or copper filings, sprinkle with vinegar, and mix well. With two parts of this compound combine one part of sulphur, and again moisten with vinegar. Dry in sun, or by a slow fire, and place in vessel thus: Cover the bottom an inch thick

with the mixture of alum and iron filings, then put in the sulphur, etc., and over that another layer of the mixture. Boil over gentle fire for three hours: stop up mouth of vessel, increase fire gradually till twenty-fourth hour, cool, collect what is sublimed. The fire should be gentle at first and strong afterwards. Take care to stir the contents of the vessel frequently, and let it be well raised above the fire to prevent the compound from getting burned. Repeat the sublimation seven times, till the sulphur becomes quite white, dry, and clear from all humidity of a corrupt kind. The sign of this perfection is a crystalline brightness and brilliancy.

It is fixed and completed in the following manner. Take strong, thrice distilled vinegar; mingle with it the aforesaid purified sulphur, and one-fifth part of its weight of thrice-sublimed salt armoniac. Mingle all with the vinegar in a porphyry jar. Put in a long-necked glass phial, close, plunge in horse dung; till all is dissolved. Congeal into ashes

with the mouth of the phial open. Continue slow fire till all is coagulated : then you will have sulphur which tinges, and remains fixed in the fire. With it you can transmute Mercury, Venus, and Jupiter into silver.

*Of quicksilver.*

Quicksilver is a mineral body, composed of subtle sulphureous earth, mixed with water, which is partly elementary, partly metallic. Its earthy substance must be purged of its gross sulphureous earthiness, and its aqueous substance of its twofold superfluous humidity. When it is thus purified it unites with purified sulphur to produce the glorious Elixir, and the complete perfection of gold and silver, just as the female menstrual blood combines with the male sperm to make a man.

*Its preparation.*

Project quicksilver on its father, coagulate a little, pound, incorporate with a double quantity of its sediment ; place in sublimatory between two layers of sediment ; when fully steamed, shut up

vessel, and place over fire gradually increasing in strength, The sediment consists of one part of common salt, one part of black or green atrament, and one part of cuperosa. Let it be seven times, or oftener, sublimed with this sediment, till it loses all superfluous, earthy humidity, and becomes very white. At first let it be pounded with its sediment, till it dies. Sprinkle with vinegar or urine. Place over very gentle fire, for it burns easily. Before you open the sublimatory, let it cool, because its vapour is very deadly. However much Mercury is purified by sublimation, it does not penetrate the body of a metal, or remain there, after the manner of sulphur or arsenic. Its substance, though very pure, is not easily fusible: their fusibility metals owe to their sulphur rather than their quicksilver. It is, therefore, necessary to cerate and to loosen. Sal ammoniac, saltpetre, borax, capillary oil, and oil of eggs are the best media for ceration, to which also contrition is eminently needful, for it subtilises parts and causes them to penetrate

one another. Take highly purified Mercury with one-seventh its weight of salt armoniac, thrice sublimed with an equal quantity of common salt; sprinkle with rectified hair oil in the place wherein it is being dried. Dry in glass vessel among hot ashes, or in the sun. Pound and sprinkle with hair oil, and again dry. Again pound and make a paste with oil, and dry. The sign of ceration is that the substance flows like wax when poured upon a plate of silver. The above operation must be repeated, if necessary, until this is accomplished. Take strong, thrice-distilled vinegar (to which add one-tenth part of thrice-sublimed salt armoniac); make a paste, place in glass vessel, close carefully, plunge in horse dung, and then leave on gentle fire about twenty-six days; take out, strain, coagulate among hot ashes into a hard and dry mass, leaving the vessel open till all humidity disappears. Test by placing on red-hot iron plate: if it remains undiminished and gives out no smoke, it is properly fixed. If it gives out smoke,



it is not fixed, and you must repeat the coagulative process. The Mercury may be changed into Moon by the method described in the section on sulphur. If on this well-coagulated Mercury you place an equal weight of common Mercury with one-tenth or one-seventh of thrice-sublimed salt armoniac, and make a paste with hair or egg oil, and dissolve and coagulate, it will more readily be fixed. To obtain the red substance, make the paste with oil,  $\frac{1}{4}$  part of the aforesaid sulphur, with one-seventh part of salt armoniac, and one-third of lime and red oil (hereafter to be described); dissolve and coagulate as aforesaid. If projected on the Moon, it will transmute into true gold.

#### *Of arsenic.*

Arsenic is a mineral body composed of earth and water; it is oleaginous, like sulphur, but having more earth than oil, and containing a more gross and earthy sulphur. Its purgation for the first sublimation is by means of substances which dry up and consume its oleaginous

superfluity, which is the first humidity. The aqueous superfluity, which is the second humidity, must be evaporated.

In God's name, take ponderous, lucid, red or yellow arsenic, pound small with an equal weight and a half of iron or copper filings ; sprinkle with vinegar, dry, place between layers of its sediment over a fire, till there is no more steam, close up vessel, increase fire more and more till all is sublimed ; cool, collect what appears outside the sediment, place between new layers, in each case about the thickness of one inch ; sublime as before, till it is white, pure, crystalline, and free from all humidity and superfluity. This may be done by means of five or six sublimations ; dissolve, and then coagulate, as in the case of sulphur, whether for the white or red. Arsenic is of less potency in the coagulation of Mercury than sulphur, but it is possible to extract from it an igneous virtue.



*How the abovesaid purified Sulphur  
changes Mercury, Copper, and  
Tin into Silver.*

Take one pound of living Mercury, five pounds of melted purified tin, amalgamate, pulverize in marble mortar with an equal quantity of common baked salt, till the salt is quite black. Wash with water, till all blackness disappears ; dry ; add salt again, etc., and repeat the process till the salt and the water cease to become black. Add again an equal quantity of salt, cook over a slow fire, pound for an hour till the salt gets dry ; when the Mercury begins to volatilize, project and pound as before, until no more blackness appears. Again wash and dry. Thus Mercury and tin are purified of their sulphureous blackness by constant poundings and assations with salt. I myself have found it necessary to repeat the cleansing operation twelve times ! Then let both be fused together (*i.e.*, the Mercury and the tin) ; project into the mass one-seventh part of our prepared fixed and

purified sulphur ; hold it there with pincers till it is all dissolved. Remove quickly from fire, plunge in distilled vinegar, and the mass will be found white, soft, and friable. Place it in an earthen vessel, having an aperture at the top for the reception of the vessel containing the matter, which close ; place on fire for thrice twenty-four hours, in order that the mass may be well digested by the fire and the sulphur ; after a time turn vessel upside down, lest the Mercury should escape the influence of the coagulating sulphur. Thus the whole mass is changed into white, pure, malleable, and fixed Silver. Note that borax is to be preferred before all things in the matter of consolidation and ductibility.

*How the aforesaid Sulphur acts  
upon Tin.*

Melt tin, and give it a strong fire, till all the smoke has evaporated ; boil in strong vinegar for half a day, strain through a rag, pound with an equal quantity of salt, till it grows black ;

renew salt twelve times, as above. Thus Jupiter will be prepared for the reception of the Medicine. Then add to the melted tin one-seventh its weight of sulphur, as before described, holding it with pincers till it is dissolved and incorporated therewith. Tin is rendered fusible and malleable as follows: Put some calcined borax in a saucepan over the fire, dissolve in good wine, plunge in it the lime of tin, boil up till all the wine evaporates; then saturate the lime with swine's blood, blow the fire, and it will presently melt, and be ready to receive the medicine, after the reception of which you will find Jove amiable and well-composed, without harshness, and fit to be the companion and friend of the prepared Moon. The Moon, thus prepared, is first purged with lead, afterwards projected upon rods, ignited ten times, and as often extinguished in swine's blood; it is then laminated, and melted with a little borax, again projected upon rods, set on fire ten times as before, once more laminated and melted. Its purgation is

now complete, a tenth part of sulphur is added to it in fusion, and this is the Moon which is the friend of Jove as aforesaid.

*How the aforesaid Sulphur acts  
on Venus.*

Take copper prepared in the right way, melt it, add a tenth part of the aforesaid sulphur ; it will come forth citrine. Then project upon rods immersed in swine's blood, when the copper will have all the more prominent qualities of silver, and will mix well with it. To change this silver into gold, be guided by the following instructions.

Take sulphur, pound small, cook over a gentle fire in an earthen vessel for seven days, till the orange colour disappears ; and you must boil it in refined and distilled urine. Let the fire be moderate, so that the unctuousity may not go forth, but only the tincture, that is, the citrine colour. Remove the urine as it receives the colour of the sulphur, till all has been removed. Let all this be poured into a vessel, and distilled over a

slow fire, till the water becomes first orange, and then red. The white water which is first distilled we do not need; distil till you come to the black sediment, and keep that for another purpose. Herein is the Tincture. It is the fire chibric, which is a secret word. Take part of that fire, and distil the water which was first orange, and then red, a second time. Boil the aforesaid fire in strong vinegar, cook over a gentle fire, till the cause of burning is extracted. For this purpose boil till the vinegar is consumed, add to it its dry, prepared fire, make a paste with three parts of the aforesaid white sulphur, adding one part of powdered salt armoniac; dissolve, coagulate, precipitate on prepared silver in the well-known manner, and it will be the best gold.

*On Vegetables and Animals.*

It has been supposed, on the authority of St. Thomas, that the Stone of the Philosophers is triplex—mineral, vegetable, and animal. Their most approximate matter has never been

expressly named by the Sages, but quicksilver has been assigned as that of the mineral, the quintessence of wine for the vegetable, and human blood for the animal. We will, therefore, now say a few words about the two Animal and Vegetable Stones, since those expressions are found in the writings of the Sages, and we wish our work to be as perfect as possible.

Among vegetables, the first place is held by grain, spirit of wine, and salt of tartar ; among sensible things by human hair, blood, urine, and eggs. They must be pure of their kind, and then subjected to putrefaction, that so they may be divided among the four elements. After putrefaction dissolve and distil for twenty-one days, place over gentle fire in a cucurbite, collecting the white distilled water in a vessel by itself. The red and yellow water which is distilled should also be collected by itself. Inhumation in horse-dung assists distillation. So continue the distillation till the steam ceases to rise, and only the



black and dry earth remains in the alembic. The white water is called water simply; and the red water is called the water of life. Spirits are cerated, dissolved, coagulated, and fixed therewith. The whole water which had the citrine and the red, even to the dry fæces, contains water, air, fire, and oil. To prepare it, place the liquid without the black sediment in an alembic, and distil it over a slow fire. By this process there will be separated first the water and then the oil, which you may recognise by its viscosity, colour, and aerial lightness, as also by the fact that it floats in the water. In this second distillation you will find the fire as something red, black, and dry at the bottom, like the earth in the first distillation. In this way you separate the four elements. The water and oil are also rectified by distillation till they attain a crystalline brightness and brilliancy, without any sediment.

The sediment of the second distillation, called fire, is thus rectified.

Pound, dry in sun, calcine over a gentle fire, till it turns of an orange or red colour, the redder the better. To rectify the earth, pound the dry earth, saturate with its water, dry over slow fire, or in the sun, pound and imbibe till the earth has drunk twice the quantity of its water; dry again, calcine over a powerful fire, add twice its quantity of water; dry again, add seven times its quantity of water; repeat operation a fourth time with seven times its quantity of water, calcine, saturate with a third part of the sevenfold quantity, place in a glass vial, adding a modicum of *bombax*; dissolve in very warm horse-dung for three days, or more; take out, saturate with remainder of that sevenfold quantity, calcine, and it will then be very yellow. By constantly repeating the saturation and calcination, it will at length become very white, and a pearl of great price.

Having rectified the four elements, prepare the elixir in the following way. Dry and pound well the aforesaid earth,



saturate with its oil, *i.e.*, its rectified air ; dry, make liquid till it flows like wax on a red-hot copper plate ; it will then have the properties of silver ; pound it with its water, and dissolve in warm dung for three days ; coagulate among hot ashes, and you have a most precious treasure. Of this, say the Sages, project one pound upon one hundred pounds of prepared copper, and it will be changed into real, pure silver. If you wish to obtain the Elixir which will transmute into gold, follow the above instructions, but add to the three parts of rectified earth one of fire, and make a paste of all this with its oil, as described ; dissolve and coagulate in the same way ; project one pound on fifty pounds of prepared silver, and it will be transmuted into true gold.

Hair and eggs must be putrefied under warm horse dung. Do not despise the putrefaction and dissolution of spirits in dung, for only in this way can they be properly digested. Note that the superior spirit of eggs is said to be in the outer shells, and they are whitened

by calcination only. They should in the first place be purged from the tela, then pounded and washed in a plain dish, and then placed in a strong earthen vessel with several small openings for the smoke to escape. Set the vessel over a powerful fire (such as is used in glass smelting) for a day and night ; saturate with their water and oil till they become fluid like wax, pound this substance with its rectified water, dry, constantly pound and saturate, till it has drunk up its own weight of the water. Pound still, and dissolve in its own water. The oftener the Medicine is dissolved, the more efficacious will it be. To make the metal malleable, ductile, and amenable to the action of the Medicine. plunge ten times in swine's blood, beat into thin plates, lay between layers of common salt and tartar of borax, pound with a moderate quantity of swine's blood, and so make the metal fusible. The same process will render the metal harder if it be too soft. If the Medicine does not enter the metallic body properly, you may remedy the de-

fect with oil of eggs or hair, and salt armoniac. If it enters well, but does not remain, this arises from a defect of fixation, and should be remedied by repeated inceration, dissolution, and coagulation. If it does not tinge well, its purification is at fault; repeat the sublimations, and add more of the metallic body. Moreover, the metals which are to be transmuted, must first be highly purified; and the Medicine itself must possess the utmost degree of purity and digestion.

In order that spirits may tinge permanently, they must first be cleansed, then sublimed, then incerated, then dissolved, and, lastly, reduced to a crystalline form. By means of sublimation the pure is removed from the impure. Bodies are calcined in order to purge out the accidents which corrupt the spirit, and impair the potency of the Tincture. Dissolution is practised for the purpose of permanently uniting bodies to spirits. They are coagulated because powders are more easily used than water.

First dissolve bodies, then form a paste with the proper aqueous or liquid substance, and coagulate in the following manner. Close the vessel, place over warm ashes, leave for two days, till it is coagulated, then project a little of the coagulated substance on a red-hot plate, and if it evaporates, know that your operation has not been properly performed. You must, therefore, add more of the body, and go through the whole process over again. For unless the spirits are bound to the bodies by indissoluble links, they do not endure the test of the fire. Anyone, then, that would succeed in this Art, must understand sublimation, calcination, dissolution, distillation, coagulation, inhumation, inceration; in a word, how to prepare baths, furnaces, and vessels. We will, therefore, briefly describe these several operations.

*Inceration.*

Inceration is the saturating of a certain substance with some liquid for the purpose of dissolving or more closely uniting its parts, or of facilitating their

mixture and purification, as when substances are saturated with a desiccating and penetrant liquid (like common salt) before sublimation.

### *Sublimation*

takes place when anything is raised by air from the bottom to the upper part of the vessel. In the case of liquids, it is called distillation. It is used to make spirits more fit to receive the Medicine, the means being a slow and gradually increasing fire. It is also used to bring bodies into permanent union with spirits. Such bodies are first calcined, then sublimed with the spirits, and this operation requires a powerful fire from the first.

### *Assation*

is to place incrated substances in a glass vessel, and to dry over hot ashes before the fire, taking care to stir the substance from time to time with a wooden stick.

### *Calcination*

is the pulverization of a substance by drying over a fire, and thus depriving it of its consolidating moisture. For there is not a full and perfect mixture of bodies

and spirits, unless both are reduced to water which is the first matter of metals ; but this cannot be done so long as they have their natural humidity, which causes them to be melted, liquefied, and moved in the fire, just like water, and holds continuous parts of the bodies in them, and strengthens them so that nothing can be administered to them whereby they can be reduced into water. When substances have thus been pulverized, they are more readily mixed, and saturated with moisture.

*Dissolution*

is the reduction of a calcined body to water. The body must be first calcined, then saturated with dissolving water, then dried before the fire, then placed in a vessel where dissolution can take place ; whatever still remains undissolved must again be prepared by the same series of operations. Dissolve by making a hole in a damp place, or in a stable, of the depth of two cubits ; fill the hole full of water, till it is absorbed, and also put in some sand. Place in the hole the



bottle having the substance to be dissolved ; seal up bottle with wax ; wrap up the same in straw ; cover up the wax with moist sand, leave for seven days, or more, and the whole will be dissolved into water. Another dissolution is by means of S. Mary's bath. Repeat the operation, till it is perfectly accomplished.

#### *Distillation.*

Distillation is the purification of water that falls drop by drop, and is performed by means of a filter, or by steaming off a liquid over the fire, and condensing it again. It is also performed by water in S. Mary's Bath.

#### *Inhumation*

is the placing of a soluble or dissolved substance in dung for purposes of dissolution (and then one part of the excrement of pigeons is mingled by means of vinegar with two parts of horse-dung), or for the purposes of developing an embryonic substance which has already begun to germinate. Make a hole two cubits deep and wide, where the wind cannot blow nor the sun

shine ; light in it a coal fire and keep up same for six hours. Take out the cinders, fill up the hole to the height of one foot with plain horse-dung, cover the side of the hole with a mixture of pigeon's excrement and horse-dung. Place in the hole a box, which fill up inside with the mixed excrements ; plunge a urinal into box, and over this place a little dish ; inside the urinal put the vessel with the substance to be dissolved, leave for seven days, pouring over it a quantity of hot water twice every day.

*Precepts of Albertus.*

Above all I exhort you to be careful not to make any mistake, first in the pounding, then in the sublimation, then in the fixation, then in the calcination, then in the dissolution, then in the distillation, then in the coagulation. Perform all these operations properly, in their correct order, and you will not go wrong. If you reverse, or interfere with the order in any way, you are sure to get into difficulty.



*Therefore Albertus says :—*

Know that before I found the truth, I fell into many errors and mistakes ; and it was by constant trials, mistakes, and study that the secret was made known to me. I pored over the books of all the Sages, from Morienus, Aristotle, and Plato downward, but yet I went wrong, till by trials and mistakes I at length discovered the truth. For this reason I desired to set forth to you plainly all my discoveries, and I have put down nothing except what I have seen with my own eyes. I have shewn you the hidden treasure which many seek, and cannot find. I have manifested to you what was hidden in darkness, the Holy Stone, which is better than all other things in this world.

*End of the Extracts from Albertus,  
S. Thomas, and others.*

CURIOUS INVESTIGATION CONCERNING  
THE NATURE OF THE SUN AND  
MOON, FROM MICHAEL SCOTUS.

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**I**F we ask ourselves as a first question whether the gold of alchemy be true gold or not, it would appear at first sight as if we must answer in the negative ; because gold is properly generated in the bowels of the earth, and therefore, whatever is not so generated would not seem to be gold. Again, the substantial form can be introduced only by its own proper active principle, which is the Sun, but not the kind of sun or fire that alchemists use. Yet it should be remembered that the real question is whether there can be elicited from the Sun and Moon, by an artificial process, any seminal virtue which shall possess the power of hardening Mercury in a moment of time into gold.

Now, in the first place, it is clear that such a seminal virtue can be extracted from gold. Every body, says St. Augustine, contains certain seminal possibilities of a specific character, which will always produce certain given effects, whenever the requisite temporal, causal, and local conditions are fulfilled. God is the only Creator, but whoever provides bodies with certain conditions may produce, through their means, certain well-defined effects. These seminal possibilities are called by some elementary virtues. We call them fermented spirits, because their action is hindered by the impurity of their bodies. But the spirit must be of a mineral kind, and all philosophers agree that the said mineral spirit is not a universal nature, nor yet is it Mercury in its whole substance, but in part it is such. Gold itself is altogether mineral, as is clearly apparent from its weight, and the ease with which it absorbs Mercury. Hence gold contains the radical seminal virtue which we seek ; it is developed by digestive heat,

and the impulse of an overruling Intelligence.

*Opinions on the First Substance of Gold and Silver.*

In the second place, some enquirers, who observed the ease with which gold absorbs Mercury, were surprised to find that this Mercury, though highly purified, did not perfect the gold into the Tincture. But those who know that there is no generation except where there is nutrition—the generative virtue being the residue of nutrition—thought of implanting this virtue by nourishing the gold, and thus stirring up its radical active principle. In order that a grain of wheat may fructify, it must die and, by the action of the sun, its substance, which is no more that of wheat than of stone, must be corrupted, and become fit to receive the form of wheat rather than that of stone. In the same way gold must putrefy so as to be reduced to its first matter, that it may become capable of germination. Many have said that this first substance of gold is sulphur and

Mercury. But sulphur and Mercury are metals distinct from gold, and are not found where gold is found. We may rather say that an unctuous vapour, embodying the nature of both Mercury and sulphur, is the first matter of gold. Now, as a man is generated by his father through the medium of seed, and generates a son through the medium of seed, so gold, which is generated through this vapour, generates gold by means of the same unctuous vapour. Hence the Sages have called gold, when decomposed into its first matter sulphur and mercury.

*Of the Reduction of Gold into its First Matter.*

In this operation we must be quite sure that our methods are strictly in accordance with Nature; or we may destroy the body instead of perfecting it. Now, gold is earthy, and generically cold and dry, though, in comparison with other metals, it may be called hot and humid; therefore, we must look for special difficulties in transmuting it into a humid unctuous vapour.

It must be carefully calcined in a reverberatory fire (so as to prevent fusion), and saturated with strong fiery waters. By this operation the surface humidity is corrupted, and there is generated a dryness, so that it is hot and dry. Earthy dryness, however, is inconsistent with the hotness of fire. Therefore, the first dryness is corrupted, and another more unctuous black dryness is generated. When Hermes says that the Stone ascends to heaven from the earth, *i.e.*, is converted out of earth into fire, he means that gold, by means of calcination, acquires the virtue of fire. Earth has dryness in common with fire; hence the conversion is all the easier, and then it once more descends from fire to earth. This latter effect is due to the operation whereby the calcined dry substance, through the mediation of our aerial water, by saturation has its dry nature corrupted, and an airy humid nature generated instead. Again the heat of fire is inconsistent with this humidity; hence it is corrupted and



becomes a temperate moist warmth. Our vapour, then, is a substance intermediate between water and air. Thus gold returns to its root, and becomes a vapour, which is called the first matter of the Sun. Hence Geber, speaking to the artist, says in *Med. tert. ord.*, c. 78 : You have extracted the precious earth, and so that has come to pass which is meant by Hermes, when he says : It again descends from heaven, *i.e.*, from fire to earth, *i.e.*, to the first matter—and thereby acquires the strength both of things above and of things below. He says that we must extract the four elements, *i.e.*, stir up the seminal virtues, or the active and passive qualities. The vapour which results is called by a countless variety of names.

*Why it is called a Stone.*

The substance has also been named after all the different varieties of salt, and this custom has given rise to many greivous errors. We prefer to call it a spiritual mineral virtue, as such a designation is less misleading, and implies

that the gold has received the power of germination and propagation. But as every spirit is contained in a humid substance, the Sages have endeavoured to convert this spiritual potency, by repeated solution and calcination, into something humid and unctuous. Thus, elementary earth germinates through the frequent irrigation of rain descending from heaven. Thus, also, the heat and dryness of the earth gradually give way to fatness and moisture, as the rain continually ascends and descends. If it be denied that by such means gold can really be converted into vapour, Plato tells us that if it be impossible to convert it into fire, it must then become the next thing to it, which is air. If a figure cannot be made circular, let it be square; in other words, the body must be reduced to its utmost limit of simplicity. That gold receives greater virtue by this process is clear from the fact that one ounce of prepared gold will fix one pound of spirit in one day, or, if the gold has been prepared ten times, it will fix one pound in an hour.



*Third part.*

Our third question is how this virtue should be sown. The earth in which it is best placed is a mineral nature, because we are fed and derive our growth from the things by which we are generated. What we need for this purpose is a mercurial virtue, and hence it must be sown in mercurial earth. This earth, however, must first be cleared, *i.e.*, it must be purified and sublimed by means of a powerful fire, though all the time its essential part must be kept from combustion. The gentle fire which we need for this purpose, is one that conserves humidity, and perfects fusion. The seminal virtue must be strong enough to fix the spirits which are enclosed with it in the vessel; for so the virtue is multiplied and grows. But if the fire be too strong, the spirits escape and evaporate, and fixation cannot take place. What is fixed, fixes; what is coagulated, coagulates; our substance impregnates itself and is the most wonderful thing on earth. Sow the gold of the

Sages, says Mary, when it has been philosophically prepared, in the earth of leaves, there it will grow, be nourished, and increase, like other plants. When you see that the process of fixation has begun to take place, then rejoice, for you are about to obtain your heart's desire. But as only that sperm which is prepared in the vital liver generates in the case of animals, so only after long and patient digestion are our mineral spirits capable of producing our Stone. While the process of digestion is going on, the vessel must be kept carefully closed, or the spirits will escape ; and as the fire must not be powerful, the operations must be frequently repeated over a gentle fire, in order to produce the same effect. When the Stone is once perfected, it may be indefinitely multiplied in quantity ; *e.g.*, one part, after the first sublimation, would perfect ten parts of common metal ; if it be twice dissolved and coagulated, it perfects one hundred parts ; if three times, it perfects two hundred parts ; if twelve times, it

tinges indefinitely. The solution, says Plato, takes place in the Moon, the coagulation in Saturn : and thereby our Stone acquires the virtue of all the planets. And again : the solution takes place in the water, the coagulation in the fire : thereby our Stone acquires the strength of the elements above, and of the elements below.

As to the fourth question (that of time), we say that those who wish to bring forth the child before the proper period produce an abortion. In order, then, that we may know when the time of perfection may be considered near, it is necessary to observe the signs of development in our Magistery. When the substance is in the white stage, it is more subtle than air, and more brilliant than snow. Not long afterwards it may be expected to reach the red stage. The addition of the orange colour, which is obtained from Mercury, is the only difference between the red Stone and the white. As a consequence, its air is more spiritual, its quicksilver more limpid, its fire more condensed, and its

coldness more effectual. The white stage is brought about by constant sublimation and distillation through a filter; the red stage by the intensity of the calcined waters. In the second place, there must be constant solution by means of strong waters, and increasing assation. Then the substance must be liquefied and slightly coagulated. This must be followed by a subtle purification of the whole material. Next you should light a violent precipitatory fire. The sixth operation includes all that have gone before, and perfects the Stone. If you add a grain of the Stone to a glass of sound wine, it cures leprosy, the itch, and all fevers, and purges all corrupt humours out of the human body; it straightens palsied limbs, and conserves youth. He who uses this medicine will always be merry and in ruddy health. Project one ounce upon forty pounds of melted white or red Mercury, and it will at once be fixed and changed into silver or gold. It has also the virtue of rendering gems, diamonds, and precious

stones far more precious and beautiful, and of giving them a more intense colouring. The medicinal efficacy of our Stone has been variously explained by the various Sages. Some regard it merely as an intensification of the power of gold to comfort and strengthen the heart of man. Some have compared it to the action of the magnet upon the steel ; only both the magnet and the steel are, of course, mineral, while man and the Elixir belong to two different natural kingdoms. It is more reasonable, perhaps, to attribute the medicinal efficacy of our Stone upon the human constitution to the mystical influences which the heavenly bodies exert over both minerals and animals, and the same are found in our Stone in a specially concentrated form. But, however we may explain the fact, let us thank God that it is a fact, and that it has pleased Him to bestow so great a boon upon men. To Him be praise and glory in all eternity, world without end. Amen.

# THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

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**The Only True Way;  
Or,  
An Useful, Good, And Helpful Tract,  
Pointing Out The Path Of Truth.  
1677.**

**The Only True Way**

Beloved friend and brother, under the name of this glorious Art there is to be found much false teaching which is put forward by pseudo-chemists, whose writings are nothing but imposture and deceit, and are yet highly esteemed by people of the simpler sort. These charlatans induce their dupes to waste much money and time on that which can profit them nothing; for unless a thing be well begun, it can never be brought to a good end. Yet most men, who, nowadays, have devoted themselves to this exalted art of chemistry, are pursuing a wrong course, and are deceivers or deceived. The deceivers are conscious of their own ignorance, and try to veil it under an obscure and allegorical style. The less they really know, the more pompous and the more unintelligible do their speculations become. But the reader, who is puzzled by their perplexing style, may at least comfort himself with the assurance that he knows as much about the matter as the authors. That assurance must serve for a kind of clue to the endless labyrinth of their false sublimations, calcinations, distillations, solutions, coagulations, putrefactions, and corruptions. Nevertheless, we may almost every (lay see foolish persons spend their whole substance on those absurd experiments, being induced to do so by the aforesaid pseudo-chemists, who impose on them with a false process, and fanciful perversions of Nature.

With these useless and unnecessary experiments the true Alchemists will have nothing to do. They follow the method pursued by Nature in the veins of the earth, which is very simple, and includes no solutions, putrefactions, coagulations, or anything of the kind Can Nature, in the heart of the earth, where the metals do grow and receive increase, have anything corresponding to all those pseudo-chemical instruments alembics, retorts, circulatory and sublimatory phials, fires, and other materials, such as cobbler's wax, salt, arsenic mercury, sulphur, and so forth? Can all these things really be necessary for the growth and increase of the metals? It is surprising that any one not entirely bereft of his senses can spend many years in the study of alchemy, and yet never get beyond those foolish and frivolous solutions, coagulations, putrefactions, distillations, while Nature is so simple and unsophisticated in her methods. Surely every true Artist must look upon this elaborate tissue of baseless operations as the merest folly, and can only wonder that the eyes of those silly dupes are not at last opened, that they may see something besides such absurd sophisms, and read something besides those stupid and deceitful books. It seems that they are so entangled in their sophisms that they can never attain to the freedom of true philosophy.

But let me tell you that so long as you love lies, and turn away from rational philosophy, you will never find the right way. I can speak from bitter experience. For I, too, toiled for many years in accordance with those sophistic methods, and endeavoured to reach the coveted goal by sublimation, distillation, calcination, circulation, and so forth, and to fashion the Stone out of substances such as urine, salt,

atrament, alum, etc. I have tried hard to evolve it out of hairs, wine, eggs, bones, and all manner of herbs; out of arsenic, mercury, and sulphur, and all the minerals and metals. I have striven to elicit it by means of aqua fortis and alkali. I have spent nights and days in dissolving, coagulating, amalgamating, and precipitating. Yet from all these things I derived neither profit nor joy. I had hoped much from the quintessence, but it disappointed me like the rest.

Therefore, beloved brother, let me warn you to have nothing to do with sublimations of sulphur and mercury, or the solution of bodies, or the coagulation of spirits, or with all the innumerable alembics, which bear little profit unto veritable art. So long as you do not seek the true essence of Nature, your labours will be doomed to failure - therefore, if you desire success, you must once for all renounce your allegiance to all those old methods, and enlist under the standards of that method which proceeds in strict obedience to the teaching of Nature - in short, the method which Nature herself pursues in the bowels of the earth. For you see that Nature uses only one substance in her work of developing and perfecting the metals, and that this substance includes everything that is required. Now, this substance appears to call for no special treatment, except that of digestion by gentle heat, which must be continued until it has reached its highest possible degree of development. For this simple heating process the cunning sophists have substituted solutions, coagulations, calcinations, putrefactions, sublimations, and other fantastical operations - which are only different names for the same thing; and thereby they have multiplied a thousand-fold the difficulties of this undertaking, and given rise to the popular notion that it is a most arduous, hazardous, and ruinously expensive enterprise. This they have simply done out of jealousy and malice, to put others off the right track, and to involve them in poverty and ruin. But they will find it difficult to justify their conduct before God, who has commanded us to love our neighbours as ourselves. For out of sheer malice they have rendered the road of truth impassable, and perplexed a simple natural process with such an elaborate tissue of circumstantial nomenclature, as to make the amelioration of the metals appear a hopelessly difficult task. For while you heat, you also putrefy, or decompose, as you may see by the changes which a grain of wheat undergoes in the ground under the influence of the rain and of the sun; you know that it must first decay before new life can spring forth. It is this process which they have denominated putrefaction and solution. Again when you heat, you also sublime, and to this coction they have applied the terms sublimation and multiplication, that the simple man might err more easily. In like manner coagulation takes place in heating; for they say that coagulation takes place when humidity is changed into the nature of fire, so as to be able to resist the action of fire, without evaporating, or being consumed. And heating also includes that which they call "circulation," or conjunction, or the union of fire with water to prevent complete combustion. Thus you see that that which they have called by so many names is really but one simple process. The substance, which is *one*, they have described under a similar variety of appellations, to prevent men from finding that which, by the grace of God, can provide for them so many precious blessings. In the first place they call it "our mercury," by which they mean nothing but moisture, which begins to unite itself with the fire, and therefore may be compared to mercury. Again, they use the expression, "our sulphur," whereby they mean nothing but the fire itself, which lies hid beneath the water, or humidity, and is heated by the water to its highest degree. Then, again, they call it Hyle, or the First Substance, because all things are first generated out of water and fire. Other names, such as Arsenic, Orpiment, Bismuth, are not used by the

Sages at all, but only by certain ignorant charlatans, of whom we need not take any further notice. Let us follow the guidance of Nature: she will not lead us astray.

If you let this be your motto, you will surely be able to call to mind the first substance, out of which all metallic substances are generated. But before we consider this question, it will much behove you to understand why the Sun, Moon, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, are metals, and what is their origin. Besides finding an answer to this question, you must also bear in mind that all created things are divided into three kingdoms, viz., the animal, the vegetable, and the mineral. To the first belong all living things that have flesh and blood; to the second all herbs, plants, and trees; to the third all metals, stones, and everything that cannot be burned.

But, though divided into three classes, yet all things, O my brother, may be traced back to one common Principle, from which they derive their generation, or birth. By different varieties of heat this first substance is transmuted in various ways, and assumes different specific forms. Since, then, Nature is so simple, I advise you once more to have done with all those foolish sublimations, coagulations, and putrefactions, and the ridiculous old wives' fables which are even now believed by many, and simply to follow Nature, and her unsophisticated methods: then she will take you by the hand, and guide you to the true substance. For the only method of correcting or ameliorating Nature, consists in the natural heating of essences. Now, this Essence, my friend, is the principal thing, on which depends the whole matter. This simple truth, the vulgar herd of alchemists seem quite unable to understand, and thus go on toiling day by day with substances which have nothing to do with the matter. They might as well sow horn, or wood, or stones, and expect a golden harvest of corn. The *sun* and *moon* cannot be made out of all substances, but only out of the natural Essence out of which all things are formed, being afterwards differentiated into divers substances by different varieties of heat. Thus the special quality of every individual thing is to be referred to the degree of its coction. If, therefore, we wish to exercise the true Art of Alchemy, we must imitate the method by which Nature does her work in the bowels of the earth.

The ancients have named many colours in connexion with this process, such as black, white, citrine, red, green, and so forth. All this is simply intended to lead you astray from the right road, and to keep you in ignorance. Those ancient writers were constantly at the greatest pains to obscure their style with such a perplexing variety of allegorical expressions as to render it impossible for the ordinary reader to understand their meaning.

Therefore, I would again and again exhort you not to believe them when they tell you that you must have or take a black substance, or that the substance turns black, white, and red in the course of the chemical process. The black colour was suggested to them by the fact that the substance or essence at first mingles with a brilliant material fire, by which a liquid is separated from the essence in the form of a certain black fume. This black fume the ancients called the Black Raven, and the essence they denominated the Raven's Head. This separation you should carefully observe. From it the ancients learned that the separation of natural substances is nothing but a natural defect of the heating process. This, again, suggested to them the consideration that those essences that had been imperfectly heated by Nature, might be aided in a natural manner by ordinary fire, and that thus the essences which are still combustible, and

their liquids (which the ancients invidiously called mercury) being black when they are separated from the essence, might be perfected by art, and the essences guarded against combustion by their liquid, and the liquid rendered incapable of being separated from the essence. This the ancients called "our sulphur." For after this preparation the essence is no longer vegetable or animal, but by the perfection of its heating it has become a mineral essence, and is therefore called sulphur; the essence is nothing but an *elementary* fire, and its liquid, which is guarded against combustion, is true *elementary* air, and, because air is naturally warm and moist, it is called mercury by those jealous ancients. Air contains in itself the nature of fire, and elementary fire, again, contains within itself the nature of air: thus, by the union of their common elements, a true amalgamation of the two can take place. Such are the material fire and water which we see. These material elements are nothing but an aid to the essences of the elements by which they can be naturally reduced to the highest degree (of perfection?). This gradation is the only true Alchemy, and there is none beside. The pseudo-alchemy of our modern charlatans is mere waste of money and time.

It would be a great mistake for you to suppose that you can derive any real knowledge from the writings of the Sages. They show you only the outside, and conceal the internal Essence. To you they offer the husks, but the finest of the wheat they keep for themselves. They show you a way which they do not dream of treading. I advise you, therefore, in future, to give them a wide berth; or you will only enrich the apothecaries while you plunge yourself and your family into the deepest poverty; nay, instead of gaining the universal panacea, you will contract the most dangerous diseases from constantly moving in an atmosphere black with sulphurous and mercurial smoke, and fetid with the stench of bismuth and all manner of salts.

It is truly amazing that none of the seekers after this great treasure, though willing to submit to any amount of labour and hardship for its sake, seem capable of perceiving the lesson which constant failure is striving to impress upon them. What, I pray you, have those thousands of persons, who have tried the solutions, coagulations, putrefactions, amalgamations, and circulations, gained by their agonising toil? What good result have they produced with their waters, solutions of metals, blood, hair, eggs, milk, sugar, and all manner of herbs? Let me beseech you to profit by their heart-breaking experience, and to have done with everything but true Alchemy, which teaches that the substance is brought to perfection, and attains the exaltation of elementary fire, by its own light and liquid- by which also imperfect metals are ameliorated, because their elementary fire was not properly digested by its liquid. And for the same reason the elementary fire cannot remain, for the liquid is separated from that elementary fire by the heat of the ordinary fire, and evaporates in the form of white smoke. The elementary fire, on the other hand, does not evaporate, but abides with its earth, and must be burned with it, because its protecting liquid has vanished in white smoke. This is that whiteness of which the Ancients have said that it comes after the black colour. For this reason, they are in the habit of saying that you must make it black before you make it white. We begin our process with blackness, and transmute the black smoke, but do not take it for our substance, and make it white. The latter would be a foolish supposition and imposture. If you would avoid such misapprehensions, you must not attempt the study of this subject until you have a sound knowledge of the operations of Nature, and more especially of the essential properties of the metals.

I am afraid, my Brother, that my book will cause you heaviness of heart, instead of joy, because I sweep away at one fell stroke all those false sophisticated notions which had become so dear to you. Nevertheless, you must once for all relinquish that idea of yours that you are profoundly versed in the mysteries of this Art, and leave these childish absurdities to those who derive wealth and profit from them. Among these persons, Adam de Bodensteyn held a very distinguished place; for he wrote all manner of so-called theosophical books, and boasted of his attainments in the alchemistic Art, of which he was really quite ignorant. Yet to the present day many people believe that he (whose expressions are those of a mere charlatan) had a real knowledge of true alchemy. It is true that his nonsense cannot for a moment impose on the initiated; but among the blind (as the proverb says) it is easy to win golden opinions as a good fencer. On this account, and as Bodensteyn is no more among the living, I will dismiss the subject, for nothing but what is favourable should be spoken of the dead and of the absent. This I will say, however, that he was a good Sophist and a good physician; but of Alchemy he knew little or nothing. I should not have said this much if I were not really anxious to warn the unwary against being dazzled by the splendour of his name, and to prevent them from being lured on by it to their own ruin.

If, then, you are a lover of the truth, you will bid farewell to these specious absurdities, and henceforth entrust yourself to the guidance of Nature alone; be sure that she will lead you onward without faltering to the desired goal, even that method by which she works towards the essence. Moreover, she will demand of you neither much labour nor any considerable outlay. The whole thing is done by a simple process of heating, which includes the solution and coagulation of the bodies, and also the sublimation and putrefaction. But some writers have substituted for the simple and true essence a certain other essence, with which they have deceived the whole world, and involved many persons in considerable losses. Whether their conduct was upright and loving will one day be decided by the Great Judge. It would be better not to publish such writings, since the false statements and groundless assertions with which they swarm, plunge so many credulous persons into grievous losses. For if there were not so many books put forward by ignorant writers, many thousands of persons who at the present moment are hopelessly floundering about in a sea of specious book-learning would have been led by the light of their own unaided intellects to the knowledge of this precious secret; they are prevented, these many years, from seeing the plain truth by a vast mass of printed nonsense which commands their reverence, because they do not understand it. The Ancients did indeed know something about the Art; but at the present day we can very well dispense with the cumbrous phraseology under which they (most successfully) attempted to veil their meaning. It can only tend to the bewilderment of honest enquirers, who are thereby thrown off the true scent, unless indeed they should come to be instructed by living Masters.

I myself may not speak out as plainly as I would, for I am silenced by the vow which binds all the masters of the Art, the curse that lights on those who violate the sacred seal of Nature's secrets, and the malediction of all the philosophers. Therefore, I must exhort you again and again to trust your own observations rather than the writings of others, and to let the Book of Nature be the most favoured volume of your library. Observe her methods, not only in the production of metals, but in the procreation of the fruits of the earth, and their constant growth and development, in the winter and summer, in the spring and autumn, by rain and sunshine. If you had a sound knowledge of Nature's methods in producing the bud and the flower, and in ripening



the green fruit, you would be able to set your hand to the germs which Nature provides in the bowels of the earth, and to educe from them (or their substance) that which you so much desire. Forgive me then, my Brother, for so unceremoniously overthrowing all your old settled and dearly cherished convictions. My excuse must be that I have done it for your own good, as you would otherwise never learn the true secret of transmuting metals. You may believe and trust me, for I can have no conceivable motive for filling the world with fresh lies of which, God knows, it is already full enough, through the agency of the aforesaid deceivers and their willing dupes, who after being lured on by those false books to the loss of all their worldly goods, have not suffered their eyes to be opened by their losses, and seem unable to find their way out of that gigantic labyrinth of falsehood. Nay, they have even taken upon themselves to write books, and to speak as if they were perfect masters of the Art, and had derived great advantage from it, though in reality they have been brought so low as to be able to afford nothing but miserable decoctions. They dissolved until their whole fortune had undergone a process of dissolution; they sublimed until all their gold and silver had evaporated; they putrefied until their clothes decayed upon their bodies; and they calcined until all their wood and coal were consumed to ashes, and they themselves were reduced to wallet and staff.

This is the prize which they have won with all their trouble. Let their ruin be a warning to you, my Brother. For their alchemy instead of imparting health, is followed by penury and disease; instead of transmuting copper into gold, it changes gold into copper and brass. Consider also how many ignorant persons, such as cobblers, tailors, bankrupt merchants, and tavern keepers, pretend to a knowledge of this Art, and, after a few years' unsuccessful experimenting in the laboratory, call themselves great doctors, announce in boastful and sesquipedalian language their power to cure many diseases, and promise mountains of gold. Those promises are empty wind, and their medicines rank poison, with which they fill the churchyards, and for the impudent abuse of which God will one day visit them with heavy punishment. But I will leave the magistrates and the jailers to deal with these swindling charlatans. I speak of them only to put you on your guard. If so many persons write on the subject of Alchemy, who know nothing whatever about the nature and generation of metals, it becomes all the more necessary for you to be careful what books you read, and how much you believe.

For I tell you truly that so long as you have no real and fundamental knowledge of the nature of the metals, you cannot make much progress in the true Art of Alchemy, or understand the natural transmutation of metals. You must grasp the meaning of every direction before you can put it into effect. Always mistrust that which you do not understand (i.e., in studying this art). There are many false ways, but there can be only one that is true, and indicates a process which does not require many hands, or much labour. For this reason, beloved friend and Brother, you must work hard by day and by night to obtain a thorough knowledge of the metals, and of their essential nature. Then you will be able to understand the requirements of the art. You will know without being told what is the true substance and the true method. You will see the utter uselessness of your former labour, and you will be amazed at your former blindness. Study the nature of metals and the causes of their generation, for they derive their birth from the same source as all other created things.

For as by a heating process the infant is developed in the mother's womb out of the father's seed, and as the chicken is brought forth out of the egg by the natural incubation of the hen, so the metals, too, are developed in a certain way out of a certain substance. Yet I do not say, my Brother, that mercury and sulphur are the first substance of metals. Those juggling deceivers have told you so; but in the veins of the earth, where the metals grow, are found neither mercury nor sulphur. Therefore, when they speak of sulphur, you must understand them to allude to elementary fire, and by mercury you must understand the liquid. In a similar lying spirit they have called fire (elementary) "our Sun," and the liquid "our Moon," or the elementary fire soul, and the elementary liquid spirit, because elementary substances are invisible. The soul is invisible fire, and the spirit invisible moisture: the outward essential fire and water they have called 'bodies,' because they are visible and palpable. Nay, they try to make you believe that these are metallic bodies, and that you must dissolve them. But do not let them deceive you. Be on your guard against their dishonest tricks, and cunning devices, by which they set you to experiment with metallic bodies, when they really mean the metallic essence.

They point out to you various materials and substances, notwithstanding that there is only one true substance, and one true method. Be sure that their solutions, coagulations, sublimations, calcinations, and putrefactions, do not represent the method of Nature in the heart of the earth, where the metals grow. For pious Nature only heats the elementary fire which is thereby ameliorated and fixed through its liquid; which latter she also changes, by various degrees of heat, into all the various objects which compose the three natural kingdoms-and although now it is differentiated into bodies so different as vegetables, animals, and minerals, yet they have all originally sprung from one common substance, all have one root, which the Ancients denominated the first Matter or Hyle. But it is really nothing but hidden elementary fire, with its liquid, which the Ancients called the root liquid, radical moisture, or humid radical, because it is the root of all created things.

This liquid, with its fire, is differentiated into the various kinds of natural bodies, by the various degrees of heat, or 'coction,' which take place in them. One thing is more perfectly heated in its elementary fire through its liquid, than another. The vegetable nature is that in which the coction is least perfect. Therefore its essence is easily burned, and its liquid easily separated from its elementary fire, by common fire.

The coction of the *animal* is almost as imperfect as that of the vegetable substance: for its essence is easily burned. The coction of the *mineral* substances is the most perfect of all, because in them the metallic liquid is more closely united (by coction) to its elementary fire. Hence metals are better able to resist common fire than the vegetable and animal substances. When a metal is placed in the fire, it does not burn with a bright flame like wood; for the liquid of wood is not so completely joined (by coction) to its essence, as the liquid of metals is to its essence. The union of the liquid with the essence is not metallic, but vegetable, for which reason the latter is consumed with a black smoke, when, by a higher degree of coction, the vegetable has been transmuted into a metallic essence, it no longer gives out a black smoke in common fire, but a white smoke, as you may see when imperfect metals are melted in the fire. That is why the Ancients said that you must first make the substance black before you make it white, i.e., it must first give out a black smoke before it gives out a white. Again they say: You must first make it white before you make it red. To make red is to make

perfect, because gold and silver have been rendered perfect by coction, their essence being fully united to their liquid, and changed into pure fire.

Do not then suffer yourself to be thrown off your guard by the obscure phraseology of the Ancients. If you thoroughly study the simple fundamental nature of the metals, you will know what their enigmatic expressions mean, and will not, like some moderns, conclude from their writings that you must take a certain substance and dissolve it until it turns black., then again purify and calcine it till the blackness disappears and it begins to turn white; and after that, once more increase the fire and calcine and toil until the substance turns red. Such an interpretation of the language of the Ancients can only suggest itself to persons entirely ignorant of the nature of metallic substances; indeed, the Ancients wrote as they did solely in order to hide their real meaning from all but the close students of Nature. To this end they were in the constant habit of employing the terms "mercury " and "sulphur." And although the metallic essence is the true substance which, by natural coction, must be raised from the lowest to the highest stage of development, and although the meaning of the Ancients is intelligible enough to the initiated, yet the ignorant can gather from their language no more than the fact that the substance must be taken from the metals. But where are they to obtain it, and how are they to bring it to perfection?

The metallic essence can not be separated from the imperfect metals without being injured; for if it be separated with fire the liquid must evaporate, and the essence (with its earth) be consumed. Nor will you be able to separate the essence of the imperfect metals by means of aqua fortis, arsenic, aqua vita-, or alkali, without injuring the essence and its liquid by the foreign moisture: for the metallic nature can bear no foreign substance, and if any foreign moisture combines with the metallic liquid, it loses its proper quality and is entirely corrupted. The metallic essence of the perfect metals you cannot obtain in a separate form; for their liquid and elementary fire are welded together by so perfect a process of coction, and so closely united with their earth, that neither fire nor water can avail to separate them, seeing that the fire has no power over them, and no foreign moisture can combine with, or corrupt, the liquid of perfect metals. All your labour will be in vain: the coction has done its work so well that you will never be able to undo it.

Hence, the Ancients said that there was no sulphur in anything but in the metals, and hence also they called the metallic liquid quicksilver. But names do not alter facts: the fact is that the elementary fire must be so united to its elementary liquid by natural coction that they become indivisible. For the liquid protects the fire against combustion, so that both remain fixed and unchanged in common fire. This perfected substance the Ancients have well called Elixir, or fire which has undergone a process of perfect coction: for that which before was crude and raw is "cooked," or digested by the process of coction. That element which, by its imperfection, causes base metals to be broken up and disintegrated by fire, has been digested and perfected by natural heat.

For this reason you must not grudge the labour which the proper performance of this heating process demands, seeing that it includes purification, sublimation, dissolution, and all the other chemical processes enumerated by the ancient alchemists. All these you may safely dismiss from your mind, as they can cause you nothing but trouble, loss, and waste of time. My purpose in writing this faithful admonition is to caution

you again and again to beware of those pitfalls with which the contemptuous  
obscurity of the Ancients has so plentifully beset the path of the ingenuous enquirer. I  
also desired to suggest to you the true *substance*, and the one true *method* and have  
throughout endeavoured to express myself in a style as free from allegorical obscurity  
as possible. I have recalled you from your wanderings in the pathless wilderness, and  
put you in the right way. Now you must beseech Almighty God to give you the real  
philosophical temper, and to open your eyes to the facts of nature. Thus alone you will  
be able to reach the coveted goal.

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THE  
"PRACTICA,"  
WITH TWELVE KEYS, AND AN APPENDIX THERETO,  
CONCERNING  
THE GREAT STONE OF THE  
ANCIENT SAGES.

BY  
BASILIUS VALENTINUS,  
A MONK OF THE BENEDICTINE ORDER.

FIRST TRACT.

AN EPIGRAM  
UPON  
THE PRACTICA OF BASILIUS.

BY  
MICHAEL MAIER

"Pactolus contains not such great treasures; nor does gold-bearing Hebrus roll down such precious things in its golden sand, as Valentine scatters abroad in this one book. Here is greater wealth than all the riches of the Inds. For he bore away the golden fruit from the Hesperian garden, and blessed with them fair Germany's fields. He bore away the golden fleece from Colchis, and gave it to us by mighty toil. And when at length he sank into the tomb, he left us his royal Treasure to enjoy. Here is something for you to admire and imitate. Only seek it at the bottom of the vessel, or you will wander astray. All things are one, though they be described under various names. Let this suffice thee; seek not many utensils for thy labour. If thou knowest the substance and the method, it is enough, and thou knowest all."

**THE PREFACE**  
OF  
**BASILIIUS VALENTINUS, THE BENEDICTINE,**  
CONCERNING  
**THE GREAT STONE OF THE**  
**ANCIENT SAGES.**

WHEN I had emptied to the dregs the cup of human suffering, I was led to consider the wretchedness of this world, and the fearful consequences of our first parents' disobedience. Then I saw that there was no hope of repentance for mankind, that they were getting worse day by day, and that for their impenitence God's everlasting punishment was hanging over them; and I made haste to withdraw myself from the evil world, to bid farewell to it, and to devote myself to the service of God.

When I had spent some years at the monastery, I found that after I had performed my work and my daily devotions I still had some time on my hands. This I did not wish to pass in idleness, lest my evil thoughts should lead me into new sins; and so I determined to use it for the study and investigation of those natural secrets by which God has shadowed out eternal things. So I read a great many books in our monastery written in olden times by philosophers who had pursued the same study, and was thereby stimulated to a more ardent desire of knowing that which they also knew. Though I did not make much progress at first, yet at last God granted my earnest prayer, and opened my eyes that I might see what others had seen before me.

In the convent there was a brother, who was afflicted with a severe disease of the kidneys, and to whom none of the many physicians he had consulted had been able to give even momentary relief. So he had committed himself to the hand of God, and despaired of all human aid.

As I loved him, I gathered all manner of herbs, extracted their salts, and distilled various medicines. But none of them seemed to do him the slightest good, and after six years I found that I had tried every possible vegetable substance, without any beneficial effect.

At last I determined to devote myself to the study of the powers and virtues which God has laid into metals and minerals; and the more I searched the more I found. One discovery led to another, and, after God had permitted unto me many experiments, I understood clearly the nature and properties, and the secret potency, imparted by God to minerals and metals.

Among the mineral substances I found one which exhibited many colours, and proved to be of the greatest efficacy in art. The spiritual essence of this substance I extracted, and therewith restored our sick brother, in a few days, to perfect health. For the strength of this spirit was so great as to quicken the prostrate spirit of my diseased brother, who, from that day to the day of his death, remembered me in his hourly prayers. And his prayers, together with my own diligence, so prevailed with God, that

there was revealed to me that great secret which God ever conceals from those who are wise in their own conceits.

Thus have I been wishing to reveal to you in this treatise, as far as may be lawful to me, the Stone of the Ancients, that you, too, might possess the knowledge of this highest of earthly treasures for your health and comfort in this valley of sorrow. I write about it, not for my own good, but for that of posterity; and though my words be few and simple, that which they import is of immeasurable magnitude. Ponder them well, that you also may find the Rock which is the foundation Stone of truth, the temporal blessing, and the eternal reward.

**THE TRACT**  
OF  
**BASILIVS VALENTINVS, THE BENEDICTINE,**  
CONCERNING  
**THE GREAT STONE OF THE**  
**ANCIENT SAGES.**

IN the preface, gentle Reader, and zealous Student of this Art, I promised to communicate to you a knowledge of our Corner Stone, or Rock, of the process by which it is prepared, and of the substance from which it was already derived by those ancient Sages, to whom the secret of our Art was first revealed by God for the health and happiness of earthly life. Let me assure you that I fully intend to fulfil my promise, and to be as plain with you as the rules of our Art permit, not misleading you by sophisticated deceptions, but opening up to you the spring of all blessings even unto the fountain head. I propose to set forth what I have to say in a few simple, straightforward words, for I am no adept in the art of multiplying words; nor do I think that exuberance of language tends to clearness; on the contrary, I am convinced that it is many words that darken council.

Let me tell you, then, that although many are engaged in the search after this Stone, it is nevertheless found but by very few. For God never intended that it should become generally known. It is rather to be regarded as a gift which He reserves for those favoured few, who love the truth, and hate falsehood, who study our Art earnestly by day and by night, and whose hearts are set upon God with an unfeigned affection.

Hence, if you would prepare our great and ancient Stone, I testify unto you in all truth that you must give diligent heed to my teaching, and before all things implore the gracious blessing of the Creator of all things. You must also truly repent you of all your sins, confessing the same, and firmly resolve to lead a good and holy life. It is also necessary that you should determine to shew your gratitude to God for His unspeakable Gift, by succouring the poor and the distressed, and by opening your hand and your heart to the needy. Then God will bless your labour, and reward your search with success, and yourself with a seat in Heaven as the fruit of your faith.

Do not despise the truthful writings of those who possessed the Stone before us. For, after the enlightening grace of God, it is from them that I received my knowledge. Let your study of them be increased and repeated often, lest you lose the thread of insight, and the lamp of understanding be extinguished.

Give yourself wholly to study, and be not flighty or double-minded. Let your mind be like a firm Rock, in which all the various sayings of the Sages are reduced to the unity of their common meaning. For a man who is easily influenced in different directions is not likely to find the right path.

As our most ancient Stone is not derived from combustible things, you should cease to seek it in substances which cannot stand the test of fire. For this reason it is absurd to suppose that we can make any use of vegetable substances, though the Stone, too, is endowed 'with a principle of growth.

If our Stone were a vegetable substance, it would, like other vegetables, be consumed by fire, leaving only a certain salt. Ancient writers have, indeed, described our Stone as the *vegetable* Stone. But that name was suggested to them by the fact that it grows and increases in size, like a plant.

Know also that animals only multiply after their kind, and within their own species. Hence our Stone can only be prepared out of its own seed, from which it was taken in the beginning; and hence also you will perceive that the soul of an animal must not be the subject of this investigation. Animals are a class by themselves; nor can anything ever be obtained from them that is not animal in its nature. But our Stone, as it has been bequeathed to me by the Ancients, is derived from two things, and one thing, in which is concealed a third thing. This is the purest truth, and a most faithful saying. For male and female have from of old been regarded as one body, not from any external or visible consideration, but on account of the ardour of that mutual love which naturally draws them together into one; and as the male and female seed jointly represent the principle of propagation, so also the sperm of the matter out of which our Stone is made can be sown and increased. There are in our substance two supplementary kinds of seed, from which our Stone may be prepared and multiplied.

If you are a true lover of our Art, you will carefully weigh and ponder these words, lest, with other sophisticators, you fall into the dangerous pit prepared by the common enemy of man.

But whence are you to obtain this seed? This question you may most easily answer by asking yourself another question. What do you want to develop from this seed, and what use do you wish to make of it? There can be no doubt, then, that it must be the root, or first substance, of metals, from which all metals derive their origin. It is, therefore, necessary that we should now proceed to speak of the generation of the metals.

In the beginning, when the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and as yet all was involved in darkness, Almighty and Eternal God, Whose beginning and wisdom are from everlasting, by His inscrutable counsel created heaven and earth, and all that in them is, both visible and invisible, out of nothing. How the act of



creation was accomplished I will not attempt to explain. This is a matter which is set forth to us in Holy Scripture, and must be apprehended by faith.

To each creature God gave its own seed, wherewith to propagate its kind, that in this way there might always be an increase of men and animals, plants and metals. Man was not to be able to produce *new* seed: he was only permitted to educe new forms of life out of that which already existed. The creating of seed God reserved to Himself. For if man could create seed he would be equal to the Creator.

Know that our seed is produced in the following way. A celestial influence descends from above, by the decree and ordinance of God, and mingles with the astral properties. When this union has taken place, the two bring forth a third, namely, an earth-like substance, which is the principle of our seed, of its first source, so that it can shew an ancestry, and from which three the elements, such as water, air, and earth, take their origin. These elements work underground in the form of fire, and there produce what Hermes, and all who have preceded me, call the three first principles, viz., the internal soul, the impalpable spirit, and visible bodies, beyond which we can find no earlier beginning of our Magistry.

In the course of time these three unite, and are changed through the action of fire into a palpable substance, viz., quicksilver, sulphur, and salt. If these three substances be mixed, they are hardened and coagulated into a perfect body, which represents the seed chosen and appointed by the Creator. This is a most important and certain truth. If the metallic soul, the metallic spirit, and the metallic *form* of body be present, there will also be metallic quicksilver, metallic sulphur, and metallic salt, which together make up the perfect metallic body.

If you cannot perceive what you ought to understand herein, you should not devote yourself to the study of philosophy.

Moreover, I tell you in few words, that you cannot obtain a metallic body except by perfectly joining these three principles into one. Know, also, that all animals are, like man, composed of flesh and blood, and also possess a vitalizing spirit, but are destitute of the rational soul which the Creator gave to man alone. Therefore, when animals die, they perish for ever. But when man yields up his mortal life into the hands of his Creator, his soul does not die. It returns, and is united to the glorified body, in which, after the Resurrection, soul and spirit dwell together once more in eternal glory, never to be separated again throughout all eternity.

Hence the rational soul of man makes him an abiding creature, and, though his body may seem to die, yet we know that he will live for ever. For to him death is only a process of purification, by means of which he is freed from his sins, and translated to another and better place. But there is no resurrection for the brute beasts, because they have no rational soul, for which alone our Lord and Saviour shed His blood.

For though a body may be vitalized by a spirit, yet it need not, therefore, be fixed, unless, indeed, it possess a rational soul, that strong bond between body and spirit, which represents their union, and resists all efforts to separate them. Where there is no soul, there is no hope of redemption. Nothing can be perfect or lasting without a soul. This is a profound and most important truth, which I feel in conscience bound to make

known to my readers. Now, the spirits of metals have this property of fixedness in a greater or less degree; they are more or less volatile in proportion to the mutual fitness of their bodies and souls. A metal that has the three conditions of fixedness is not affected by fire or overcome by any other outward agent. But there is only *one* metal that fulfils these conditions, namely, gold. Silver also contains fixed mercury, and is not so quickly volatilised as the imperfect metals, but stands the trial of fire, and yields no food to voracious Saturn.

Amatory Venus is clothed with abundant colour, and her whole body is one pure tincture, not unlike the red colour which is found in the most precious of metals. But though her spirit is of good quality, her body is leprous, and affords no permanent substratum to the fixed tincture. Hence the soul has to share the fate of the imperfect body, and when the body dies the soul has to leave it. For its dwelling has been destroyed by fire, and it is without a house wherein to abide.

Fixed salt has imparted to warlike Mars a hard, firm, and durable body, which is evidence of the generosity of his soul; nor can fire be said to have much power over it. And if its strength be united to the beauty of Venus, I do not say but that a precious and harmonious result may be obtained. For the phlegmatic or humid quality of the Moon may be heated with the ardent blood of Venus, and the blackness of Venus removed with the strong salt of Mars.

You need not look for our metallic seed among the elements. It need not be sought so far back. If you can only rectify the Mercury, Sulphur, and Salt (understand, those of the Sages) until the metallic spirit and body are inseparably joined together by means of the metallic soul, you thereby firmly rivet the chain of love, and prepare the palace for the coronation.

These things represent a liquid key, comparable to the celestial influence, and a dry water joined to the terrestrial substance: all which are *one* thing, derived from three, and two, and one. If you understand this, you have already attained our Magistry. Then you must join the husband and wife together, that each may feed upon the other's flesh and blood, and that so they may propagate their species a thousandfold.

Though I would fain reveal this matter to you more plainly and openly, I am prohibited from doing so by the law of God, and by the fear of His wrath, and of eternal punishment, lest the gift of the Most High should be abused.

If, however, you do not understand the theoretical part of my work, perhaps the practical part will serve to enlighten you more fully. I will therefore proceed to shew how, by the help of God, I was enabled to prepare the Stone of the Ancients, and, for your further instruction, I will add twelve keys, in which I give a figurative account of our Art.

Take a quantity of the best and finest gold, and separate it into its component parts by those media which Nature vouchsafes to those who are lovers of Art, as an anatomist dissects the human body. Thus change your gold back into what it was before it became gold; and thou shalt find the seed, the beginning, the middle, and the end—that from which *our gold* and its female principle are derived, viz., the pure and subtle spirit, the spotless soul, and the astral salt and balsam. When these three are united,

we may call them the mercurial liquid: a water which was examined by Mercury, found by him to be pure and spotless, and therefore espoused by him as his wife. Of the two was born an incombustible oil; for Mercury became so proud that he hardly knew himself. He put forth eagle feathers, and devoured the slippery tail of the Dragon, and challenged Mars to battle.

Then Mars summoned his horsemen, and bade them enclose Mercury in prison under the ward of Vulcan, until he should be liberated by one of the female sex.

When this became known, the other Planets assembled and held a deliberation on the question, what would be the best and wisest course to adopt. When they were met together, Saturn first came forward, and delivered himself as follows:

"I, Saturn, the greatest of the planets in the firmament, declare here before you all, that I am the meanest and most unprofitable of all that are here present, that my body is weak, corruptible, and of a swarthy hue, but that, nevertheless, it is I that try you all. For having nothing that is fixed about me, I carry away with me all that is of a kindred nature. My wretchedness is entirely caused by that fickle and inconstant Mercury, by his careless and neglectful conduct. Therefore, I pray you, let us be avenged on him, shut him up in prison, and keep him there till he dies and is decomposed, nay, until not a drop of his blood is to be seen."

Then yellow Jupiter stepped forward, bent his knees, inclined his sceptre, and with great authority bade them carry out the demand of Saturn. He added that he would punish everyone who did not aid the execution of this sentence.

Then Mars presented himself, with sword drawn—a sword that shone with many colours, and gave out a beautiful and unwonted splendour. This sword he gave to the warder Vulcan, and bade him slay Mercury, and burn him, together with his bones, to ashes. This Vulcan consented to do.

While he was executing his office, there appeared a beautiful lady in a long, silver robe, intertissued with many waters, who was immediately recognised as the Moon, the wife of the Sun. She fell on her knees, and with outspread hands, and flowing tears, besought them to liberate her husband—the Sun—from the prison in which, through the crafty wiles of Mercury, he was being detained by the Planets. But Vulcan refused to listen to her request; nor was he softened by the moving prayers of Lady Venus, who appeared in a crimson robe, intertissued with threads of green, and charmed all by the beauty of her countenance and the fragrance of the flowers which she bore in her hand. She interceded with Vulcan, the Judge, in the Chaldee tongue, and reminded him that a woman was to effect the deliverance of the prisoner. But even to her pleading he turned a deaf ear.

While they were still speaking the heaven was opened, and there came forth a mighty animal, with many thousands of young ones, which drove the warder before it, and opening its mouth wide, swallowed Venus, its fair helper, at the same time exclaiming with a loud voice: "I am born of woman, woman has propagated my seed, and therewith filled the earth. Her soul is devoted to mine, and therefore I must be nourished with her blood." When the animal had said these words with a loud voice, it hastened into a certain chamber, and shut the door behind it; whither its voracious

brood followed, drinking of the aforesaid incombustible oil, which they digested with the greatest ease, and thereby became even more numerous than they had been before. This they continued to do until they filled the whole world.

Then the learned men of that country were gathered together, and strove to discover the true interpretation of all they had seen. But they were unable to agree until there came forward a man of venerable age, with snowy locks and silvery beard, and arrayed in a flowing purple robe. On his head he wore a crown set with brilliant carbuncles. His loins were girded with the girdle of life. His feet were bare, and his words penetrated to the depth of the human soul. He mounted the tribune, and bade the assembly listen to him in silence, since he was sent from above to explain to them the significance of what they had seen.

When perfect silence prevailed, he delivered himself as follows:

“Awake, O man, and behold the light, lest the darkness deceive thee! The Gods revealed to me this matter in a profound sleep. Happy is the man who knows the great works of the Divine power. Blessed is he whose eyes are opened to behold light where before they saw darkness.

“Two Stars are given by the Gods to man to lead him to great wisdom. Gaze steadily upon them, follow their lights, and you will find in them the secret of knowledge.

“The bird Phoenix, from the south, plucks out the heart of the mighty beast from the east. Give the animal from the east wings, that it may be on an equality with the bird from the south. For the animal from the east must be deprived of its lion's skin, and lose its wings. Then it must plunge in the salt water of the vast ocean, and emerge thence in renovated beauty. Plunge thy volatile spirits in a deep spring whose waters never fail, that they may become like their mother, who is hidden therein, and born of three.

“Hungary is my native land, the sky and the stars are my habitation, the earth is my spouse. Though I must die and be buried, yet Vulcan causes me to be born anew. Therefore, Hungary is my native land, and my mother encloses the whole world.”

When all that were present had received these his sayings, he thus continued:

“Cause that which is above to be below; that which is visible, to be invisible; and that which is palpable, to become impalpable. Again, let that which is below become that which is above; let the invisible become visible, and the impalpable, palpable. Here you see the perfection of our Art, without any defect, or diminution. But that in which death and life, destruction and resurrection dwell, is a round sphere, with which the goddess of fortune drives her chariot, and imparts the gift of wisdom to men of God. Its proper name here upon earth, and for the human understanding, is 'All-in-All.'

“Let him who would know what this 'All-in-All' is, give the earth great wings, and make it fly upward through the air to the heavenly regions. Then singe its wings with fierce heat, and make it fall into the Red Sea, and there be drowned. Then dry up the water with fire and air till the earth reappears, and you will have 'All-in-All.'

“If you cannot find it in this way, look around upon the things that are in the world. Then you will find the 'All-in-All,' which is the attracting force of all metals and minerals derived from salt and sulphur, and twice born of Mercury. More I may not say about 'All-in-All,' since all is comprehended in all.

“My friends, blessed are ye if, by listening to the words of the wise, ye can find this great Stone, which has power to cure leprous and imperfect metallic bodies and to regenerate them; to preserve men in health, and procure for them a long life—as it has hitherto kept the vital fire burning within me so long that I am weary of life, and yearn to die.

“For His wisdom and mercy, and for the gracious Gift which He has bestowed upon me so long ago, I am bound to render God thanks, now and evermore. Amen.”

When the old man had thus spoken, he vanished from their sight.

But all who had heard him went each man to his house, and meditated on his words by day and by night.

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## **The Remonstrance of Nature, made to the erring alchemists, and complaining of the sophists and other false teachers.**

**Set forth by John A. Mehung.**

Nature speaks.

Good heavens, how deeply I am often saddened at seeing the human race, which God created perfect, in His own image, and appointed to be the lords of the earth, depart so far away from me! I allude more particularly to you, O stolid philosophaster, who presume to style yourself a practical chemist, a good philosopher, and yet are entirely destitute of all knowledge of me, of the true Matter, and of the whole Art which you profess! For, behold, you break vials, and consume coals, only to soften your brain still more with the vapours. You also digest alum, salt, orpiment, and atrament; you melt metals, build small and large furnaces, and use many vessels: nevertheless, I am sick of your folly, and you suffocate me with your sulphurous smoke. With most intense heat you seek to fix your quicksilver, which is the vulgar volatile substance, and not that out of which I make metals; therefore you effect nothing. For you do not follow my guidance, or strive to imitate my methods, rather mistaking my whole artifice. You would do better to mind your own business, than to dissolve and distill so many absurd substances, and then to pass them through alembics, cucurbites, stills, and pelicans. By this method you will never succeed in congealing quicksilver. For the revivification you use a reverberatory fire, and make it so hot as to render everything liquid — thus do you finish your work, and in the end ruin yourself and others. You will never discover anything unless you first enter my workshop, where, in the inmost bowels of the earth I ceaselessly forge metals: there you may find the substance which I use, and discover the method of my work.

Do not suppose that I will reveal my secret to you unless you first find the growing seed of all metals (resembling that of the animals and vegetables). I preserve in the bosom of the earth both that which is used for their generation, and that with which they are nourished up.

Metals Exist, vegetables Live and Grow, and animals Feel, which is more than merely to grow. I make metals, stones, and the atramental substances out of certain elements, which I mix and compound in a certain way. These elements you must seek in the heart of the earth, and nowhere else. Vegetables contain their own seed, and image; in like manner, animals are propagated, and by the same means do generate their own likeness. Everything proceeds by the laws laid down for it. Only you, wicked man, who try to usurp my office, have departed further from me than any other creature. Metals have no life, or principle of generation and growth, if they lack their own proper seed. The first is accomplished by the four elements in nine days; the Moon goes through the twelve heavenly signs in twenty-nine and a half days.

By the aforesaid laws, winter and summer relieve each other, the elements are changed, generations take place in the earth — through my working, through the working of God and the heavens, do all things subsist, the perceptible, the visible, and the invisible. Thus all things in heaven which are comprehended under the Moon, do work, and impart their influence to the substance, which, like a woman, longs to

conceive seed. Each star influences its own substance, and according to their peculiar nature, they produce different things. They work first in heaven above, then in the earth beneath in the elements, each according to its own peculiar virtue; and hence arise species and individual things.

You are to know that these manifold influences do not pour themselves fruitlessly upon the earthly elements. For though their working is invisible, yet it is a most certain and real thing. The earth is surrounded by heaven, and from it obtains her best influences and substances. Every sphere is ready to communicate its truth, and therewith to pervade her centre. Through this motion and heat, there arise upon earth vapours, which are the first substances. If the vapour is cold and moist, it sinks down again to the earth, and is there preserved; that which is moist and warm ascends to the clouds. That which is shut up in the earth I change, after a long time, into the substance of sulphur, which is the active, and into quicksilver, which is the passive principle. The metals are another mixture of this first composition. The whole is obtained from the four elements, which I form into one mass. This process I repeat so often that you have no excuse for a mistake.

After the putrefaction comes the generation, which is brought about by the internal incombustible warmth heating the coldness of the quicksilver, which gladly submits to this heat because it wishes to be united to its sulphur. All these things, fire, air, and water, I have in one alembic in the earth. There I digest, dissolve, and sublime them, without any hammer, tongs, file, coals, vapour, fire, "bath of S. Mary", or other sophisticated contrivances. For I have my own heavenly fire which excites the elemental according as the matter desires to put on a suitable and comely form. Thus I extract my quicksilver from the four elements, or their substance. This is always accompanied by its sulphur, which is its second self, and warms it gradually, gently, and pleasantly. Thus the cold becomes warm, and the dry moist and oily. But the moist is not without its dry substance, nor is the dry without its moist: one is conserved by the other in its first essence (which is the elementary spirit of the essence, or the quintessence) from which proceeds the generation of our child. The fire brings it forth, and nourishes it in the air, but before that, it is decomposed in virgin earth; then water flows forth (or it flows forth from the water), which we must seek, since it is my first Matter, and the source of my mineral. For contrary resists strenuously to contrary, and doth in such wise fortify itself, lest perchance it be carried away in operating; then does it suffer transmutation, and is stripped of its form by the concupiscence of matter, which incessantly attracts a new form.

By my wisdom I govern the first principle of motion. My hands are the eighth sphere, as my Father ordained; my hammers are the seven planets, with which I forge beautiful things. The substance out of which I fashion all my works, and all things under heaven, I obtain from the four elements alone. Chaos, or Hyle, is the first substance. This is the Mistress that maintains the King, the Queen, and the whole court. A horseman is always ready to do her bidding, and a virgin performs her office in the chambers. The more beautiful she is, the more beautiful do I appear in her. Know also that I have power to give their essence to all essences, that it is I who preserve them, and mould them into shape. Moreover, observe the three parts into which God has divided the first substance. Of the first and purest part He created the Cherubin, Seraphin, Archangels, and all the other angels. Out of the second, which was not so pure, He created the heavens and all that belongs to them; of the third,

impure part, the elements and their properties. First and best of these is Fire. Fire admits of no corruption, and contains the purest part of the quintessence. After Fire, He made the subtle Air, and put into it a part (but not so large a part) of the quintessence. Then came the visible element of Water, which has as much of the quintessence as it needs. Last of all comes the Earth. All these (like all the rest of Nature) He created in a moment of time. The earth is gross and dark, and though it is fruitful, yet it contains the smallest part of the quintessence. At first the elements remained as they were in their separate spheres. So Air is really moist, but is properly tempered by Fire. Water is really warm, but obtains its moisture from the air. The Earth is really dry, but it is also cold; its great dryness renders it akin to fire. Fire, however, is the first of elements which causes life and growth by its heat.

Now all these elements influence and qualify each other, so that each in its turn is now active, now passive. For instance, Fire works upon air and earth. Earth is the mother and nurse of all things, and sustains all that is liable to decay under heaven. Now God has given me power to resolve the four elements into their quintessence; this is that first substance which in every element is generically qualified. I resolve them for my own purpose, and thereby bring about all generation. But no one will be able to resolve me into my first substance, as he strives to resolve the elements. For I alone can transmute the elements and their forms, and he who thinks otherwise deceives himself. For you will never be able to assign to each substance its proper influence, or to find the correct proportions of the elements which are required by that substance. I alone, I say, can form created things, and give to them their peculiar properties and substance. By my heavenly mysteries I produce perfect works, which are justly called miracles, as may be seen in the Elixir which has such marvelous virtue, and is of my own forming. No art upon earth can add anything to, or improve upon, my workmanship. Every sane person must see that nothing can be accomplished without a perfect knowledge of the heavenly bodies, or apart from the efficacy which abides in them; without these everything is error and misuse; and yet, whence is a mere man to obtain this influence, and how is he to apply it to the substance? How can he mingle the elements in their right proportions? Even if a man were to spend a long life in the investigation of this secret (says Avicenna, *De Vir. Cord.*, chap. ii.), he would not get any nearer to its solution. It is entrusted to my keeping alone, and can never be known to any man. By my virtue and efficacy I make the imperfect perfect, whether it be a metal or a human body. I mix its ingredients, and temper the four elements. I reconcile opposites, and calm their discord.

This is the golden chain which I have linked together of my heavenly virtues and earthly substances. I accomplish my works with such unerring accuracy that in them all my power is strewn forth, and with so much skill that the wisest of men cannot attain to my perfection. Go forth then, and behold my works, you who think yourself so skilled a workman, and (without any knowledge of me), with your coal fires and your S. Mary's bath, strive to make gold potable in my alembics — and know that I cannot bear the sight of your folly. Are you not ashamed, after considering my works, to attempt to rival them with your malodorous decoctions in your coloured and painted vials, and thus lose both your time and your money? I am at a loss to conceive what you can be thinking. Have pity upon yourself, and consider my teaching. Try to understand rightly what I tell you, for I cannot lie. Consider how that most glorious metal, gold, has received its beautiful form from heaven and its precious substance from the earth. The generation of the precious stones, such as carbuncles, amethysts,



and diamonds, takes place in the same manner. The substance itself is composed of the four elements; its form and qualities it receives through heavenly influences, although the capacity of being thus wrought upon slumbers in the element and is only brought out and purified in the course of time. All this is accomplished by my hands alone. I am the architect, and no one else knows the secret of life. For, however wise he may think himself, he does not know how much to take of each element, or where to obtain it, or how to mingle hostile elements so as to allay their discord, or how to bring the heavenly influences to bear on these essences: He cannot even make iron, or lead, or the very basest of metal; how then should he be able to make gold except by stealing my treasure? The object which he desires can be accomplished by my art alone — an art which it is impossible for man to know.

And even though we allow gold to be the most precious of metals, yet gold by itself cannot cure diseases, or heal the imperfections of other metals, or change them into gold. In the same way glass (which might otherwise be the Philosopher's Stone) can never become so soft as to be rendered malleable. Gold alone is the most precious and the most perfect of all the metals. But if you cannot even make lead, or the minutest grain of any metals, or produce the fruit of any herb, how hopeless must your search after the art of making gold appear! Again if you say that you wish to produce some chemical result, even if it do not turn out to be gold, I answer that you thereby only give a fresh proof of your folly. Can you not understand that the secret of my innermost working must always remain a sealed book to you? What Nature does can never be successfully imitated by any created being. Nay, if I made gold out of seven metals, and you do not understand my method, how can you ever hope to prepare the substance which itself changes all metals into the purest gold, and is the most precious treasure that God has given me? You are foolish and ignorant, if you do not know that this precious thing which you seek is, to the created mind, the greatest mystery of Nature, and that it is compounded by heavenly influences — and thus has power to heal and deliver men from all diseases, and to remove the imperfection of the base metals. If, therefore, it is in itself so perfect that it has not its like upon earth, it must surely be the workmanship of the highest Intelligence, since no one else can even make gold, and certainly not produce a thing which has itself the power of making gold. Surely, to maintain that you are able to prepare such a thing, is like saying that you cannot carry ten pounds, but that you are strong enough to carry a hundred pounds. Put to heart, therefore, the true scope and responsibility of your intent.

I, myself, again, receive all my wisdom, virtue, and power from heaven, and my Matter, in its simplest form, is the four elements. This is the first principle and the quintessence of the elements, which I bring forth by reductions, time, and circulations, by which I transmute the inferior into the more perfect, the cold and dry into the moist and warm; and thus I preserve stones and metals in their natural state of moisture. This is brought about by the movements of the celestial bodies, for by them the elements are ruled; by their controlling influence like is brought to like. The purer my substance is, the more excellent are the results produced by the heavenly influence. And do you think that there in your alembic, where you have your earth and water, I will be induced by your fire and heat, and by your white and red colour, to bend my neck to your yoke, and to do your will and pleasure? Do you think that you can move the heavens, and force them to shed their influence upon your work. Do you think that that is an organic instrument which gives forth sweet music only when it is touched by the musician's fingers? You take too much upon yourself, you foolish man. Do you

not know that the revolutions of the heavens are governed by a mighty Mind, which, by its influence, imparts power to all things?

I beseech you to remember that all great things proceed from me, and, in the last instance, from God; and not to suppose that the skill of your hands can be as perfect as the operation of Nature. For it is void and vain, and, ape-like, must imitate me in all things. Nor must you suppose that your distilling, dissolving, and condensing of your substance in your vessel, or your eliciting of water out of oil, is the right way of following me. Far from it, my son. All your mixing and dissolving of elements never has produced, and never can produce, any good result. Do you wish to know the reason? Your substance cannot stand the heat of the furnace for a single half-hour, but must evaporate in smoke, or be consumed by the fire. But the substance with which work, can stand any degree of heat, without being injured. My water is dry, and does not moisten what it touches; it does not evaporate, or become less, neither is its oil consumed. So perfect are my elements; but yours are worse than useless.

In conclusion, let me tell you that your artificial fire will never impart my heavenly warmth, nor will your water, oil, and earth supply you with any substitute for my substance. It is the gift of God, shed upon the elements from heaven, and upon one more than upon another; but how, is known only to me, and to the Great Artist who entrusted me with this knowledge. One thing more let me tell you, my son. If you would imitate me, you must prepare all out of one simple, self-contained Matter, in one well-closed vessel, and in one alembic. The substance contains all that is needed for its perfect development, and must be prepared with a warmth that is always kept at the same gentle temperature. Let me ask you to consider the birth and development of man, my noblest work. You cannot make a human body out of any substance whatsoever. Of my method in forming so subtle a body neither Aristotle nor Plato had the remotest knowledge. I harden the bones and the teeth, I make the flesh soft, the muscles cold, the brain moist, the heart, into which God has poured the life, warm, and fill all the veins with red blood. And in the same way, I make of one quicksilver, and of one active male sulphur, one maternal vessel, the womb of which is the alembic. It is true that man aids me with his art, by shedding external heat into the matrix; more than this, however, he cannot do. He, then, that knows the true Matter, and prepares it properly in a well-closed vessel, and puts the whole in an alembic, and keeps up the fire at the proper degree of warmth, may safely leave the rest to me. Upon the fire all depends, and much, therefore, does it behove you to see thereto. Consider, therefore, the fire, which they call epesin, pepsin, pepausin, and optesin, or natural, preternatural, and infranatural fire, which burns not. Without the true Matter and the proper fire, no one can attain the end of his labour. I give you the substance; you must provide the mere outward conditions. Take, then, a vessel, and an alembic of the right kind and of the right size. Be wise, and perform the experiment in accordance with my laws. Help me, and I will help you. I will deal with you as you deal with me. To my other sons, who have treated me well, have obeyed their father and mother, and submitted themselves to my precepts, I have given a great reward, as John de Mehung, for instance, will tell you. His testimony is also borne out by Villanova, Raymond, Morienus the Roman, Hermes (whom they call Father, and who has not his like among the Sages), Geber, and others who have written about this Art, and know by experience that it is true.

If you, my son, wish to prepare this precious Stone, you need not put yourself to any great expense. All that you want is leisure, and some place where you can be without any fear of interruption. Reduce the Matter (which is one) to powder, put it, together with its water, in a well-closed vessel, and expose it to continuous, gentle heat, which will then begin to operate, while the moisture favours the decomposition. The presence of the moisture prevents the dryness of the quicksilver from retarding its assimilation. Meanwhile, you must diligently observe what I do, and remember the words of Aristotle (Meteor iii. and iv.), who says: "Study Nature, and carefully peruse the book concerning Generation and Corruption." You must also read the book concerning heaven and the world, in which you will find indicated the beautiful and pure substance. If you neglect this study, you will fail. On this subject consult Albertus Magnus, De Mineralibus. But if your eyes are opened by such studies, you will discover the secret of the growth of minerals, viz., that they are all produced from the elements.

First learn to know me, before you call yourself Master. Follow me, that am the mother of all things created, which have one essence, and which can neither grow, nor receive a living soul, without the heavenly and elementary influences. When you have learned by persevering study to understand the virtues of the heavenly bodies, their potent operations, and the passive condition of the elements, and its reason — if you further know the media of transmutation, the cause of generation, nutrition, and decay, and the essence and substance of the elements — you are already acquainted with the Art, notwithstanding that a most subtle mind is still needed for the studying of my operations. But if you do not possess part at least of this knowledge, you will be fortunate indeed if you succeed in discovering my secret. It is a secret that is read not by those that are wise in their own conceits, but by those that humbly and patiently listen to my teaching. Therefore, if you desire to own this treasure, which has been the reward of the truly wise in all ages, you must do as I bid you. For my treasure has such virtue and potency that the like of it is to be found neither in heaven nor upon earth. It holds an intermediate position between Mercury and the Metal which I take for the purpose of extracting from it by your art and my knowledge that most precious essence. It is pure and potable gold, and its radical principle is active humidity. Moreover, it is the universal Medicine described by Solomon (Eccles. xxxviii.); the same also is taken from the earth, and honoured by the wise. God has assigned it a place among my mysteries, and reveals it to the Sages, although many who call themselves learned doctors of Theology and Philosophy, hold it in ignorant contempt — as Alchemy is also despised by the doctors of Medicine, because they do not know me, and are ignorant of that which they profess to teach. They must be insufficiently furnished with brains, or they would not direct their foolish scorn against the panacea which renders all other medicines unnecessary. Happy is the man, even though he be sinking under the weight of years, whose days God prolongs until he has come to the knowledge of this secret! For (as Geber says) many to whom this gift was imparted late in life, have, nevertheless, been refreshed and delighted by it in extreme old age.

He that has this secret possesses all good things and great riches. One ounce of it will ensure to him both wealth and health. It is the only source of strength and recreation, and far excels the golden tincture. It is the elixir and water of life, which includes all other things. In my treasure are concealed quicksilver, sulphur, incombustible oil, white, indestructible, and fusible salt. I tell you, frankly, that you will never be able to

accomplish its preparation without me, just as I can do nothing without your help. But if you understand my teaching, and cooperate with me, you can accomplish the whole thing in a short time.

Have done with the charlatans, and their foolish writings; have done with all their various alembics, and phials; have done with their excrements of horses, and all the variety of their coal-fires, since all these things are of no use whatever. Do not perplex yourself with metals, or other things of a like nature: rather change the elements into a mutable form. For this is the most excellent substance of the Sages, and is rejected only by the foolish. Its substance is like, but its essence unlike, that of gold.

Transmute the elements and you will have what you seek. Sublime that which is the lowest, and make that which is the highest, the lowest. Take quicksilver which is mixed with its active sulphur; put it into a well-closed vial, and one alembic, plunge one-third of it into the earth, kindle the fire of the Sages, and watch it well so that there may be no smoke. The rest you may leave to me. I ask you to do no more, but only bid you follow my unerring guidance.

The Answer of the Chemist,

In which he confesses his errors, asks pardon for them, and returns thanks to Nature.

Dearest Mother Nature, who, next to the angels, art the most perfect of all God's creatures, I thank thee for thy kindly instruction. I acknowledge and confess that thou art the Mother and Empress of the great world, made for the little world of man's mind. Thou movest the bodies above, and transmutes the elements below. At the bidding of thy Lord thou dost accomplish both small things and great, and renewest, by ceaseless decay and generation, the face of the earth and of the heavens. I confess that nothing can live without a soul, and that all that exists and is endued with being flows forth from thee by virtue of the power that God has given to thee. All matter is ruled by thee, and the elements are under thy governance. From them thou takest the first substance, and from the heavens thou dost obtain the form. That substance is formless and void until it is modified and individualized by thee. First thou givest it a substantial, and then an individual form. In thy great wisdom thou dost cunningly mould all thy works through the heavenly influences, so that no mortal hand can utterly destroy them. Under thy hands God has put all things that are necessary to man, and through thee, He has divided them into four kingdoms, namely, those that have being and essence, like the metals and stones; those that have essence and growth, like the vegetables; those that have feeling and sensation, like the beasts, birds, and fishes. These are the first three classes; in the fourth it pleased God to place only the noblest and most perfect of His works, namely, man, to whom He also gave a rational and immortal soul. This soul is obscured by the defilement which found its way into the body through the senses, and, but for the grace and mercy of God, would have become involved in its condemnation. Hence the chief perfection of man is not derived from thee, nor dost thou impart to us our humanity. Nevertheless, the material part of man is the work of thy hands alone.

And, surely, our bodies are cunningly and wonderfully made, and, in every part of them, bear witness to the masterly skill of the workman. How marvellous are the uses of our various members! How wonderful that the soul can move them and set them to work at will! But, alas! oftener still the body is master of the soul, and forces it to do

many things which pure reason condemns. If we consider the matter from this point of view, it seems as though thou hadst begun well, and yet thy work had, after all, turned out an abortion. Wert thou wanting in wisdom, or knowledge; or couldst thou not do otherwise? Pardon me if I speak too presumptuously about thy wisdom, I only desire to be rightly and truly informed. For, indeed, even now thy stern rebuke has made many things clear to me. I have spent my whole life in attending to thy lessons; and the more closely I have listened, the more clearly have I understood my mistakes and the depth of thy wisdom. Now, whether I lie, or stand, or walk, I can think of nothing but thy great mystery. And yet I am unable to conceive what substance and form I must take for it. Thou didst sternly rebuke me for not following thy way; but thou knowest that, if I do not obey thee, it is only because I do not know what thou wouldst have me do. I shall never be able to attain any satisfactory result in this Art, unless thou wilt enlighten my blindness. Thou hast rightly said that it is not for man to know the mystery of thy working: how then can I be guided to this knowledge, unless thou wilt take me by the hand? Thou sayest that I must follow thee; and I am willing to do so. But tell me what I must do, and what books I must study for that purpose. Of the books which I have read, one says, "Do this," and the other, "No, do that"; and they are full of unintelligible expressions and of dark parables. At last I see that I cannot learn anything from them. Therefore I take refuge with thee, and instantly beseech thee to advise and to tell me how to set about this difficult task. On my knees I implore thee to show me the way by which I can penetrate into the lower parts of the earth, and by what subtle process I am to obtain the perfect mercury of the metals. And yet I doubt whether any man, even after obtaining this mercury, can really make gold. That is thy work, and not the work of man; as thy words and my own experience most clearly shew.

We see that the cold and moist mercury needs the assistance of its sulphur, which is its seed after its kind, or its homogeneous sperm, out of which the metal or Stone must be produced. But thou sayest only: Take the proper substance, the proper vessel, the proper mineral, the proper place, and the proper fire; then form, colour, and life will grow and spring forth from thence. Thou art the Architect; thou knowest the glorious properties of the Matter. The active principle can do nothing unless there be a passive principle prepared to receive its influence. Thou knowest how to mix the warm and the cold, the dry and the moist; by reconciling hostile elements, thou canst produce new substances and forms. For I did indeed understand all that thou didst tell me, but am unable to express it so well as thou. This thou hast firmly impressed on my mind, that the Elixir is composed by the reconciling and mutual transmutation of the four elements. But what man is sufficient for such a task? For who knows how earth can have its essence in common with air, or how it can be changed into moisture which is contrary to its nature? For humidity will not leave a cold and humid element, not even under the influence of fire. This, too, is the work of Nature, that it becomes black, and white, and red. These three visible colours correspond to the three elements, earth, water, and fire, and are pervaded by the air.

Then, again, thou sayest that the Stone is prepared of one thing, of one substance, in one vessel, the four (elements) composing one essence in which is one agent which begins and completes the work; man, thou sayest, need do nothing but add a little heat, and leave the rest to thy wisdom. For all that is needed is already contained in the substance, in perfection, beginning, middle, and end, as the whole man, the whole animal, the whole flower is contained each in its proper seed. Now, in the human seed

the human specific-substance is also included, as flesh, blood, hair, &c.; and thus every seed contains all the peculiar properties of its species. In the whole world men spring from human seed, plants from plants, animals from animals. Now I know that when once the seed is enclosed in the female vessel, no further trouble or work of any kind is required — everything is brought to perfection by thy gradual and silent working. And the generation of the Stone, thou sayest, is performed in a similar manner. Only one substance is required, which contains within itself air, water, and fire — in short, everything that is needed for the completion of this work. No further handling of any kind is necessary, and a gentle fire is sufficient to rouse the internal warmth, just as an infant in the womb is cherished by natural heat. The only thing in which man must aid thee, is, by preparing the substance, removing all that is superfluous, enclosing this simple earth, which is combined with its water, in a vessel, and subjecting it to the action of gentle heat in a suitable alembic. This, thou sayest, is all that needs to be done by man; when all has been prepared for thee, thou dost begin thy part of the work. Thou dissolvest the substance, and makest the dry watery; then thou sublimest it, and bearest it upward into the air, and thus, without any further aid, bringest that to perfection which can itself impart perfection to all imperfect things. Therefore, thou, Nature, art the first mother, since thou dost cunningly combine the four elements into an essence by a process of which none but thou has any knowledge. Thus far have I understood thee, and do not quite despair, if it be pleasing unto God and to thee, of seeing thy great reward with my own eyes.

But at present I earnestly desire to know but one thing: and that is, how can that substance be obtained, what are its qualities, and what its powers to impart perfection to imperfect things

I am well aware that gold is the most precious of the metals; but I cannot see that it has any capacity of becoming more potent than it already is. For whatever man may do with it, it will never be able to perfect anything but itself. If any one told me to dissolve it and extract from it its quicksilver, I should regard that as a very foolish direction; for nothing can be got out of gold but what is in it. These philosophasters betray their ignorance by saying that they can reduce gold to its first substance; but thy instruction has made it clear to me that the first substance cannot be obtained, except by destroying the specific properties of a thing, nor can any new species be brought forth by such a destruction, unless the species be first universalized into the genus. Moreover, I make bold to affirm that no man can first resolve gold into its generic substance, and then restore it again; for when it has once lost its specific properties, no mere human skill can change it back into what it was before. Nor can any one really reduce gold to the first form imparted to it by the elements. For gold is not transmuted either by heat or by cold, and is so perfect in its kind that fire only renders it purer. It does not admit of any further development, and therefore no other metal or quicksilver can be obtained from it.

It is true that plants and animals are constantly producing their like by means of their seed, and their capacity of organic nutrition. But I do not see how the same can be said of metals, seeing that at the expiration of any given period they still retain the same size and weight which they had at the beginning. Through thee they receive their being out of the elements without any sowing, planting, or development of any kind. Moreover, I know that no credit is to be attached to the fanciful notions of the old Sages who would prepare our Stone out of a crude metallic substance, and do not

understand that the form and substance of a thing are conditioned by its essential nature. Now, I remember a certain juggling charlatan, who was looked upon as a great philosopher, telling me that the only true material was common quicksilver, which must be well mingled with gold, since in such an union the one brought the other to perfection. If I did this, continued that impostor, I should be able to prepare the Elixir. First, however, the four elements must be separated from each other, then, after each had been purified, they must be reunited, the great being combined with the small, and the subtle with the gross. This, he said, was the right way of making the Stone. But I know that all this is sheer nonsense, and that such men are only deceiving themselves and others.

I am also aware that only God can produce anything out of the elements. He alone knows how to mingle and combine them in their due proportions. For He alone is the Creator and Author of all good things, and there is nothing in the world that He has not made. Therefore, let the charlatans cease their vain-glorious talk, and remember that they can never hope to gather where they cannot sow; let them make an end of their false calcinations, sublimations, distillations, by which they extract the spirit in a vaporous form, and of their juggling coagulations and congelations, by which they pretend, even among the initiated, to be able rightly to separate the elements of gold and quicksilver. It is certainly true that all things under heaven are composed of the four elements, and mixed of them according to the due proportion of their genus and species; but it is not simply the union of the four elements, but their being combined in a certain way, which constitutes the substance of the Philosophical Stone.

I also understand that in the red quicksilver and perfect body, which is called the Sun, the four elements are combined in a peculiar way, and so inseparably conjoined, that no mere human art can divide them. For all ancient and true Sages say that fire and air are enclosed in earth and water, and contend so violently with each other that none but God and Nature can loosen their grappling embrace. This I can truly affirm and also prove. For we can neither see the fire nor grasp the air; and if any one says that the several elements can be seen he is an impostor, seeing that they are inseparably and inextricably conjoined. For, although the Sophists pretend, and confidently affirm, that they can divide gold and quicksilver into the four elements, yet for all that they speak not the truth. If two elements, fire and air, were thus taken away, all the rest must vanish into nothing. They may say that those two are retained, but they are, nevertheless, densely ignorant as to what becomes of them; for air and fire cannot be seen or perceived. Again, that extract which they call fire and air renders humid, which is not the property either of fire or of air.

Moreover, as thou hast said, even the most learned Doctor cannot know the proportion of each element in any given substance. For God has entrusted this knowledge to thee alone. Nor is any Sage wise enough to be able to mingle and put together the elements so as to produce any natural object. If then he dissolves anything into its elements, how, I pray thee, is he to put them together again into any abiding form, since he is ignorant of their proportionate quantity and quality, and of the method of their composition? Yet it is of no use to separate them, if they cannot be put together again. To thee, O Nature, we must entrust this task, since thou knowest the art of preparing the Philosopher's Stone, and of combining the elements without first separating them. Nevertheless, for the preparation of the true Elixir, thou needest the aid of a wise and truly learned man. Aristotle says: "Where the physicist ends, there the physician

begins." Nor can we attain to true alchemy, until we begin to follow Nature, and to be guided by a knowledge of her principles. Where the study of Alchemy is rightly carried on, it is mightily advanced by Nature. But, for all that, we must not suppose that every natural substance must be useful to the alchemist. We must remember that Alchemy has a threefold aim: First, to quicken and perfect the metal, and so to digest its spirit that none of it is lost; secondly, so to digest and heat the substance in a small phial that (without the addition of anything else) the body and spirit are changed into one. The mingling of the elements is performed, not by the artist, but by thee. Thirdly, it (alchemy) proves that the process of preparing the Stone does not include any separation of the four elements (of the quicksilver and the Sun, which is called red and glorious gold). To believe that such a separation must take place is a great mistake, and contradicts the fundamental principles of philosophy.

Again, it is an undoubted fact, that every elementary substance is fed by the elements themselves. If, then, that which now forms one object is dissolved, the object as such is destroyed, the bond which held the elements together being violently broken, and each returning to that from which it was first taken. A father that begets a son must not be destroyed for that purpose; it suffices that the generating spirit shall go forth with the seed, and be conceived by the female seed, and cherished with its warmth. Such a generating spirit has power to beget an infant of the same species, as Avicenna says. Now, it is the same with pure gold, which is the true master of the Philosophical Stone. For the father is the active principle, and must not be destroyed, or resolved into its elements, but it is sufficient for the paternal Sun (gold) to breathe its virtue and strength through the mother into the son. When the mother (who is of the earth) brings forth, the son is seen to have the father's substance.

Thus, I have learnt from thee, O Nature, that Alchemy is a true science, and that the deep red gold, which is called Sun, is the true father of the Stone or Elixir, from which this great and precious treasure proceeds; which heats, digests, and cunningly tinges (without the least diminution or corruption) the other principle of that gold, and thus brings forth so glorious a son. It is worse than useless, therefore, to meddle with the composition, or to separate the elements, which Nature has so skillfully combined in the quicksilver, and in the perfect body of the gold. All we have to do is to imitate Nature, and use the instruments with which she combines the elements, and which she uses in moulding minerals, and in giving its form to the quicksilver. If we act otherwise, we destroy thy works, and sever the golden chain which thou hast forged. Nevertheless, we must, as Aristotle says, transmute the elements that we may obtain the object of our search.

Thus thou hast wisely led me into thy way, and hast shewn me the utter folly of my own doings. Unto thee I render the most heartfelt thanks for that thou hast delivered me from my own ignorance, and from the disgrace and ruin to which all my endless alembics quicksivers, aquae fortes, dissolutions, excrements of horses, and coal fires, must at length have brought me.

In future, I will read thy book more diligently, and obey thee more implicitly. For this is the surest and safest way that a man can go, because the Art is entirely in thy hands, although, by reason of its gigantic aim, its progress must necessarily be slow. Therefore, I will lose no more time, and first begin to think about the substance, the active principle of which shall yield me most potent quicksilver. That I will enclose in



a clean, air-tight phial, and under it I will place an alembic; thereupon thou wilt wait upon thine office. From the bottom of my heart I once more render unto thee the debt of unspeakable gratitude, for that thou hast deigned to visit me, and to bestow upon me so precious an inheritance. In token of my gratitude I will now do thy bidding, and let it be my ceaseless aim to attain to this most glorious Tincture of the Elements, feeling assured that with the help of the thrice great and good God, I shall succeed.

# The Root of the World

By Roger BACON

1. The bodies of all natural things being as well perfect as imperfect from the original of time, and compounded of a quaternity of elements or natures, viz., fire, air, earth, water, are conjoined by God Almighty in a perfect unity. In these four elements is hid the secret of the philosophers. The earth and water give corporeity and visibility; the fire and air, the spirit and invisible power, which cannot be seen or touched but in the other two. When these four elements are conjoined, and made to exist in one, they become another thing; whence it is evident, that all things in nature are composed of the said elements, being altered and changed.

2. So, saith Rhasis, simple generation, and natural transformation is the operation of the elements. But it is necessary, that the elements be of one kind, and not divers, to wit, simple: for otherwise neither action nor passion could happen between them. So saith Aristotle, there is no true generation, but of things agreeing in nature. So that things be not made but according to their natures. The elder or oak trees will not bring forth pears; nor can you gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles, things bring not forth, but only their like, or what agrees with the in nature, each tree its own fruit.

3. Our secret therefore is to be drawn only out of those things in which it is. You cannot extract it out of stones or salt, or other heterogeneous bodies: neither salt nor alum enters into our mystery. But as Theophrastus saith, the philosophers disguise with salts and alums, the places of the elements. If you prudently desire to make our elixir, you must extract it from a mineral root. For as Geber saith, you must obtain the perfection of the matter from the seeds thereof. Sulphur and mercury are the mineral roots, and natural principles, upon which nature herself acts and works in the mines and caverns of the earth, which are viscous water, and subtil spirits running through the pores, veins, and bowels of the mountains. Of them is produced a vapour or cloud, which is the substance and body of metals united, ascending, and reverberating upon its own proper earth, (as Geber sheweth) even till by a temperate digestion through the space of a thousand years, the matter is fixed, and converted into a mineral stone, of which metals are made.

4. In the same manner, sol, which is our sulphur, being reduced into mercury by mercury, which is the viscous water made thick, and mixed with its proper earth by a temperate decoction and digestion, ariseth the vapour or cloud, agreeing in nature and substance with that in the bowels of the earth. --- This afterwards is turned into most subtil water, which is called the soul, spirit, and tincture, as we shall hereafter shew. When this water is returned into the earth, out of which it was drawn, and every way spreads through or is mixed with it, as its proper womb, it becomes fixed. Thus the wise man does that by art in a short time, which nature cannot perform in less than the revolution of a thousand years. Yet notwithstanding, it is not we that make the metal, but nature herself that does it. --- Nor do or can we change one thing into another; but it is nature that changes them. We are no more than mere servants in the work.

Therefore Medus in *Turba Philosophorum*, saith, our stone naturally contains in it the whole tincture. It is perfectly made in the mountains and body of the earth; yet of itself, without art, it has no life or power whereby to move the elements.

**5.** Choose then the natural minerals, to which, by the advice of Aristotle, add art; for nature generates metalline bodies of the vapours, clouds, or fumes of sulphur and mercury, to which all philosophers agree. Know therefore the principles upon which art works, to wit, the principles or beginnings of metals; for he that knows not these things shall never attain to the perfection of the work. Geber saith, he who has not in himself the knowledge of the natural principles, is far from attaining the perfection of the art; being ignorant of the mineral root upon which he should work. Geber also farther saith, that our art is only to be understood and learned through the true wisdom and knowledge of natural things; that is, with a wisdom searching the roots and natural principles of the matter. Yet saith he, my son, I shew thee a secret, though thou knowest the principles, yet therein thou cant not follow nature in all things. --- Herein some have erred, in essaying to follow nature in all her properties and differences.

**6.** The second principle of our stone is called mercury, which some philosophers call, as it is simple of itself, a stone. One of them said, this is a stone, and no stone, and that without which, nature never performs any thing; which enters into, or is swallowed up of other bodies, and also swallows them up. This is simply argent vive, which contains the essential power, which explicates the tincture of our elixir or philosophers' stone. Therefore saith Rhasis, such a thing may be made of it which exceedeth the highest perfection of nature. For it is the root of metals, harmonizes with them, and is the medium that explicates and conjoins the tinctures. For it swallows up that which is of its own nature and production; but rejects what is foreign and heterogene: being of an uniform substance in all its parts. Wherefore our stone is called natural, or mineral, vegetable, and animal, for it is generated in the mines, and is the mother or womb of all metals, and by projection converts into metals; it springs or grows like a vegetable, and abounds wit life like an animal, by piercing with its tincture, like spirit and life, every where, and through all particules.

**7.** Morien saith, this stone is no stone that can generate a living creature. Another saith, it is cast out upon the dunghill as a vile thing, and is hidden from the eyes or understandings of ignorant men. Also in *Libro Speculi Alchemiae*, it is said, our stone is a thing rejected, but found in dunghills, i.e., in putrefaction, or the matter being putrefied) containing in itself the four elements, over which it triumphs, and is certainly to be perfected by human industry. Some make mercury of lead, thus: --- R. lead, melt it six or seven times, and quench it in salt armoniac dissolved, of which take three lb.: of sal vitriol, one lb.; of borax, half lb., mix, and digest forty days in igne philosophorum. So have you mercury, not at all differing from the natural. But as that is not fit for our work, as the mineral. If you have any understanding, this caution may sufficiently instruct you.

**8.** This is a great and certain truth, that the clean ought to be separated from the unclean; for nothing can give that which it has not. For the pure substance is of one simple essence, void of all heterogeneity; but that which is impure and unclean, consists of heterogene parts, is not simple, but compounded (to wit of pure and impure) and apt to putrefy and corrupt. Therefore let nothing enter into your

composition, which is alien or foreign to the matter, as all impurity is; for nothing goes to the composition of our stone, that proceedeth not from it neither in part nor in whole. If any strange or foreign thing be mixed with it, it is immediately corrupted, and by that corruption your work becomes frustrated.

**9.** The citrine bodies, as sol, etc., you must purge by calcinations or cementation; and it is then purged or purified if it be fine and florid. The metal being well cleansed, beat it into thin plates or leaves, as if gold leaf, and reserve them for use. The white liquor, as mercury, contains two superfluities, which must necessarily be removed from it, viz., its foetid earthiness, which hinders its fusion; and its humidity, which causes its flying. The earthiness is thus removed. Put it into a marble or wooden mortar, with its equal weight of pure fine and dry salt, and a little vinegar. Grind all with the pestle, till nothing of the matter appears, but the whole salt becomes very black. Wash this whole matter with pure water, till the salt is dissolved; this filthy water decant, and put to the mercury again as much more salt and vinegar, grinding it as before, and washing it with fair water, which work so often repeat, till the water comes clear from it, and that the mercury remains pure, bright and clear, like a Venice looking-glass, and of a celestial colour. Then strain it through a linen cloth three or four times doubled, two or three times, into a glass vessel, till it be dry. The proportion of the parts is as 24 to 1. There are 24 hours in a natural day, to which add one, and it is 25, to wit, the rising of the sun. To understand this, is wisdom, as Geber saith. --- Endeavor through the whole work, to overpower the mercury in commixtion. Rhasis saith, those bodies come nearest to perfection, which contain most argent vive. He farther saith, that the philosophers hid nothing but weight and measure, to wit, the proportions of the ingredients, which is clear, for that none of them all agree with another therein, which causeth great error. Though all matters be well prepared and well mixed, without the proportions or quantities of the things be just, and according to the reason of the work, you will miss the truth, or the end, and lose all your labour; you will not indeed bring any thing to perfection. And this is evident in the examination: when there is a transmutation of the body, or that the body is changed, then let it be put into the cineritum or test, and then it will be consumed, or otherwise remain, according as the proportions are more or less than just; or just as they ought to be. If they be right and just, according to the reason of that, your body will be incorruptible and remain firm, without any loss, through all essays and trial; you can do nothing in this work without the true knowledge of this thing, whose foundation is natural matter, purity of substance, and right reason or proportion.

**10.** Euclid the philosopher, and a man of great understanding, advises to work in nothing but in sol and mercury; which joined together, make the wonderful and admirable philosophers' stone, as Rhasis saith. White and red both proceed from one root; no other bodies coming between them. But yet the gold, wanting mercury, is hindered from working according to his power. Therefore know that no stone, nor pearl, or other foreign thing, but this our stone, belongs to this work. You must therefore labour about the dissolution of the citrine body, to reduce it to its first matter. For as Rhasis saith, we dissolve gold, that it may be reduced into its first nature or matter that is mercury. For being broke and made one, they have in themselves the whole tincture both of the agent and patient. Wherefore saith Rhasis, make a marriage (that is a conjunction) between the red man, and his white wife, and you have the whole secret.

**11.** The same saith Merlin: if you marry the white woman to the red man, they will be conjoined and embrace one another, and become impregnated. By themselves they are dissolved, and by themselves they bring forth what they have conceived, whereby the two are made but one body. And truly our dissolution, is only the reducing of the hard body into a liquid form, and into the nature of argent vive, that the saltness of the sulphur may be diminished. Without our brass then be broken, ground, and gently and prudently managed, till it will be reduced from its hard and dense body, into a thin and subtil spirit, you labour in vain.

**12.** And therefore in the *Speculum Alchemiae*, it is said, the first work is the reducing the body into water, that is, into mercury. And this the philosophers called dissolution, which is the foundation of the whole art. This dissolution makes the body of an evident liquidity, and absolute subtilty; and this is done by a gentle grinding, and a soft and continued assation or digestion. Wherefore saith Rhasis, the work of making our stone is, that the matter be put into its proper vessel, and continually decocted and digested, until such time as it wholly ascends, or sublimes to the top thereof. This is declared in *Speculum Philosophorum*. The philosophers' stone is converted from a vile thing, into a precious substance; for the semen solare is cast into the matrix of mercury, by copulation or conjunction, whereby in process of time they be made one. Also, that when it is compounded with the like, and mercurized, then it shall be the springing bud. For the soul, the spirit, and the tincture may then be drawn out of them by the help of a gentle fire.

**13.** Therefore saith Aristotle, the true matters or principles are not possible to be transformed or changed by the most learned in alchemie, except they be reduced into their first matter. And Geber saith, all ought to be made of mercury only; for when sol is reduced to its first original or matter, by mercury, then nature embraceth nature. And then it will be easy to draw out the subtil and spiritual substance thereof; of which Alkindus saith, take the things from their mines, and exact or subtilize them, and reduce them to their roots, or first matter, which is lumen luminum. And therefore, except you cast out the redness with the whiteness, you will never come to the exalted glory of the redness. For Rhasis saith, he that knows how to convert sol into luna, knows how to convert luna into sol. Therefore saith Pandophilus, in *Turba Philosophorum*, he that prudently draws the virtue or power from sol, and his shadow, shall obtain a great secret. Again it is said, without sol, and his shadow, no tinging virtue or power is generated. And whosoever it is that shall endeavor to make a tinging or colouring tincture, without these things, and by any other means, he errs, and goes astray from truth, to his own hurt, loss and detriment.

**14.** The vessel for our stone is but one, in which the whole magistry or elixir is performed and perfected; this is a cucurbit, hose bottom is round like an egg, or an urinal, smooth within, that it may ascend and descend the more easily, covered with a limbeck round and smooth every where, and not very high, and whose bottom is round also like an egg. Its largeness ought to be such, that the medicine or matter may not fill above a fourth part of it, made of strong durable glass, clear and transparent, that you may see through it, all the colours appertaining to, and appearing in the work; in which the spirit moving continually, cannot pass or fly away. Let it also be so closed, that as nothing can go out of it, so nothing can enter into it; as Lucas saith, lute the vessel strongly with lutum sapientiae, that nothing may get in or go out of it. For

the flowers, or matter subliming, should breathe out, or any strange air or matter enter in, your work will be spoiled and lost.

**15.** And though the philosophers oftentimes say, that the matter is to be put into the vessel, and closed up fast, yet it is sufficient for the operator, once to put the said matter in, once to close it up, and so to keep it even to the very perfection and finishing of the work. If these things be often repeated, the work will be spoiled. Therefore saith Rhasis, keep your vessel continually close, encompassed with dew, which demonstrates what kind of heat you are to use, and so well luted that none of the flowers, or that which sublimes, may get out, or vanish in vapour or fume. And in *Speculum Alchimiae*, it is said, let the philosophers' stone remain shut within the vessel strongly, until such time that it has drunk up the humidity; and let it be nourished with a continual heat till it becomes white.

**16.** Also another philosopher, in his *Breveloquium* saith, as there are three things in a natural egg, viz., the shell, the white, and the yolk, so likewise there are three things corresponding to the philosophers' stone, the glass vessel, the white liquor, and the citrine body. And as of the yolk and white, with a little heat, a bird is made, (the shell being whole, until the coming forth or hatching of the chicken), so it is in the work of the philosophers' stone. Of the citrine body, and white liquor, with a temperate or gentle heat is made the avis hermetis, or philosophers' bird.

**17.** The vessel being well and perfectly closed, and never so much as once opened till the perfection or end of the work; so that you see the vessel is to be kept close, that the spirit may not get out and vanish. Therefore saith Rhasis, keep thy vessel and its junctures close and firm, for the conservation of the spirit. And another saith, close they vessel well, and as you are not to cease from the work, or let it cool, so neither are you to make too much haste, neither by too great a heat, nor too soon opening of it. You must take special care that the humidity, which is the spirit, gets not out of the vessel; for then you will have nothing but a dead body remaining, and the work will come to nothing. Socrates saith, grind it with most sharp vinegar, till it grows thick, and be careful that the vinegar be not turned into fume, and perish.

**18.** The philosophers have described in their books a twofold fire, a moist and a dry. The moist fire they called the warm horse belly; in the which, so long as the humidity remains, the heat is retained; but the humidity being consumed, the heat vanishes and ceases, which heat being small, seldom lasts above five or six days; but it may be conserved and renewed, by casting upon it many times urine mixed with salt. Of this fire speaks Philares the philosopher: the property of the fire of the horse belly, is, not to destroy with its dryness the oil, but augments it with its humidity; whereas other fire would be apt to consume it.

**19.** Senior the philosopher saith, dig a sepulcher and bury the woman with her man, or husband, in horse-dung, or balneo of the same heat, until such time as they be intimately conjoined or united. Altudonius the philosopher saith likewise, you must hide your medicine in horse-dung, which is the fire of the philosophers; for this dung is hot, moist, and dark, having a humidity in itself, and an excellent light, or whiteness. Here is no other fire comparable to it in the world, excepting only the natural heat of a man, or woman's body. This is a secret. The vapour of the sea not burned, the blood of man, and the blood of the grape is our red fire.

**20.** The dry fire is the fire of the bodies themselves; and the inflammability of every thing able to be burned. Now the government of these fires is thus: the medicine of the white ought to be put into the moist fire, until the complement of the whiteness shall appear in the vessel. For a gentle fire is the conservation of the humidity. Therefore saith Pandolphus, you are to understand that the body is to be dissolved with the spirit; --- with which they are mixed by an easy and gentle decoction, so that the body may be spiritualized by it. Ascanius also saith, a gentle fire gives health, but too much or great a heat will not conserve or unite the elements, but on the contrary divide them, waste the humidity, and destroy the whole work.

**21.** Therefore saith Rhasis, be very diligent and careful in the sublimation and liquefaction of the matter, that you increase not your fire too much, whereby the water may ascend to the highest part of the vessel. For then wanting a place of refrigeration, it will stick fast there, whereby the sulphur of the elements will not be perfected. For indeed in this work, it is necessary that they be many times elevated, or sublimed, and depressed again. And the gentle or temperate fire is that only which completes the mixture, makes thick, and perfects the work. Therefore saith Botolphus, that gentle fire, which is the white fire of the philosophers, is the greatest and most natural principle matter of the operation of the elements. Rhasis also saith, burn our brass with a gentle fire, such as that of a hen for the hatching of eggs, until the body be broken, and the tincture extracted. For with an easy decoction, the water is congealed, and the humidity which corrupteth, drawn out; --- and in drying, the burning is avoided. The happy prosecution of the whole work, consists in the exact temperament of the fire; therefore beware of too much heat, lest you come to solution before the time, viz., before the matter is ripe; for that will bring you to despair of attaining the end of your hopes. --- Wherefore saith he, beware of too much fire for if it be kindled before the time, the matter will be red, before it comes to ripeness and perfection, whereby it becomes like an abortion, or the unripe fruit of the womb; whereas it ought to be first white, then red, like as the fruits of a tree, a cherry is first white, then red, when it comes to its perfection.

**22.** And he that might indigitate a certain time, of decoction, he saith, that the dissolution of the body, and coagulation or congelation of the spirit, ought to be done, by an easy decoction in a gentle fire, and a moist putrefaction, for the space of one hundred and forty days. To which Orsolan assents saying, in the beginning of the mixture, you ought to mix the elements, being sincere and made pure, clean and rectified with a gentle fire, by a slow and natural digestion, and to beware of too much fire, till you know they are conjoined. Bonelius also saith, that by a temperate and gentle heat continued, you must make the pure and perfect body.

**23.** You ought to put on courage, resolution, and constancy, in attempting this great work, lest you err, and be deceived, sometimes following or doing one thing, and then another. For the knowledge of this art consisteth not in the multiplicity, or great number of things, but in unity; our stone is but one, the matter is one, and the vessel is one. The government is one, and the disposition is one. The whole art and work thereof is one, and begins in one manner, and in one manner it is finished.

**24.** Notwithstanding the philosophers have subtly delivered themselves, and clouded their instructions with enigmatical and typical phrases and words, to the end that their art might not only be hidden and so continued, but also be had in the greater

eneration. Thus they advise to decoct, to commix, and to conjoin, to sublime, to bake, to grind, and to congeal; to make equal, to putrefy, to make white, and to make red; of all which things, the order, management, and way of working is all one, which is only to decoct. And therefore to grind is to decoct, of which you are not to be weary, saith Rhasis: digest continually, but not in haste, that is, not wit too great a fire; cease not, or make no intermission in your work, follow not the artifice of sophisters, but pursue your operation, to the complement and perfection thereof.

**25.** Also in the *Rosary* it is advised, to be cautious and watchful, lest your work prove dead or imperfect, and to continue it with a long decoction. Close up well they vessel, and pursue to the end. For there is no generation of things, but by putrefaction, by keeping out the air, and a continual internal motion, with an equal and gentle heat. Remember when you are in your work, all the signs and appearances which arise in every decoction, for they are necessary which arise in every decoction, for they are necessary to be known and understood in order to the perfecting the matter. You must be sure to be incessant and continual in your operation, with a gentle fire, to the appearing of the perfect whiteness, which cannot be if you open the vessel, and let out the spirit. From whence it is evident, that if you manage you matter ill, or your fire be too great, it ought to be extinguished. Therefore saith Rhasis, pursue your business incessantly, beware of instability of mind, and too great expectations, by a too hasty and precipitate pursuit, lest you lose your end. But as another philosopher saith, digest, and digest again, and be not weary; the most exquisite and industrious artist can never attain to perfection by too much haste, but only by a long and continual decoction and digestion, for so nature works, and art must in some measure imitate nature.

**26.** This then is the thing, that the vessel with the medicine be put into a moist fire; to wit, that the middle or one half of the vessel be in a moist fire, or balneo, of equal heat with horse-dung, and the other half out of the fire, that you may daily look into it. And in the space of forty days, the superficies or upper part of the medicine will appear black as melted pitch; and this is the sign, that the citrine body is truly converted into mercury. Therefore saith Bonellus, when you see the blackness of the water to appear, be assured that the body is made liquid. The same thing saith Rhasis; the disposition or operation of out stone is one, which is, that it be put into its vessel and carefully decocted and digested, till such time as the whole body be dissolved and ascended. And in another place he saith, continue it upon a temperate or gentle balneo, so long till it be perfectly dissolved into water, and made impalpable, and that the whole tincture be extracted into the blackness, which is the sign of its dissolution. Lucas also assureth us, that when we see the blackness of the water in all things to appear, that then the body is dissolved, or made liquid. This blackness the philosophers call the first conjunction; --- for then the male and female are joined together, and it is the sign of perfect mixtion.

**27.** Yet notwithstanding, the whole tincture is not drawn out together; but it goes out every day, by little and little, until by a great length of time, it is perfectly extracted, and made complete. And that part of the body which is dissolved, ever ascends or rises to the top, above all the other undissolved matter which remains yet at bottom. Therefore saith Avicen, that which is spiritual in the vessel ascends up to the top of the mater, and that which is yet gross and thick, remains in the bottom of the vessel. This blackness is called among the philosophers by many names, to wit, the fires, the



soul, a cloud, the raven's head, a coal, our oil, aqua vitae, the tincture of redness, the shadow of the sun, black brass, water of sulphur, and by many other names.

**28.** And this blackness is that which conjoineth the body with the spirit. Then saith Rhasis, the government of the fire being observed for the space of forty days, both (to wit the white liquor, and the citrine body) are made a permanent or fixed water, covered over with blackness; which blackness, if rightly ordered, cometh to its perfection in forty days space. Of which another philosopher saith, so long as the obscure blackness appeareth, the woman hath the dominion; and this is the first conception or strength of our stone; for if it be not first black, it shall never be either white or red. Avicen saith, that heat causeth blackness first, in a moist body; then the humidity being consumed, it putteth off or loseth its blackness; and as the heat increaseth, or is continued, so it grows white. Lastly, by a more inward heat, it is calcined into ashes, as the philosophers teach.

**29.** In the first decoction, which is called putrefaction, our stone is made all black, to wit, a black earth, by the drawing out of its humidity; and in that blackness, the whiteness is hidden. And when the humidity is reverted upon the blackness again, and by a continued soft and gentle digestion is made fixed with its earth, then it becomes white. In this whiteness, the redness is hidden; and when it is decocted and digested by augmentation and continuance of the fire, that earth is changed into redness, as we shall hereafter teach.

**30.** Now let us return to the black matter in its vessel, continually closed. Let this vessel I say, stand continually in the moist fire, till such time as the white colour appears, like to a white moist salt. The colour is called by the philosophers arsenic, and sal armoniac; and some others call it, the thing without which no profit is to be had in the work. But inward whiteness appearing in the work, then is there a perfect conjunction, and copulation, of the bodies in this stone, which is indissoluble. And then is fulfilled that saying of Hermes, the thing which is above, is as that which is beneath; and that which is beneath, is as that which is above, to perform the mystery of this matter. Phares saith, seeing the whiteness appearing above in the vessel, you may be certain, that in the whiteness, the redness lies hid; but before it becomes white, you will find many colours to appear. Therefore saith Diomedes, decoct the male and the (female or) vapour together, until such time as they shall become one dry body; for except they be dry, the divers or various colours will not appear. --- For it will ever be black, whilst that humidity or moisture has the dominion; but if that be once wasted, then it emits divers colours, after many and several ways.

**31.** And many times it shall be changed from colour to colour, till such times as it comes to the fixed whiteness. Synon saith, all the colours of the world will appear in it when the black humidity is dried up. But value none of these colours, for they be not the true tincture: yea, many times it becomes citrine and reddish, and many times it is dried, and becomes liquid again, before the whiteness will appear. Now all this while the spirit is not perfectly joined with the body, nor will it be joined or fixed but in the white colour. Astanus saith, between the white and the red appear all colours, even to the utmost imagination. --- For the varieties of which the philosophers have given various names, and almost innumerable; some for obscuring it, some for envy's sake. The cause of the appearance of such variety of colours in the operation of your medicine, is from the extension of the blackness; for as much as blackness and

whiteness be the extreme colours, all the other colours are but means between them. Therefore as often as any degree or portion of blackness descends, so often another and another colour appears, until it comes to whiteness.

**32.** Now concerning the ascending and descending of the medicine, Hermes saith, it ascends from the earth into heaven, and again descends from heaven to the earth, whereby it may receive both the superior strength, and the inferior. Moreover this you are to observe, that if between the blackness and the whiteness, there should appear the red or citrine colour, you are not to look upon it or esteem it, for it is not fixed, but will vanish away. There cannot indeed be any perfect and fixed redness, without it be first white. Wherefore saith Rhasis, no man can come from the first to the third, but by the second. From whence it is evident, that whiteness must always be first looked for, after the blackness, and before the redness; for as much as it is the complement of the whole work. Then after this whiteness appears, it shall not be changed into any true or stable colour, but into the red, Thus we have taught you to make the white; it now remains that we elucidate the red.

**33.** The matters then of the white and red, among themselves, differ not in respect to their essence; but for the red elixir needs more subtilization, and longer digestion, and a hotter fire in the course of the operation, than the white, because the end of the white work, is the beginning of the red work; and that which is complete in the one, is to be begun in the others. --- Therefore without you make the white elixir first, make the matter become first white, you can never come to the red elixir, that which is indeed the true red; which how it is to be performed, we shall briefly shew. The medicine for the red ought to be put into our moist fire, until the white colour aforesaid appear, afterwards take out the vessel from the fire, and put it into another pot with sifted ashes made most with water, to about half full, in which let it stand up in the middle thereof, making under the earthen pot a temperate dry fire, and that continually. But the heat of this dry fire ought to be double at the least, to what it was before, or than the heat of the moist fire, by the help of this heat, the white medicine receiveth the admirable tincture of the redness.

**34.** You cannot err if you continue the dry fire. Therefore Rhasis saith, with a dry fire, and a dry calcinations, decoct the dry matter, till such time as it becomes in colour, like to vermilion or cinnabar. To the which you shall not afterwards put to complete it, either water, or oil, or vinegar; the more red it is, the more worth it is, and the more decocted it is, the more red it is. Therefore that which is more decocted, is the more precious and valuable.

**35.** Therefore you must burn it without fear in a dry fire, until such time as it is clothed with a most glorious red, or a pure vermilion colour. For which cause Epitus the philosopher saith, decoct the white in a red hot furnace, until such time as it be clothed with a purple glory. Do not cease, though the redness be somewhat long, before it appears. For as I have said, the fire being augmented, the first colour of whiteness will change into red. Also when the citrine shall first appear, among those colours, yet that colour is not fixed. But not long after it, the red colour shall begin to appear, which ascending to the height, your work will indeed be complete. As Hermes saith in *Turba*, between the whiteness and the redness, one colour only appears, to wit, citrine, but it changes from the less to the more. Maria also saith, when you have

the true white, then follows the false and citrine colour; and at last the perfect redness itself. This is the glory and the beauty of the whole world.

**36.** Our medicine, or elixir, is multiplied after a two-fold manner, viz., 1. By dissolution, 2. By fermentation. By dissolution, it is augmented tow manner of ways, first, by a greater or more intense heat; secondly, by dew, or the heat of the balneum roris. The dissolution of heat is, that you take the medicine put into a glazen vessel, or boil or decoct it in our moist fire for seven days or more, until the medicine be dissolved into water, which will be without much trouble. The dissolution by dew, or balneum roris, is, that you take the glass vessel with the medicine in it, and hang it in a brazen or copper pot, with a narrow mouth, in which there must be water boiling, the mouth of the vessel being in the mean season shut, that the ascending vapours of the boiling water may dissolve the medicine. But note, that the boiling water ought not to touch the glass vessel, which contains the medicine, by three or four inches, and this dissolution possibly may be done in two or three days. A fter the medicine is dissolved, take it from the fire, and let it cool, to be fixed, to be congealed, and to be made hard or dried; and so let it be dissolved many times; for so much the oftener it is dissolved, so much the more strong, and the more perfect it shall be. Therefore Bonellus saith, when the aes, brass, or laten is burned, and this burning many times reiterated, it is made better than it was; and this solution is the subtilization of the medicine, and the sublimation of the virtues thereof.

**37.** So that the oftener it is sublimed and made subtil, so much the more virtue it shall receive; and te more penetrative shall the tincture be made, and more plentiful in quantity; and the more perfect it is, the more it shall transmute. In the fourth distillation then, it shall receive such a virtue and tincture, that one part shall be able to transmute a thousand parts of the cleansed metal into fine gold or silver, better than that which is generated in the mines. Therefore saith Rhasis, the goodness or excellency of the dissolution and fixation of the perfect medicine. For so much the oftener the work is reiterated, so much the more fruitful it will be, and so much the more augmented. So much the oftener you sublime it, so much the more you increase it; for every time it is augmented in virtue, and power, and tincture, one more to be cast upon a thousand; at a second time upon ten thousand; at a third time upon one hundred thousand; at the fourth time upon a million. And thus you may increase its power by the number of reiterations, till it is almost infinite. Therefore saith Mercedes the philosopher, know for certain, that the oftener the matter or stone is dissolved and congealed, the more absolutely and perfectly the spirit and soul are conjoined and retained. And for this cause, every time the tincture is multiplied, after a most admirable and inconceivable manner.

**38.** Our medicine is multiplied by fermentation; and the ferment for the white is pure luna, the ferment for the red is pure fine sol. Now cast one part of the medicine upon twenty parts of the ferment, and all shall become medicine, elixir, or tincture; put it on the fire in a glass vessel, and seal it so that no air can go in or out, dissolve and subtilize it, as oft as you please, even as you did for making of the first medicine. And one part of this second medicine, shall have as much virtue and power, as ten parts of the former. Therefore saith Rhasis, now have we accomplished our work by that which is hot and moist, and it is become equally temperate: and whatsoever is added or put to it shall become of the same temperament and virtue with it. You must then conjoin it, that it may generate its like; yet you must not join it with any other that it

might convert to the same, but only with that very same kind, of whose substance it was in the beginning

**39.** For in *Speculo Terrae Spiritualis*, it is written, that the elixir is figured in the body, from whence it was taken in the beginning, when it was to be dissolved. That is to say, to dispose, marry or conjoin that earth revived, and in its soul purified by commixtion of its first body from whence it took beginning. Also in *Libro Gemmae Salutaris*, it is said, that the white work needs a white ferment; which when it is made white, is white ferment also; and when it is made red, is the ferment of redness. And so the white earth is ferment of ferment: for when it is conjoined with luna; or shall be made a medicine, it is to be cast upon mercury, and every imperfect metalline body, to be converted into luna. And to the red, ought sol to be joined; and it will become a medicine or tincture, to project upon mercury, or upon luna.

**40.** Rhasis, also saith, you must now mix it with argent vive, white and red, after their kind; and be so chained that it flies not away. Wherefore we command argent vive to be mixed with argent vive, until one clear water be made of two argent vives compounded together, But you must not make the mixture of them, till each of them apart or separately be dissolved into water: and in the conjunction of them, put a little of the matter upon much of the body, viz., first upon four; and it shall become in a short time a fine powder, whose tincture shall be white or red, This powder is the true and perfect elixir or tincture, and the elixir or tincture, it is truly a simple powder.

**41.** Egidius also saith, to solution put solution, and in dissolution put dessication, viz., make it dry, putting all together to the fire. Keep entire the fume or vapour, and take heed that nothing thereof fly out from it. Tarry by the vessel and behold the wonders, how it changes from colour to colour, in less space than an hour's time, till such time as it comes to the signs of whiteness or redness. For it melts quickly in the fire, and congeals in the air. When the fume or vapour feels the force of the fire, the fire will penetrate into the body, and the spirit will become fixed, and the matter made dry, becoming a body fixed and clear or pure whether white or red. This powder is the compleat and perfect elixir or tincture; now you may separate or take it from the fire, and let it cool.

**42.** And first, part of it projected upon 1000 parts of any metalline body, transmutes it into fine gold or silver, according as your elixir or tincture is for the red or the white. From what has been said, it is manifest and evident, that if you do not congeal argent vive, making it to bear and endure the fire, and then conjoining it with pure silver, you shall never attain to the whiteness. And if you make not argent vive red, and so as it may endure the greatest fire, and then conjoin it with pure fine gold, you shall never attain to the redness. And by dissolution, viz., by fermentation, your medicine, elixir, or tincture, may be multiplied infinitely.

**43.** Now you must understand that the elixir or tincture, gives fusion like wax: for which cause saith Rhasis, our medicine ought of necessity be of a subtle substance, and most pure, cleaving to mercury, of its nature, and of most easy and thin liquefaction, fusion, or melting, after the manner of water. Also in the book, called *Omne Datum Optimum*, it is said, when the elixir is well prepared, it ought to be made liquid, that it may melt as wax upon a plate red fire-hot, or upon coals. Now observe what you do in the white, the same you must do in the red, for the work is all one. The

same operation that is in the one, is in the other, as well in multiplication as projection.

**44.** Geber, the Arabian prince, alchemist, and philosopher, in lib. 5 cap. 21 saith, that there are three orders of medicines. The first order, is of such medicines, which being cast upon imperfect bodies, takes not away their corruption or imperfection, but only gives tincture, which in examination, flies away and vanishes. The second order, is of such medicines, which being cast upon imperfect bodies, tinge them (in examination) with a true tincture, but take not away wholly their corruption. The third order, is of such medicines, which being cast upon imperfect bodies, not only perfectly tinge them, but also take away all their corruption and impurities, making them incorrupt and perfect: of the first two kinds, or orders of medicines, we have nothing to say here; we now come to speak of the third. Let therefore this your perfect medicine, or elixir, be cast upon a thousand or more parts, according to the number of times it has been dissolved, sublimed, and made subtile: if you put on too little, you must mend it by adding more; otherwise the virtue thereof will not accomplish a perfect transmutation.

**45.** The philosophers therefore made three proportions, divers manners of ways, but the best proportion is this: let one part be cast upon an hundred parts of mercury, cleansed from all its impurities; and it will all become medicine, or elixir; and this is the second medicine: which projected upon a thousand parts, converts it all into good sol, or luna. Cast one part of this second medicine upon an hundred of mercury prepared, and it will all become medicine, and this is the third medicine, or elixir of the third degree, which will project upon ten thousand parts of another body, and transmute it wholly into fine sol or luna. Again, every part of this third medicine being cast upon an hundred parts of prepared mercury, it will all become medicine of the fourth degree, and it will transmute ten hundred thousand times its own quantity of another metal into fine sol or luna, according as your fermentation was made. Now these second, third, and fourth medicines may be so often dissolved, sublimed, and subtilized, till they receive far greater virtues and powers, and may after the same manner be multiplied infinitely.

**46.** According to Rhasis, the proportion is thus to be computed. First, multiply ten by ten, and its product is an hundred: again 100 by 10, and the product is 1000; and a 1000 by 10, and the product will be 10,000. And this 10,000 being multiplied by 10, produces an 100,000; and thus by consequence you may augment it, till it comes to a number almost infinite. That is to say, put 1 upon 10, and that 10 upon an 100, and that 100 upon a 1000, and it shall multiply to, or produce an 100,000; and so forward, in the same proportion.

**47.** Now the projection is after this manner to be done: put the body, or metal upon the fire in a crucible, and cast thereon the elixir as aforesaid, moving, or stirring it well; and when it is melted, become liquid, and mixed with the body, or with the spirit, remove it from the fire, and you shall have fine gold or silver, according to what your elixir was prepared from. But here is to be noted, that by how much the more the metalline body is the easier to be melted, by so the ore shall the medicine have power to enter into, and transmute it. Therefore by so much as mercury is more liquid than any other body, by so much the more, the medicine has power in being cast upon it, to wit, mercury, to transmute it into fine sol or luna. And a greater quantity of it shall

your medicine transmute, give tincture to, and make perfect, than of any other mineral body. The like is to be understood, to be performed in the same manner upon other mineral bodies, according as they are easy or hard to be fused or melted.

And because prolixity is not pleasant, but induceth error, and clouds the judgment, we shall now use much brevity, and shew the complement of the whole work, the premises being well conceived. It appears, that our work is hidden in the body of the magnesias, that is, in the body of Sulphur; which is sulphur of sulphur; and in the body of mercury, which is mercury of mercury.

Therefore our stone is from one thing only, as is aforesaid, and it is performed by one act or work, with decoction: and by one digestion, or operation, which is the changing of it first to black, then to white, thirdly, to red: and by one projection, by which the whole act and work is finished. From henceforth, let all pseudo-chemist, and their followers, cease from their vain distillations, sublimations, conjunctions, calcinations, dissolutions, contritions, and other like vanities. Let them cease from their deceiving, prating, and pretending to any other gold, than our gold; or an other sulphur than our sulphur, or any other argent vive than ours; or any other ablation or washing than what we have taught.

Which washing is made by means of the black colour, and is the cause of the white, and not a washing made with hands. Let them not say, that there is any other dissolution than ours, or other congelation than that which is performed with an easy fire: or any other egg than that which we have spoken of by similitude, and so called an egg. Or that there is any production of the philosophic matter from vegetables, or from mankind, or from brute beasts, or hares' blood, and such like, which may serve to this work, lest thereby you be deceived, and err, and fall short of the end. But hear now what Rhasis saith, look not upon the multitude, or diversity of names, which are dark and obscure, they are chiefly given to the diversity of colours appearing in the work.

Therefore whatever the natures be, and how many soever, yet conceive the matter or thing to be but one, and the work to be but one only. Lucas saith, consider not the multitude of the simples composing it, which the philosophers have dictated, for the verity is but one only, in the which is the spirit and life sought after. And with this it is that we tinge and colour every body, bringing them from their beginnings and smallness, to their compleat growth, and full perfection.

Permenides the philosopher saith, it is a stone, and yet no stone; it is sulphur, and no sulphur, it is gold, and yet no gold: it is also a hen's egg, a toad, man's blood, man's hair, etc., by which names it is called, only to hide the mystery. Then he adds, O thou most happy, let not these words, nor other the like trouble thee, for by them understand our sulphur and our mercury. If you that are searchers into understand these words and things which we have written, you are happy, yea, thrice happy: if you understood not what we have said, God himself has hidden the thing from you. Therefore blame not the philosophers but yourselves; for if a just and faithful mind possessed your souls, God would doubtless reveal the verity to you. And know, it is imposible for you to attain to this knowledge, unless you become sanctified in mind, and purified in soul, so as to be united to God, and to become one spirit with him.

When you shall appear thus before the Lord, he shall open to you the gates of his treasure, the like of which is not to be found in all the earth. Behold, I shew unto you the fear of the Lord, and the love of Him with unfeigned obedience: nothing shall be wanting to them that fear God, who are cloathed with the excellency of his holiness, to whom be rendered all praise, honour and glory to the ages of ages. Amen.

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## The Secret Book of Artephius

This has been transcribed from 'In Pursuit of Gold' by 'Lapidus'. This treatise describes the entire process of preparing the philosopher's stone. There are three separate operations described here: the preparation of the 'secret fire' (the catalyst or solvent which is used throughout the whole work, without which nothing can be achieved, but which is seldom if ever mentioned in any alchemical treatise), the preparation of 'mercury' (a metallic vapor made from antimony and iron, said to resemble vulgar mercury (Hg) in appearance, necessary in the preparation of the stone) and the preparation of the stone itself.

These operations are not presented in sequence. The reader will note that the language is allusive and recondite, that several names are used to refer to the same thing and that one name is used to refer to several things. This is, however, an exceptionally clear alchemical text.

Artephius is said to have written this in the 12th century. Lapidus doesn't say who translated it (presumably from the Latin).

Comments in [square brackets] are by the transcriber.

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### The Secret Book Artephius

(1) Antimony is a mineral participating of saturnine parts, and has in all respects the nature thereof. This saturnine antimony agrees with sol, and contains in itself argent vive, in which no metal is swallowed up, except gold, and gold is truly swallowed up by this antimonial argent vive. Without this argent vive no metal whatsoever can be whitened; it whitens laton, i.e. gold; reduceth a perfect body into its prima materia, or first matter, viz. into sulphur and argent vive, of a white color, and outshining a looking glass. It dissolves, I say the perfect body, which is so in its own nature; for this water is friendly and agreeable with the metals, whitening sol, because it contains in itself white or pure argent vive.

(2) And from both these you may draw a great arcanum, viz. a water of saturnine antimony, mercurial and white; to the end that it may whiten sol, not burning, but dissolving, and afterwards congealing to the consistence or likeness of white cream. Therefore, saith the philosopher, this water makes the body to be volatile; because after it has dissolved in it, and in frigidated, it ascends above and swims upon the surface of the water. Take, saith he, crude leaf gold, or calcined with mercury, and put it into our vinegre, made of saturnine antimony, mercurial, and sal ammoniac, in a broad glass vessel, and four inches high or more; put it into a gentle heat, and in a short time you will see elevated a liquor, as it were oil swimming atop, much like a scum. Gather this with a spoon or feather dipping it in; and in doing so often times a day until nothing more arises; evaporate the water with a gentle heat, i.e., the superfluous humidity of the vinegre, and there will remain the quintessence, potestates or powers of gold in the form of a white oil incombustible. In this oil the philosophers have placed their greatest secrets; it is exceeding sweet, and of great virtue for easing the pains of wounds.



(3) The whole, then, of this antimonial secret is, that we know how by it to extract or draw forth argent vive, out of the body of Magnesia, not burning, and this is antimony, and a mercurial sublimate. That is, you must extract a living and incombustible water, and then congeal, or coagulate it with the perfect body of sol, i.e. fine gold, without alloy; which is done by dissolving it into a nature [sic? mature?] white substance of the consistency of cream, and made thoroughly white. But first this sol by putrefaction and resolution in this water, loseth all its light and brightness, and will grow dark and black; afterwards it will ascend above the water, and by little and little will swim upon it, in a substance of a white color. And this is the whitening of red laton to sublimate it philosophically, and to reduce it into its first matter; viz. into a white incombustible sulphur, and into a fixed argent vive. Thus the perfect body of sol, resumeth life in this water; it is revived, inspired, grows, and is multiplied in its kind, as all other things are. For in this water, it so happens, that the body compounded of two bodies, viz. sol and luna, is puffed up, swells, putrefies, is raised up, and does increase by the receiving from the vegetable and animated nature and substance.

(4) Our water also, or vinegar aforesaid, is the vinegar of the mountains, i.e. of sol and luna; and therefore it is mixed with gold and silver, and sticks close to them perpetually; and the body receiveth from this water a white tincture, and shines with inestimable brightness. Who so knows how to convert, or change the body into a medicinal white gold, may easily by the same white gold change all imperfect metals into the best or finest silver. And this white gold is called by the philosophers "luna alba philosophorum, argentum vivum album fixum, aurum alchymiae, and fumes albus" [white philosophical silver, white fixed mercury, alchemical gold and white (something)]: and therefore without this our antimonial vinegar, the aurum album of the philosophers cannot be made. And because in our vinegar there is a double substance of argentum vivum, the one from antimony, and the other from mercury sublimated, it does give a double weight and substance of fixed argent vive, and also augments therein the native color, weight, substance and tincture thereof.

(5) Our dissolving water therefore carries with it a great tincture, and a great melting or dissolving; because that when it feels the vulgar fire, if there be in it the pure and fine bodies of sol or luna, it immediately melts them, and converts them into its white substance such as itself is, and gives to the body color, weight, and tincture. In it also is a power of liquefying or melting all things that can be melted or dissolved; it is a water ponderous, viscous, precious, and worthy to be esteemed, resolving all crude bodies into their prima materia, or first matter, viz. earth and a viscous powder; that is into sulphur, and argentum vivum. If therefore you put into this water, leaves, filings, or calx of any metal, and set it in a gentle heat for a time, the whole will be dissolved, and converted into a viscous water, or white oil as aforesaid. Thus it mollifies the body, and prepares for liquefaction; yea, it makes all things fusible, viz. stones and metals, and after gives them spirit and life. And it dissolves all things with an admirable solution, transmuting the perfect body into a fusible medicine, melting, or liquefying, moreover fixing, and augmenting the weight and color.

(6) Work therefore with it, and you shall obtain from it what you desire, for it is the spirit and soul of sol and luna; it is the oil, the dissolving water, the fountain, the Balneum Mariae, the praeternatural fire, the moist fire, the secret, hidden and invisible fire. It is also the most acrid vinegar, concerning which an ancient philosopher saith, I

besought the Lord, and he showed me a pure clear water, which I knew to be the pure vinegar, altering, penetrating, and digesting. I say a penetrating vinegar, and the moving instrument for putrefying, resolving and reducing gold or silver into their prima materia or first matter. And it is the only agent in the universe, which in this art is able to reincrudate metallic bodies with the conservation of their species. It is therefore the only apt and natural medium, by which we ought to resolve the perfect bodies of sol and luna, by a wonderful and solemn dissolution, with the conservation of the species, and without any destruction, unless it be to a new, more noble, and better form or generation, viz. into the perfect philosopher's stone, which is their wonderful secret or arcanum.

(7) Now this water is a certain middle substance, clear as fine silver, which ought to receive the tinctures of sol and luna, so as they may be congealed, and changed into a white and living earth. For this water needs the perfect bodies, that with them after the dissolution, it may be congealed, fixed, and coagulated into a white earth. But if this solution is also their coagulation, for they have one and the same operation, because one is not dissolved, but the other is congealed, nor is there any other water which can dissolve the bodies, but that which abideth with them in the matter and the form. It cannot be permanent unless it be of the nature of other bodies, that they may be made one. When therefore you see the water coagulate itself with the bodies that be dissolved therein; be assured that thy knowledge, way of working, and the work itself are true and philosophic, and that you have done rightly according to art.

(8) Thus you see that nature has to be amended by its own like nature; that is, gold and silver are to be exalted in our water, as our water also with these bodies; which water is called the medium of the soul, without which nothing has to be done in this art. It is a vegetable, mineral and animal fire, which conserves the fixed spirits of sol and luna, but destroys and conquers their bodies; for it destroys, overturns, and changes bodies and metallic forms, making them to be no bodies but a fixed spirit. And it turns them into a humid substance, soft and fluid, which hath ingression and power to enter into other imperfect bodies, and to mix with them in their smallest parts, and to tinge and make them perfect. But this they could not do while they remained in their metallic forms or bodies, which were dry and hard, whereby they could have no entrance into other things, so to tinge and make perfect, what was before imperfect.

(9) It is necessary therefore to convert the bodies of metals into a fluid substance; for that every tincture will tinge a thousand times more in a soft and liquid substance, than when it is in a dry one, as is plainly apparent in saffron. Therefore the transmutation of imperfect metals is impossible to be done by perfect bodies, while they are dry and hard; for which cause sake they must be brought back into their first matter, which is soft and fluid. It appears therefore that the moisture must be reverted that the hidden treasure may be revealed. And this is called the reincrudation of bodies, which is the decocting and softening them, till they lose their hard and dry substance or form; because that which is dry doth not enter into, nor tinge anything except its own body, nor can it be tinged except it be tinged; because, as I said before, a thick dry earthy matter does not penetrate nor tinge, and therefore, because it cannot enter or penetrate, it can make no alteration in the matter to be altered. For this reason it is, that gold coloureth not, until its internal or hidden spirit is drawn forth out of its

bowels by this, our white water, and that it may be made altogether a spiritual substance, a white vapor, a white spirit, and a wonderful soul.

(10) It behoves us therefore by this our water to attenuate, alter and soften the perfect bodies, to wit sol and luna, that so they may be mixed other perfect bodies. From whence, if we had no other benefit by this our antimonial water, than that it rendered bodies soft, more subtile, and fluid, according to its own nature, it would be sufficient. But more than that, it brings back bodies to their original of sulphur and mercury, that of them we may afterwards in a little time, in less than an hour's time do that above ground which nature was a thousand years doing underground, in the mines of the earth, which is a work almost miraculous.

(11) And therefore our ultimate, or highest secret is, by this our water, to make bodies volatile, spiritual, and a tincture, or tinging water, which may have ingress or entrance into bodies; for it makes bodies to be merely spirit, because it reduces hard and dry bodies, and prepares them for fusion, melting and dissolving; that is, it converts them into a permanent or fixed water. And so it makes of bodies a most precious and desirable oil, which is the true tincture, and the permanent fixed white water, by nature hot and moist, or rather temperate, subtile, fusible as wax, which does penetrate, sink, tinge, and make perfect the work. And this our water immediately dissolves bodies (as sol and luna) and makes them into an incombustible oil, which then may be mixed with other imperfect bodies. It also converts other bodies into the nature of a fusible salt which the philosophers call "sal alebrot philosophorum", better and more noble than any other salt, being in its own nature fixed and not subject to vanish in fire. It is an oil indeed by nature hot, subtile, penetrating, sinking through and entering into other bodies; it is called the perfect or great elixir, and the hidden secret of the wise searchers of nature. He therefore that knows this salt of sol and luna, and its generation and perfection, and afterwards how to commix it, and make it homogeneous with other perfect bodies, he in truth knows one of the greatest secrets of nature, and the only way that leads to perfection.

(12) These bodies thus dissolved by our water are called argent vive, which is not without its sulphur, nor sulphur without the fixedness of sol and luna; because sol and luna are the particular means, or medium in the form through which nature passes in the perfecting or completing thereof. And this argent vive is called our esteemed and valuable salt, being animated and pregnant, and our fire, for that is nothing but fire; yet not fire, but sulphur; and not sulphur only, but also quicksilver drawn from sol and luna by our water, and reduced to a stone of great price. That is to say it is a matter or substance of sol and luna, or silver and gold, altered from vileness to nobility. Now you must note that this white sulphur is the father and mother of the metals; it is our mercury, and the mineral of gold; also the soul, and the ferment; yea, the mineral virtue, and the living body; our sulphur, and our quicksilver; that is, sulphur of sulphur, quicksilver of quicksilver, and mercury of mercury.

(13) The property therefore of our water is, that it melts or dissolves gold and silver, and increases their native tincture or color. For it changes their bodies from being corporeal, into a spirituality; and it is in this water which turns the bodies, or corporeal substance into a white vapor, which is a soul which is whiteness itself, subtile, hot and full of fire. This water also called the tinging or blood-color-making stone, being the virtue of the spiritual tincture, without which nothing can be done; and is the subject

of all things that can be melted, and of liquefaction itself, which agrees perfectly and unites closely with sol and luna from which it can never be separated. For it joined [joins?] in affinity to the gold and silver, but more immediately to the gold than to the silver; which you are to take special notice of. It is also called the medium of conjoining the tinctures of sol and luna with the inferior or imperfect metals; for it turns the bodies into the true tincture, to tinge the said imperfect metals, also it is the water that whiteneth, as it is whiteness itself, which quickeneth, as it is a soul; and therefore as the philosopher saith, quickly entereth into its body.

(14) For it is a living water which comes to moisten the earth, that it may spring out, and in its due season bring forth much fruit; for all things springing from the earth, are endued through dew and moisture. The earth therefore springeth not forth without watering and moisture; it is the water proceeding from May dew that cleanseth the body; and like rain it penetrates them, and makes one body of two bodies. This aqua vite or water of life, being rightly ordered and disposed with the body, it whitens it, and converts or changes it into its white color, for this water is a white vapor, and therefore the body is whitened with it. It behoves you therefore to whiten the body, and open its unfoldings, for between these two, that is between the body and the water, there is desire and friendship, like as between male and female, because of the propinquity and likeness of their natures.

(15) Now this our second and living water is called "Azoth", the water washing the laton viz. the body compounded of sol and luna by our first water; it is also called the soul of the dissolved bodies, which souls we have even now tied together, for the use of the wise philosopher. How precious then, and how great a thing is this water; for without it, the work could never be done or perfected; it is also called the "vase naturae", the belly, the womb, the receptacle of the tincture, the earth, the nurse. It is the royal fountain in which the king and queen bathe themselves; and the mother must be put into and sealed up within the belly of her infant; and that is sol himself, who proceeded from her, and whom she brought forth; and therefore they have loved one another as mother and son, and are conjoined together, because they come from one and the same root, and are of the same substance and nature. And because this water is the water of the vegetable life, it causes the dead body to vegetate, increase and spring forth, and to rise from death to life, by being dissolved first and then sublimed. And in doing this the body is converted into a spirit, and the spirit afterwards into a body; and then is made the amity, the peace, the concord, and the union of contraries, to wit, between the body and the spirit, which reciprocally, or mutually change their natures which they receive, and communicate one to another through their most minute parts, so that that which is hot is mixed with that which is cold, the dry with the moist, and the hard with the soft; by which means, there is a mixture made of contrary natures, viz. of cold and hot, and moist with dry, even most admirable unity between enemies.

(16) Our dissolution then of bodies, which is made such in this first water, is nothing else, but a destroying or overcoming of the moist with the dry, for the moist is coagulated with the dry. For the moisture is contained under, terminated with, and coagulated in the dry body, to wit, in that which is earthy. Let therefore the hard and the dry bodies be put into our first water in a vessel, which close well, and let them there abide till they be dissolved, and ascend to the top; then may they be called a new body, the white gold made by art, the white stone, the white sulphur, not inflammable,

the paradisaical stone, viz. the stone transmuting imperfect metals into white silver. Then we have also the body, soul and spirit altogether; of which spirit and soul it is said, that they cannot be extracted from the perfect bodies, but by the help or conjunction of our dissolving water. Because it is certain, that the things fixed cannot be lifted up, or made to ascend, but by the conjunction or help of that which is volatile.

(17) The spirit, therefore, by help of the water and the soul, is drawn forth from the bodies themselves, and the body is thereby made spiritual; for that at the same instant of time, the spirit, with the soul of the bodies, ascends on high to the superior part, which is the perfection of the stone and is called sublimation. This sublimation, is made by things acid, spiritual, volatile, and which are in their own nature sulphureous and viscous, which dissolves bodies and makes them to ascend, and be changed into air and spirit. And in this sublimation, a certain part of our said first water ascends with the bodies, joining itself with them, ascending and subliming into one neutral and complex substance, which contains the nature of the two, viz. the nature of the two bodies and the water. and therefore it is called the corporeal and spiritual compositum, corjufle, cambar, ethelia, zandarith, duenech, the good; but properly it is called the permanent or fixed water only, because it flies not in the fire. But it perpetually adheres to the commixed or compound bodies, that is, the sol and luna, and communicates to them the living tincture, incombustible and most fixed, much more noble and precious than the former which these bodies had. Because from henceforth this tincture runs like oil, running through and penetrating bodies, and giving to them its wonderful fixity; and this tincture is the spirit, and the spirit is the soul, and the soul is the body. For in this operation, the body is made a spirit of a most subtile nature; and again, the spirit is corporified and changed into the nature of the body, with the bodies, whereby our stone consists of a body, a soul, and a spirit.

(18) O God, how through nature, doth thou change a body into a spirit: which could not be done, if the spirit were not incorporated with the bodies, and the bodies made volatile with the spirit, and afterwards permanent and fixed. For this cause sake, they have passed over into one another, and by the influence of wisdom, are converted into one another. O Wisdom: how thou makest the most fixed gold to be volatile and fugitive, yeah, though by nature it is the most fixed of all things in the world. It is necessary therefore, to dissolve and liquefy these bodies by our water, and to make them a permanent or fixed water, a pure, golden water leaving in the bottom the gross, earthy, superfluous and dry matter. And in this subliming, making thin and pure, the fire ought to be gentle; but if in this subliming with soft fire, the bodies be not purified, and the gross and earthy parts thereof (note this well) be not separated from the impurities of the dead, you shall not be able to perfect the work. For thou needest nothing but the thin and subtile part of the dissolved bodies, which our water will give thee, if thou proceedest with a slow or gentle fire, by separating the things heterogene from the things homogene. (19) This compositum then has its mundification or cleaning, by our moist fire, which by dissolving and subliming that which is pure and white, it cast forth its feces or filth like a voluntary vomit, for in such a dissolution and natural sublimation or lifting up, there is a loosening or untying of the elements, and a cleansing and separating of the pure from the impure. So that the pure and white substance ascends upwards and the impure and earthy remains fixed in the bottom of the water and the vessel. This must be taken away and removed, because it is of no value, taking only the middle white substance, flowing and melted or dissolved,

rejecting the feculent earth, which remains below in the bottom. These feces were separated partly by the water, and are the dross and terra damnata, which is of no value, nor can do any such service as the clear, white, pure and clear matter, which is wholly and only to be taken and made use of.

(20) And against this capharean rock, the ship of knowledge, or art of the young philosopher is often, as it happened also to me sometimes, dashed together in pieces, or destroyed, because the philosophers for the most part speak by the contraries. That is to say that nothing must be removed or taken away, except the moisture, which is the blackness; which notwithstanding they speak and write only to the unwary, who, without a master, indefatigable reading, or humble supplications to God Almighty, would ravish away the golden fleece. It is therefore to be observed, that this separation, division, and sublimation, is without a doubt the key to the whole work.

[the first 20 chapters of this treatise were presented under the heading 'the secret book' (chapter 3 of 'in pursuit of gold'). at this point is begun chapter 4, 'the wisdom of artemphius', which contains the balance of the treatise. I feel the division is significant, though I couldn't quite say why]

(21) After the putrefaction, then, and dissolution of these bodies, our bodies also ascend to the top, even to the surface of the dissolving water, in a whiteness of color, which whiteness is life. And in this whiteness, the antimonial and mercurial soul, is by natural compact infused into, and joined with the spirits of sol and luna, which separate the thin from the thick, and the pure from the impure. That is, by lifting up, by little and little, the thin and the pure part of the body, from the feces and impurity, until all the pure parts are separated and ascended. And in this work is out natural and philosophical sublimation work completed. Now in this whiteness is the soul infused into the body, to wit, the mineral virtue, which is more subtile than fire, being indeed the true quintessence and life, which desires or hungers to be born again, and to put off the defilements and be spoiled of its gross and earthy feces, which it has taken from its monstrous womb, and corrupt place of its original. And in this our philosophical sublimation, not in the impure, corrupt, vulgar mercury, which has no qualities or properties like to those, with which our mercury, drawn from its vitriolic caverns is adorned. But let us return to our sublimation.

(22) It is most certain therefore in this art, that this soul extracted from the bodies, cannot be made to ascend, but by adding to it a volatile matter, which is of its own kind. By which the bodies will be made volatile and spiritual, lifting themselves up, subtilizing and subliming themselves, contrary to their own proper nature, which is corporeal, heavy and ponderous. And by this means they are unbodied, or made no bodies, to wit, incorporeal, and a quintessence of the nature of a spirit, which is called, "avis hermetis", and "mercurius extractus", drawn from a red subject or matter. And so the terrene or earthy parts remain below, or rather the grosser parts of the bodies, which can by no industry or ingenuity of man be brought to a perfect dissolution. (23) And this white vapor, this white gold, to wit, this quintessence, is called also the compound magnesia, which like a man does contain, or like a man is composed of a body, soul and spirit. Now the body is the fixed solar earth, exceeding the most subtile matter, which by the help of our divine water is with difficulty lifted up or separated. The soul is the tincture of sol and luna, proceeding from the conjunction, or communication of these two, to wit, the bodies of sol and luna, and our water, and the

spirit is the mineral power, or virtue of the bodies, and also out of the bodies like as the tinctures or colors in dying cloth are by the water put upon, and diffused in and through the cloth. And this mercurial spirit is the chain or band of the solar soul; and the solar body is that body which contains the spirit and soul, having the power of fixing in itself, being joined with luna. The spirit therefore penetrates, the body fixes, and the soul joins together, tinges and whitens. From these three bodies united together is our stone made: to wit, sol, luna and mercury.

(24) Therefore with this our golden water, a natural substance is extracted, exceeding all natural substances; and so, except the bodies be broken and destroyed, imbibed, made subtile and fine, thriftily, and diligently managed, till they are abstracted from, or lose their grossness or solid substance, and be changed into a subtile spirit, all our labor will be in vain. And unless the bodies be made no bodies or incorporeal, that is converted into the philosophers mercury, there is no rule of art yet found out to work by. The reason is, because it is impossible to draw out of the bodies all that most thin and subtile spirit, which has in itself the tincture, except it first be resolved in our water. Dissolve then the bodies in this our golden water, and boil them until all the tincture is brought forth by the water, in a white color and a white oil; and when you see this whiteness upon the water, then know that the bodies are melted, liquified or dissolved. Continue then this boiling, till the dark, black, and white cloud is brought forth, which they have conceived.

(25) Put therefore the perfect bodies of metals, to wit, sol and luna, into our water in a vessel, hermetically sealed, upon a gentle fire, and digest continually, till they are perfectly resolved into a most precious oil. Saith Adfar, digest with a gentle fire, as it were for the hatching of chickens, so long till the bodies are dissolved, and their perfectly conjoined tincture is extracted, mark this well. But it is not extracted all at once, but it is drawn out by little and little, day by day, and hour by hour, till after a long time, the solution thereof is completed, and that which is dissolved always swims atop. And while this dissolution is in hand, let the fire be gentle and continual, till the bodies are dissolved into a viscous and most subtile water, and the whole tincture be educed, in color first black, which is the sign of a true dissolution.

(26) Then continue the digestion, till it become a white fixed water, for being digested in balneo, it will afterwards become clear, and in the end become like common argent vive, ascending by the spirit above the first water. When there you see bodies dissolved in the first viscous water, then know, that they are turned into a vapor, and the soul is separated from the dead body, and by sublimation, turned into the order of spirits. Whence both of them, with a part of our water, are made spirits flying up in the air; and there the compounded body, made of the male and female, viz. of sol and luna, and of that most subtile nature, cleansed by sublimation, taketh life, and is made spiritual by its own humidity. That is by its own water; like as a man is sustained by the air, whereby from thenceforth it is multiplied, and increases in its own kind, as do all other things. In such an ascension therefore, and philosophical sublimation, all are joined one with another, and the new body subtilized, or made living by the spirit, miraculously liveth or springs like a vegetable.

(27) Wherefore, unless the bodies be attenuated, or made thin, by the fire and water, till they ascend in a spirit, and are made or do become like water and vapor or mercury, you labor wholly in vain. But when they arise or ascend, they are born or

brought forth in the air or spirit, and in the same they are changed, and made life with life, so as they can never be separated, but are as water mixed with water. And therefore, it is wisely said, that the stone is born of the spirit, because it is altogether spiritual. For the vulture himself flying without wings cries upon the top of the mountain, saying, I am the white brought forth from the black, and the red brought forth from the white, the citrine son of the red; I speak the truth and lie not.

(28) It sufficeth thee then to put the bodies in the vessel, and into the water once and for all, and to close the vessel well, until a true separation is made. This the obscure artist calls conjunction, sublimation, assation, extraction, putrefaction, ligation, desponsation, subtilization, generation, etc.

(29) Now the whole magistry may be perfected, work, as in the generation of man, and of every vegetable; put the seed once into the womb, and shut it up well. Thus you may see that you need not many things, and that this our work requires no great charges, for that there is but one stone, there is but one medicine, one vessel, one order of working, and one successive disposition to the white and to the red. And although we say in many places, take this, and take that, yet we understand, that it behoves us to take but one thing, and put it once into the vessel, until the work be perfected. But these things are so set down by obscure philosophers to deceive the unwary, as we have before spoken; for is not this "ars cabalistica" or a secret and a hidden art? Is it not an art full of secrets? And believest thou O fool that we plainly teach this secret of secrets, taking our words according to their literal signification? Truly, I tell thee, that as for myself, I am no ways self seeking, or envious as others are; but he that takes the words of the other philosophers according to their common signification, he even already, having lost Ariadne's clue of thread, wanders in the midst of the labyrinth, multiplies errors, and casts away his money for naught.

(30) And I, Artephius, after I became an adept, and had attained to the true and complete wisdom, by studying the books of the most faithful Hermes, the speaker of truth, was sometimes obscure also as others were. But when I had for the space of a thousand years, or thereabouts, which has now passed over my head, since the time I was born to this day, through the alone goodness of God Almighty, by the use of this wonderful quintessence. When I say for so very long a time, I found no man had found out or obtained this hermetic secret, because of the obscurity of the philosophers words. Being moved with a generous mind, and the integrity of a good man, I have determined in these latter days of my life, to declare all things truly and sincerely, that you may not want anything for the perfecting of this stone of the philosophers. Excepting one certain thing, which is not lawful for me to discover to any, because it is either revealed or made known by God himself, or taught by some master, which notwithstanding he that can bend himself to the search thereof, by the help of a little experience, may easily learn in this book.

(31) In this book I have therefore written the naked truth, though clothed or disguised with few colors; yet so that every good and wise man may happily have those desirable apples of the Hesperides from this our philosophers tree. Wherefore praises be given to the most high God, who has poured into our soul of his goodness; and through a good old age, even an almost infinite number of years, has truly filled our hearts with his love, in which, methinks, I embrace, cherish, and truly love all mankind together. But to return to our business. Truly our work is perfectly



performed; for that which the heat of sun is a hundred years in doing, for the generation of one metal in the bowels of the earth; our secret fire, that is, our fiery and sulphureous water, which is called *Balneum Mariae*, doth as I have often seen in a very short time.

(32) Now this operation or work is a thing of no great labor to him who knows and understands it; nor is the matter so dear, consideration [sic, considering?] how small a quantity does suffice, that it may cause any man to withdraw his hand from it. It is indeed, a work so short and easy, that it may well be called woman's work, and the play of children. Go to it then,, my son, put up thy supplications to God almighty; be diligent in searching the books of the learned in this science; for one book openeth another; think and meditate of these things profoundly; and avoid all things which vanish in or will not endure the fire, because from these adjustable, perishing or consuming things, you can never attain to the perfect matter, which is only found in the digesting of your water, extracted from sol and luna. For by this water, color, and ponderosity or weight, are infinitely given to the matter; and this water is a white vapor, which like a soul flows through the perfect bodies, taking wholly from them their blackness, and impurities, uniting the two bodies in one, and increasing their water. Nor is there any other thing than Azoth, to wit, this our water, which can take from the perfect bodies of sol and luna, their natural color, making the red body white, according to the disposition thereof.

(33) Now let us speak of the fire. Our fire is mineral, equal, continuous; it fumes not, unless it be too much stirred up, participates of sulphur, and is taken from other things than from the matter; it overturns all things, dissolves, congeals, and calcines, and is to be found out by art, or after an artificial manner. It is a compendious thing, got without cost or charge, or at least without any great purchase; it is humid, vaporous, digestive, altering, penetrating, subtile, spiritous, not violent, incombustible, circumspective, continent, and one only thing. It is also a fountain of living water, which circumvolveth and contains the place, in which the king and queen bathe themselves; through the whole work this moist fire is sufficient; in the beginning, middle and end, because in it, the whole of the art does consist. This is the natural fire, which is yet against nature, not natural and which burns not; lastly, this fire is hot, cold, dry, moist; meditate on these things and proceed directly without anything of a foreign nature. If you understand not these fires, give ear to what I have yet to say, never as yet written in any book, but drawn from the more abstruse and occult riddles of the ancients.

(34) We have properly three fires, without which our art cannot be perfected; and whosoever works without them takes a great deal of labor in vain. The first fire is that of the lamp, which is continuous, humid, vaporous, spiritous, and found out by art. This lamp ought to be proportioned to the enclosure; wherein you must use great judgement, which none can attain to, but he that can bend to the search thereof. For if this fire of the lamp be not measured, or duly proportioned or fitted to the furnace, it will be, that either for the want of heat you will not see the expected signs, in their limited times, whereby you will lose your hopes and expectation by a too long delay; or else, by reason of too much heat, you will burn the "flores auri", the golden flowers, and so foolishly bewail your lost expense.

(35) The second fire is ignis cinerum, an ash heat, in which the vessel hermetically sealed is recluded, or buried; or rather it is that most sweet and gentle heat, which proceeding from the temperate vapors of the lamp, does equally surround your vessel. This fire is not violent or forcing, except it be too much excited or stirred up; it is a fire digestive; alterative, and taken from another body than the matter; being but one only, moist also, and not natural. (36) The third fire, is the natural fire of water, which is also called the fire against nature, because it is water; and yet nevertheless, it makes a mere spirit of gold, which common fire is not able to do. This fire is mineral, equal, and participates of sulphur; it overturns or destroys, congeals, dissolves, and calcines; it is penetrating, subtile, incombustible and not burning, and is the fountain of living water, wherein the king and queen bathe themselves, whose help we stand in need of through the whole work, through the beginning, middle, and end. But the other two above mentioned, we have not always occasion for, but only at sometimes. In reading therefore the books of the philosophers, conjoin these three fires in your judgement, and without doubt, you will understand whatever they have written of them.

(37) Now as to the colors, that which does not make black cannot make white, because blackness is the beginning of whiteness, and a sign of putrefaction and alteration, and that the body is now penetrated and mortified. From the putrefaction therefore in this water, there first appears blackness, like unto broth wherein some bloody thing is boiled. Secondly, the black earth by continual digestion is whitened, because the soul of the two bodies swims above upon the water, like white cream; and in this only whiteness, all the spirits are so united, that they can never fly one from another. And therefore the laton must be whitened, and its leaves unfolded, i.e., its body broken or opened, lest we labor in vain; for this whiteness is the perfect stone for the white work, and a body ennobled to that end; even a tincture of a most exuberant glory, and shining brightness, which never departs from the body it is once joined with. Therefore you must note here, that the spirits are not fixed but in the white color, which is more noble than the other colors, and is more vehemently to be desired, for that as it were the complement or perfection of the whole work.

(38) For our earth putrefies and becomes black, then it is putrefied in lifting up or separation; afterwards being dried, its blackness goes away from it, and then it is whitened, and the feminine dominion of the darkness and humidity perisheth; then also the white vapor penetrates through the new body, and the spirits are bound up or fixed in the dryness. And that which is corrupting, deformed and black through the moisture, vanishes away; so the new body rises again clear, pure, white and immortal, obtaining the victory over all its enemies. And as heat working upon that which is moist, causeth or generates blackness, which is the prime or first color, so always by decoction more and more heat working upon that which is dry begets whiteness, which is the second color; and then working upon that which is purely and perfectly dry, it produces citrinity and redness, thus much for colors. WE must know therefore, that thing which has its head red and white, but its feet white and afterwards red; and its eyes beforehand black, that this thing, I say, is the only matter of our magistry.

(39) Dissolve then sol and luna in our dissolving water, which is familiar and friendly, and next in nature to them; and is also sweet and pleasant to them, and as it were a womb, a mother, an original, the beginning and the end of their life. That is the reason why they are meliorated or amended in this water, because like nature, rejoices in like nature, and like nature retains like nature, being joined the one to the other, in a true

marriage, by which they are made one nature, one new body, raised again from the dead, and immortal. Thus it behoves you to join consanguinity, or sameness of kind, by which these natures, will meet and follow one another, purify themselves and generate, and make one another rejoice; for that like nature now is disposed by like nature, even that which is nearest, and most friendly to it.

(40) Our water then is the most beautiful, lovely, and clear fountain, prepared only for the king, and queen whom it knows very well, and they it. For it attracts them to itself, and they abide therein for two or three days, to wit, two or three months, to wash themselves therewith, whereby they are made young again and beautiful. And because sol and luna have their original from this water their mother; it is necessary therefore that they enter into it again, to wit, into their mothers womb, that they may be regenerated and born again, and made more healthy, more noble and more strong. If therefore these do not die and be converted to water, they remain alone or as they were and without fruit; but if they die, and are resolved in our water, they bring forth fruit of a hundred fold; and from that very place in which they seem to perish, from thence shall they appear to be that which they were not before.

(41) Let therefore the spirit of our living water be, with all care and industry, fixed with sol and luna; for they being converted into the nature of water become dead, and appear like to the dead; from thence afterwards being revived, they increase and multiply, even as do all sorts of vegetable substances; it suffices then to dispose the matter sufficiently without, because that within, it sufficiently disposes itself for the perfection of its work. For it has in itself a certain and inherent motion, according to the true way and method, and a much better order than it is possible for any man to invent or think of. For this cause it is that you need only prepare the matter, nature herself will perfect it; and if she be not hindered by some contrary thing, she will not overpass her own certain motion, neither in conceiving or generating, nor in bringing forth.

(42) Wherefore, after the preparation of the matter, beware only lest by too much heat or fire, you inflame the bath, or make it too hot; secondly, take heed lest the spirit should exhale, lest it hurt the operator, to wit, lest it destroy the work, and induce many informities, as trouble, sadness, vexation, and discontent. From these things which have been spoken, this axiom is manifest, to wit, that he can never know the necessary course of nature, in the making or generating of metals, who is ignorant of the way of destroying them. You must therefore join them together that are of one consanguinity or kindred; for like natures do find out and join with their like natures, and by putrifying themselves, and mix together and mortify themselves. It is needful therefore to know this corruption and generation, and the natures themselves do embrace one another, and are brought to a fixity in a slow and gentle fire; how like natures rejoiceth with like natures; and how they retain one another and are converted into a white consistency.

(43) This white substance, if you will make it red, you must continually decoct it in a dry fire till it be rubified, or become red as blood, which is nothing but water, fire, and true tincture. And so by a continual dry fire, the whiteness is changed, removed, perfected, made citrine, and still digested till it become to a true red and fixed color. And consequently by how much more it is heightened in color, and made a true tincture of perfect redness. Wherefore with a dry fire, and a dry calcination, without

any moisture, you must decoct this compositum, till it be invested with a most perfect red color, and then it will be the true and perfect elixir.

(44) Now if afterwards you would multiply your tincture, you must again resolve that red, in new and fresh dissolving water, and then by decoctions first whiten, and then rubify it again, by the degrees of fire, reiterating the first method of operating in this work. Dissolve, coagulate, and reiterate the closing up, the opening and multiplying in quantity and quality at your own pleasure. For by a new corruption and generation, there is introduced a new motion. Thus we can never find an end if we do always work by reiterating the same thing over and over again, viz. by solution and coagulation, by the help of our dissolving water, by which we dissolve and congeal, as we have formerly said, in the beginning of the work. Thus also is the virtue thereof increased, and multiplied both in quantity and quality; so that if after the first course of the operation you obtain a hundred fold; by the second fold you will have a thousand fold; and by the third; ten thousand fold increase. And by pursuing your work, your projection will come to infinity, tinging truly and perfectly, and fixing the greatest quantity how much soever. Thus by a thing of small and easy price, you have both color, goodness, and weight.

(45) Our fire then and azoth are sufficient for you: decoct, reiterate, dissolve, congeal, and continue this course, according as you please, multiplying it as you think good, until your medicine is made fusible as wax, and has attained the quantity and goodness or fixity and color you desire. This then is the compleating of the whole work of our second stone (observe it well) that you take the perfect body, and put it into our water in a glass vesica or body well closed, lest the air get in or the enclosed humidity get out. Keep it in digestion in a gentle heat, as it were of a balneum, and assiduously continue the operation or work upon the fire, till the decoction and digestion is perfect. And keep it in this digestion of a gentle heat, until it be purified and re-solved into blackness, and be drawn up and sublimed by the water, and is thereby cleaned from all blackness and impurity, that it may be white and subtile. Until it comes to the ultimate or highest purity of sublimation, and utmost volatility, and be made white both within and without: for the vulture flying in the air without wings, cries out that it might get up upon the mountain, that is upon the waters, upon which the "spiritus albus" or spirit of whiteness is born. Continue still a fitting fire, and that spirit, which is the subtile being of the body, and of the mercury will ascend upon the top of the water, which quintessence is more white than the driven snow. Continue yet still, and towards the end, increase the fire, till the whole spiritual substance ascend to the top. And know well, that whatsoever is clear, white-pure and spiritual, ascends in the air to the top of the water in the substance of a white vapor, which the philosophers call their virgin milk.

(46) It ought to be, therefore, as one of the Sybills said, that the son of the virgin be exalted from the earth, and that the white quintessence after its rising out of the dead earth, be raised up towards heaven; the gross and thick remaining in the bottom, of the vessel and the water. Afterwards, the vessel being cooled, you will find in the bottom the black feces, scorched and burnt, which separate from the spirit and quintessence of whiteness, and cast them away. Then will the argent vive fall down from our air and spirit, upon the new earth, which is called argent vive sublimed by the air or spirit, whereof is made a viscous water, pure and white. This water is the true tincture separated from all its black feces, and our brass or latten is prepared with our water,

purified and brought to a white color. Which white color is not obtained but by decoction and coagulation of the water; decoct, therefore, continually, wash away the blackness from the latten, not with your hands, but with the stone, or the fire, or our second mercurial water which is the true tincture. This separation of the pure from the impure is not done with hands, but nature herself does it, and brings it to perfection by a circular operation.

(47) It appears then, that this composition is not a work of hands, but a change of the natures; because nature dissolves and joins itself, sublimes and lifts itself up, and grows white, being separated from the feces. And in such a sublimation the more subtile, pure, and essential parts are conjoined; for that with the fiery nature or property lifts up the subtile parts, it separates always the more pure, leaving the grosser at the bottom. Wherefore your fire ought to be gentle and a continual vapor, with which you sublime, that the matter may be filled with spirit from the air, and live. For naturally all things take life from the inbreathing of the air; and so also our magistry receives in the vapor or spirit, by the sublimation of the water. (48) Our brass or latten then, is to be made to ascend by the degrees of fire, but of its own accord, freely, and without violence; except the body therefore be by the fire and water broken, or dissolved, and attenuated, until it ascends as a spirit, or climbs like argent vive, or rather as the white soul, separated from the body, and by sublimation diluted or brought into a spirit, nothing is or can be done. But when it ascends on high, it is born in the air or spirit, and is changed into spirit; and becomes life with life, being only spiritual and incorruptible. And by such an operation it is that the body is made spirit, of a subtile nature, and the spirit is incorporated with the body, and made one with it; and by such a sublimation, conjunction, and raising up, the whole, both body and spirit are made white.

(49) This philosophical and natural sublimation therefore is necessary which makes peace between, or fixes the body and spirit, which is impossible to be done otherwise, than in the separation of these parts. Therefore it behoves you to sublime both, that the pure may ascend, and the impure may descend, or be left at the bottom, in the perplexity of a troubled sea. And for this reason it must be continually decocted, that it may be brought to a subtile property, and the body may assume, and draw to itself the white mercurial soul, which it naturally holds, and suffers not to be separated from it, because it is like to it in the nearness of the first pure and simple nature. From these things it is necessary, to make a separation by decoction, till no more remains of the purity of the soul, which is not ascended and exalted to the higher part, whereby they will both be reduced to an equality of properties, and a simple pure whiteness.

(50) The vulture flying through the air, and the toad creeping upon the ground, are the emblems of our magistry. When therefore gently and with much care, you separate the earth from the water, that is from the fire, and the thin from the thick, then that which is pure will separate itself from the earth, and ascend to the upper part, as it were into heaven, and the impure will descend beneath, as to the earth. And the more subtile part in the superior place will take upon it the nature of a spirit, and that in the lower place, the nature of an earthy body. Wherefore, let the white property with the more subtile part of the body, be by this operation, made to ascend leaving the feces behind, which is done in a short time. For the soul is aided by her associate and fellow, and perfected by it. My mother, saith the body, has begotten me, and by me she herself is begotten; now after I have taken from her, her flying she after an

admirable manner becomes kind and nourishing, and cherishing the son whom she has begotten till he come to a ripe or perfect age.

(51) Hear now this secret: keep the body in our mercurial water, till it ascends with the white soul, and the earthy part descends to the bottom, which is called the residing earth. Then you shall see the water coagulate itself with the body, and be assured the art is true; because the body coagulates the moisture into dryness, like as the rennet of a lamb or calf turns milk into cheese. In the same manner the spirit penetrates the body, and is perfectly comixed with it in its smallest atoms, and the body draws to itself his moisture, to wit, its white soul, like as the loadstone draws iron, because of the nearness and likeness of its nature; and then one contains the other. And this is the sublimation and coagulation, which retaineth every volatile thing, making it fixed for ever.

(52) This compositum then is not a mechanical thing, or a work of the hands, but as I said, a changing of natures; and a wonderful connection of their cold with hot, and the moist with the dry; the hot is mixed with the cold, and the dry with the moist: By this means is made the mixture and conjunction of body and spirit, which is called a conversion of contrary spirits and natures, because by such a dissolution and sublimation, the spirit is converted into a body and body in a spirit. So that the natures being mixed together, and reduced into one, do change one another: and as the body corporifies the spirit, or changes it into a body, so also does the spirit convert the body into a tinged and white spirit.

(53) Wherefore as the last time I say, decoct the body in our white water, viz. mercury, till it is dissolved into blackness, and then by continual decoction, let it be deprived of the same blackness, and the body so dissolved, will at length ascend or rise with a white soul. And then the one will be mixed with the other, and so embrace one another that it shall not be possible any more to separate them, but the spirit, with a real agreement, will be unified with the body, and make one permanent or fixed substance. And this is the solution of the body, and coagulation of the spirit which have one and the same operation. Who therefore knows how to conjoin the principles, or direct the work, to impregnate, to mortify, to putrefy, to generate, to quicken the species, to make white, to cleanse the culture from its blackness and darkness, till he is purged by the fire and tinged, and purified from all his spots, shall be the possessor of a treasure so great that even kings themselves shall venerate him.

(54) Wherefore, let our body remain in the water till it is dissolved into a subtile powder in the bottom of the vessel and the water, which is called the black ashes; this is the corruption of the body which is called by the philosophers or wise men, "Saturnus plumbum philosophorum", and pulvis discontinuatus, viz. saturn, latten or brass, the lead of the philosophers the disguised powder. And in this putrefaction and resolution of the body, three signs appear, viz., a black color, a discontinuity of parts, and a stinking smell, not much unlike to the smell of a vault where dead bodies are buried. These ashes then are those of which the philosophers have spoken so much which remained in the lower part of the vessel, which we ought not to undervalue or despise; in them is the royal diadem, and the black and unclean argent vive, which ought to be cleansed from its blackness, by a continual digestion in our water, till it be elevated above in a white color, which is called the gander, and the bird of Hermes. He therefore that maketh the red earth black, and then renders it white, has obtained

the magistry. So also he who kills the living, and revives the dead. Therefore make the black white, and the white black, and you perfect the work.

(55) And when you see the true whiteness appear, which shineth like a bright sword, or polished silver, know that in that whiteness there is redness hidden. But then beware that you take not that whiteness out of the vessel, but only digest it to the end, that with heat and dryness, it may assume a citron color, and a most beautiful redness. Which when you see, render praises and thanksgiving to the most great and good God, who gives wisdom and riches to whomsoever He pleases, and takes them away according to the wickedness of a person. To Him, I say, the most wise and almighty God, be glory for ages and ages. AMEN.

THE SECRET  
OF THE  
IMMORTAL LIQUOR  
CALLED  
**ALKAHEST**  
OR  
IGNIS-AQUA.

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By EIRENÆUS PHILALETHES.

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Communicated to his Friend, a Son of Art, and now Philosopher.

By Question and Answer.

**THE SECRET OF THE LIQUOR ALKAHEST.**

1. Question.—What is the Alkahest?

Answer.—It is a Catholic and Universal *Menstruum*, and, in a word, may be called (*Ignis-Aqua*) a Fiery Water, an uncompounded and immortal *ens*, which is penetrative, resolving all things into their first Liquid Matter, nor can anything resist its power, for it acteth without any reaction from the patient, nor doth it suffer from anything but its equal, by which it is brought into subjection; but after it hath dissolved all other things, it remaineth entire in its former nature, and is of the same virtue after a thousand operations as at the first.

2. Q.—Of what substance is it?

A.—It is a noble circulated salt, prepared with wonderful art till it answers the desires of an ingenious artist; yet it is not any corporal salt made liquid by a bare solution, but is a saline spirit which heat cannot coagulate by evaporation of the moisture, but is of a spiritual uniform substance, volatile with a gentle heat, leaving nothing behind it; yet is not this spirit either acid or alkali, but salt.

3. Q.—Which is its equal?

A.—If you know the one, you may without difficulty know the other; seek therefore, for the Gods have made Arts the reward of industry.



4. Q.—What is the next matter of the Alkahest?

A.—I have told you that it is a salt; the fire surrounded the salt and the water swallowed up the fire, yet overcame it not; so is made the philosopher's fire, of which they speak; the vulgar burn with fire, we with water.

5. Q.—Which is the most noble salt?

A.—If you desire to learn this, descend into yourself, for you carry it about with you, as well the salt as its Vulcan, if you are able to discern it.

6. Q.—Which is it, tell me, I pray you?

A.—Man's blood out of the body, or man's urine, for the urine is an excrement separated, for the greatest part, from the blood. Each of these give both a volatile and fixed salt; if you know how to collect and prepare it, you will have a most precious Balsam of Life.

7. Q.—Is the property of human urine more noble than the urine of any beast?

A.—By many degrees, for though it be an excrement only, yet its salt hath not its like in the whole universal nature.

8. Q.—Which be its parts?

A.—A volatile and more fixed; yet according to the variety of ordering it, these may be variously altered.

9. Q.—Are there any things in urine which are different from its inmost specific urinaceous nature?

A.—There are, viz., a watery phlegm, and sea salt which we take in with our meat; it remains entire and undigested in the urine, and by separation may be divided from it, which (if there be no sufficient use of it in the meat after a convenient time) ceaseth.

10. Q.—Whence is that phlegm, or insipid watery humidity?

A.—It is chiefly from our several drinks, and yet everything hath its own phlegm.

11. Q.—Explain yourself more clearly.

A.—You must know that the urine, partly by the separative virtue, is conveyed with what we drink to the bladder, and partly consists of a watery Teffas (an excrementitious humour of the blood), whence being separated by the odour of the urinaceous ferment, it penetrates most deeply, the saltness being unchanged, unless that the saltness of the blood and urine be both the same; so that whatsoever is contained in the urine besides salt is unprofitable phlegm.

12. Q.—How doth it appear that there is a plentiful phlegm in urine?

A.—Thus suppose; first, from the taste; secondly, from the weight; thirdly, from the virtue of it.

13. Q.—Be your own interpreter.

A.—The salt of urine contains all that is properly essential to the urine, the smell whereof is very sharp; the taste differs according as it is differently ordered, so that sometimes it is also salt with an urinaceous saltness.

14. Q.—What have you observed concerning the weight thereof?

A.—I have observed thus much, that three ounces, or a little more, of urine, taken from a healthy man, will moderately outweigh about eighty grains of fountain water, from which also I have seen a liquor distilled which was of equal weight to the said water, whence it is evident that most of the salt was left behind.

15. Q.—What have you observed of its virtue?

A.—The congelation of urine by cold is an argument that phlegm is in it; for the salt of urine is not so congealed if a little moistened with a liquid, though it be water.

16. Q.—But this same phlegm though most accurately separated by distillation, retains the nature of urine, as may be perceived both by the smell and taste.

A.—I confess it, though little can be discerned by taste, nor can you perceive more, either by smell or taste, than you may from salt of urine dissolved in pure water.

17. Q.—What doth pyrotechny teach you concerning urine?

A.—It teacheth this, to make the salt of urine volatile.

18. Q.—What is then left?

A.—An earthly, blackish, stinking dreg.

19. Q.—Is the spirit wholly uniform?

A.—So it appeareth to the sight, smell, and taste; and yet it containeth qualities directly contrary to each other.

20. Q.—Which be they?

A.—By one, through its innate virtue, the Dulech is coagulated; by the other, it is dissolved.

21. Q.—What further?

A.—In the coagulation of urine, its spirit of wine is discovered.

22. Q.—Is there such a spirit in urine?

A.—There is indeed, truly residing in every urine, even of the most healthful man, most of which may be prepared by Art.

23. Q.—Of what efficacy is this spirit?

A.—Of such as is to be lamented, and indeed may move our pity to mankind.

24. Q.—Why so?

A.—From hence the Dulech, its most fierce enemy, hath its original.

25. Q.—Will you give an example of this thing?

A.—I will. Take urine, and dissolve in it a convenient quantity of saltpetre. Let it stand a month; afterwards distil it, and there will come over a spirit which burns upon the tongue like a coal of fire. Pour this spirit on again, and cohobate it four or five times, abstracting every time not above half; so the spirit becometh most piercing, yet not in the least sharp; the heat which goeth out in the first distillation of the liquor, afterwards grows sensibly mild, and at length almost (if not altogether) vanisheth, and the second spirit may be perceived mild, both by the smell and taste, which in the former was most sharp.

26. Q.—What have you observed concerning the former spirit?

A.—If it be a little shaken, oily streaks appear sliding here and there, just as spirit of wine distils down the head of the alembic in streaks like veins.

27. Q.—What kind of putrefaction should the urine undergo that such a spirit may be got from it?

A.—In a heat scarce to be perceived by sense, in a vessel lightly closed, or covered rather; it may also be sometimes hotter, sometimes cooler, so that neither the heat nor cold exceed a due mean.

28. Q.—How may this winy spirit become most perspicuous?

A.—By such a putrefaction as causeth a ferment, and exciteth ebullition, which will not happen in a long time if the urine be kept in a wooden vessel, and in a place which is not hot, but yet keeps out the cold, as, suppose, behind a furnace in winter, where let it be kept till of itself a ferment arise in the urine and stirs up bubbles, for then you may draw from it a burning water which is somewhat winy.

29. Q.—Is there any other spirit of urine?

A.—There is; for urine, putrefied with a gentle heat, during the space of a fortnight or thereabouts, sends forth a coagulating spirit, which will coagulate well rectified *Aqua Vitæ*.

30. Q.—How is that spirit to be prepared which forms the Dulech of itself with a clear watery stalagma; and also that which dissolves the same?

A.—Urine putrefied for a month and a-half in a heat most like the heat of horse-dung will give you, in a fit vessel, each stillatitious stalagma according to your desire.

31. Q.—Doth every spirit coagulate the spirit of wine?

A.—By no means; this second spirit is observed to want that virtue.

32. Q.—What doth urine, thus ordered, contain besides the aforesaid spirits?

A.—Its more fixed urinaceous salt, and, by accident, foreign marine salt.

33. Q.—Can this more fixed salt be brought over the alembic, with a gentle heat, in form of a liquor?

A.—It may, but art and ingenuity are required.

34. Q.—Where is the phlegm?

A.—In the salt; for in the preparation of putrefaction, the salt, being putrefied in the phlegm, ascends together with it.

35. Q.—Can it be separated?

A.—It may, but not by every artist.

36. Q.—What will this spirit do when it is brought to this?

A.—Try, and you will wonder at what you shall see in the solution of bodies.

37. Q.—Is not this the Alkahest?

A.—This liquor cannot consist without partaking of the virtues of man's blood; and in urine the footsteps thereof are observable.

38. Q.—In urine, therefore, and blood the Alkahest lies hid?

A.—Nature gives us both blood and urine; and from the nature of these pyrotechny gives us a salt which art circulates into the circulated salt of Paracelsus.

Q.—You speak short.

39. A.—I will add this; the salt of blood ought so to be transmuted by the urinaceous ferment that it may lose its last life, preserve its middle life, and retain its saltness.

40. Q.—To what purpose is this?

A.—To manifest the excellency which is in man's blood above all other blood whatever, which is to be communicated to the urine (after an excrementitious liquor is separated from it), whence this urine excels all others in a wonderful virtue.

41. Q.—Why do you add urine?

A.—You must know that to transmute things a corruptive ferment is required, in which respect all other salts give place to the strong urinous salt.

42. Q.—Cannot the phlegm be collected apart from the salt?

A.—It may, if the urine be not first putrefied.

43. Q.—How great a part of the water is to be reckoned phlegm?

A.—Nine parts of ten, or thereabouts, distilled from fresh urine are to be rejected, the tenth part (as much as can be extracted in form of liquor) is to be kept; from that dried urine which remains in the bottom by a gentle fire (which will not cause sublimation), let the salt be extracted with water, so that there be as much water as half that urine whence this feces was dried; whatsoever is imbibed by the water, let it be poured off by decanting; let it be strained, or purged, per deliquium; then filter it through a glass. Let fresh water be poured on, and reiterate this work till the salt become pure, then join this vastly stinking salt with your last spirit and cohobate it.

PRAISED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD.—AMEN.

# THE SECRET PAPERS IN THE JADE BOX OF CH'ING-HUA

By TENNEY L. DAVIS AND CHAO YÜN-TS'UNG

The treatise entitled *Yü ch'ing chin sǎ ch'ing hua pi wên chin pao nei lien tan chüeh* 玉清金笥青華秘文金寶內鍊丹訣 (The Secret of Compounding Internal *tan* of the Golden Treasure from the Secret Papers in the Clear Jade Golden Box of *Ch'ing-hua*) exists in a *Ming* 明 edition of 3 *chüan* 卷 or chapters in 3 volumes, and purports to be the work of *Tzū-yang* 紫陽, *chên jên* 真人, *Chang* 張, *P'ing-shu* 平叔. His name is printed on the title page and at the beginning of each of the volumes, but the literary workmanship of the piece is markedly inferior to that of the *Wu chên p'ien* 悟真篇, and the style, the vocabulary, the doctrine, and the method of treating alchemy are all different from those of *Chang Po-tuan* 張伯端. We believe that the work is falsely ascribed to him. At the same time the treatise possesses real interest, for it is undoubtedly of the *Ming* dynasty, and it illustrates the intellectual vagaries to which the alchemists, Chinese and European alike, were often disposed. A somewhat detailed analysis of it is distinctly worth while in order that its true character may be known and in order that our reasons for believing it to be the work of someone other than *Chang Po-tuan* may be made more clear.

The work commences with an introduction in which the author, allegedly *Chang Po-tuan*, says—

Yesterday I was given the secret of compounding internal *tan* 丹 of the *chin pao* 金寶 (golden treasure) for seeking the method of long life and independence of the material world out of the clear jade golden box of *Ch'ing-hua* 青華, the *chên jên* whose name is *ch'ing-hua*. . . . Recently I informed heaven that I was going to disclose this secret by writing it on paper and by setting forth the principle with pictures, for the purpose of instructing all followers who should be qualified. I lay on the bed in my straw house awaiting the penalties which should arrive from heaven for disclosing the secret. After a period of thirty days no penalties had yet come. I then washed my body and hair, and dared to start the writing. After three days the work was finished, and I kept it in the secret box of *fa* 法 (talismans) waiting to give it to the right man. I ask the kind forgiveness of heaven so that everyone will follow this method of compounding the golden treasure and will acquire longevity. . . . After I comprehended the secret of *chin tan* 金丹, I frequently met calamities from heaven. I also wrote the *Wu chên p'ien* and other

papers which are circulating in the world. I have satisfied myself now.

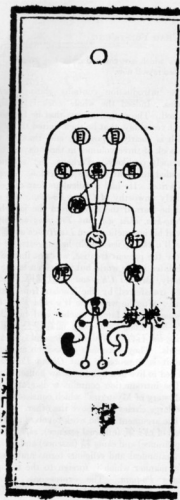
The introduction contains glaring inconsistencies. Indeed the whole work is poorly organized. The author asserts that he learned the secret yesterday, that he then waited thirty days, which is clearly impossible, and that he wrote the book of three volumes in three days, which is extremely unlikely. Perhaps the account is intended to point to the miraculous powers of the writer. He had a ridiculous fear of heaven, entirely unworthy of *Chang Po-tuan*. He states that he learned the secret from the jade box of *Ch'ing-hua*, *chên jên*, but *Tzū-yang* actually received his instruction from *Liu Hai-ch'an* 劉海蟾. The *Wu chên p'ien* which, he suggests, he wrote before the present treatise, was not immediately circulated in the world but was given to one man, namely, *Ma-mo* *Ch'u-hou* 馬默處厚, and was later transferred by the Taoists from hand to hand. After he wrote the *Wu chên p'ien*, *Chang Po-tuan* was a famed teacher and had *Ma-mo* *Ch'u-hou*, *Lung-t'u-lu-kung* 龍圖陸公 and *Shih Hsing-jin* 石杏林 as his disciples and sympathetic friends. They were men of position and wealth, and it is improbable that *Chang Po-tuan* was obliged to live in a humble straw house.

The introduction contains a diagram entitled "Mystery of Mysteries" which consists simply of two large circles one above the other.

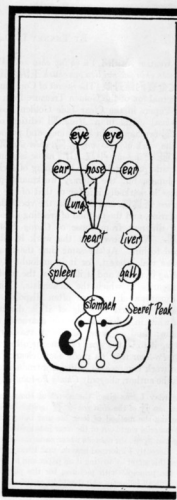
The argument of the work revolves around the ideas of *ch'i* 氣 (ethereal essence), *shên* 神 (facial appearance) and *ching* 精 (essence) and makes use of anatomical and religious terms and analogies in a manner which is foreign to the thought of *Chang Po-tuan*. The expressions, *Chin pao* (golden treasure) and *huang t'ing* 黃庭 (yellow court), which appear frequently in the text do not occur at all in the *Wu chên p'ien*.

The following is a brief survey of the several parts of the treatise.

1.) Mind is the key. *Chang P'ing-shu* was able to stand his physical strains in his old age because he could fix his mind, that is, because he was able to avoid excessive thinking. If one can quiet and appease the mind, *chin tan* will be acquired without working on it. *Shên*, *ch'i* and



a



b

FIGURE 1. Anatomical diagram showing connections between various organs. One kidney is black and is connected with the stomach; the other is white and is connected with the "secret peak." (The term which is translated secret also means mechanism, vitality, chance and moment.)



FIGURE 2. Alchemical diagram representing the combination or interaction of the yin and yang principles.



FIGURE 3. Diagram of the furnace and the *ting*. Eight *kua* are represented but only six different ones altogether, for two of them are repeated. The *ch'ien kua* at the top is completely yang and represents heaven. The *k'un kua* at the bottom is completely yin and represents earth. The legend at the side says: "This *ting* and furnace picture is as clear as is indicated here."



*ching* will obey the mind if the mind is intent upon them.

2.) *Shên* (appearance) is the main factor. There are two kinds of *shên*, the primary *shên* and the lustful *shên*. The primary *shên* is the spot of efficacious light which is formed before life, and is natural. The lustful *shên* is the character formed from *ch'i*, and is artificial. Things which are formed before life should be used to control those which are formed after life.

3.) *Ch'i* is of utility. There are *ch'i* of before-life and *ch'i* of after-life. The primary *ch'i* is formed throughout the body, but it should be obtained from the kidney. The reasons are 1.) that the path of the kidney reaches straightway to the aperture of *ch'i*, 2.) that the kidney is the source of essence, 3.) that the *ch'i* can be recognized easily in the place of the essence, and 4.) that the *ch'i* of mind (heart) penetrates the kidney and thus is collected more easily at the kidney. Therefore, there are these four reasons for collecting *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽 at the kidney.

4.) *Ching* (essence) follows *ch'i* (ethereal essence). *Ching* grows from *ch'i* and fills the kidney in an atmosphere of *ch'i*. When the essence is lost, the *yang* principle will not form. Primary *ch'i* grows in the presence of primary *shên*, and primary *ching* forms in the presence of primary *ch'i*.

5.) *K'an* 坎 and *li* 離 (two of the *kua* 卦). *K'an* represents the chamber of the kidney, and *li* the field of the mind. Feeling grows in the mind and descends to the kidney. *Yang* is produced in the kidney and ascends to *huang t'ing* 黃庭 (yellow court).

6.) *Ching* and *shên* (appearance). Many of those who work on *tan* are ignorant of the method of fixing *shên*. This does not depend upon swiftness or slowness. The fixing consists in condensing *shên* into the interior of the essence. Fixing *shên*, in other words, is extinguishing all desires and returning *shên* to the mind. When this is done, one may see the whole figure of *hsing* 性 (character, nature). "Dissolve *shên* in *ching* and *ch'i*, and combine them into one. Then *yang* begins to form and your body (material) becomes useless (you become a *hsien* ?). I heard this from my near teacher; my near teacher heard it from a far teacher who in turn heard it from heaven."

7.) False *tan*. False *tan* will result from wrong

collection and selection, when the worker's mind is not yet fixed and the single *yang* is a false *yang*.

8.) The technique of catching *tan*. *Chin tan*, which resides within, can also be lost. "When you feel your *ch'i* scattering about without inner influence, then your *tan* has gone away. It may be hiding in the heart, in the liver, in the stomach, in the kidney or in the apertures of your body. When you know where the *tan* is, you can collect it back by means of feeling (exercise of will) through a long period of time, into the chamber of *yang* and then into the *yang ting* 陽鼎."

9.) Spiritual water and beautiful pond. Spiritual water is the fluid of wood, and beautiful pond is the aperture which is located in the abdomen. The former is used to irrigate the furnace and the *ting* (tripod, furnace pot) and to wash the stomach.

10.) Hundreds of apertures. In the human body there are eighty four thousand hair holes and three hundred and eighty four air chambers. All these apertures can hold the *tan*. (This completes the first volume.)

11.) Diagram of collection and selection. Collection is the collection of the true *yang* in the kidney; selection is the selection of the true mercury in the field of mind. "I drew a diagram to show them and to disclose the secret of heaven." The growth of *yang* occurs when the *ch'i* of before-life flows out from the spring of *ch'i* to reach the kidney, similar to spraying. Mercury is produced in the heart. The accompanying picture represents a man sitting Buddha-wise, a gown over his shoulders, a crown on his head and symbols on his chest and abdomen, namely, two small white circles (above and below), four small black squares (two on each side) and a pot or cauldron (center).

12.) Diagram on interlocking. "Whenever you get oral instruction on the secret, do not write it on paper. If you do write it, do not let it be seen by others. I followed my teacher for ten years,<sup>2</sup> and I wrote down all that I learned in order that my comrades might keep it." The author mentions a diagram, which he says is very important, but no diagram is given.

13.) Diagram of disclosing the secret of heaven. The anatomical diagram reproduced in Figure 1, with commentaries devoted largely to a discussion of *shên*.

<sup>1</sup> According to *Liu I-ming* 劉一明, *huang t'ing* means *chin tan*.

<sup>2</sup> There is no tradition that *Chang Po-tuan* ever followed a teacher for ten years.

14.) Diagram of the light of the toad. Long commentaries dealing with primary *shên*, artificial *shên*, *ch'i*, etc. Although the diagram, Figure 2, is entitled the light of the toad, the creature which is represented is clearly a tortoise. Toad and tortoise both appear in the *Wu chên y'ien* as symbols of the *yin* principle. The diagram has real alchemical significance, and represents the combination of the heavy, tortoise, inert, watery, mercury, *yin* principle with the light, active, fiery, sun, lead, *yang* principle.

15.) Diagram of the furnace and the *ting*鼎. Long commentaries dealing with *huang t'ing* (yellow court), the aperture of *ch'i*, etc. In the picture, Figure 3, eight *kua* are shown, that which is completely *yang*, made up of three unbroken lines, being at the top, and that which is completely *yin*, made up of three broken lines, being at the bottom. But other combinations of *yin* and *yang* are needful, or at least useful, for the preparation of *chin tan*.

16.) Diagram of *shên shih* 神室 (chamber of *shên*, efficacious chamber). Lengthy commentaries. The diagram represents a man sitting Buddha-wise, a gown over his shoulders, and on his chest and abdomen four symbols, namely, reading downward, a small white circle, a small white rectangle, a small white square, and a small white circle. (This completes the second volume.)

17.) Diagram of the fire and the season. Long commentaries dealing with the *kua*, the planets, *ch'i*, the hours, the kidney, rising and sinking, gentle fire and drastic fire. The accompanying picture represents a man sitting Buddha-wise, a

gown over his shoulders and a small crown on his head, on his chest and abdomen a symbol made up of a down-pointing triangle with a small circle at its lower tip, another circle at the middle of its horizontal upper side and a third circle directly above this one and connected to it by a short straight line.

18.) Diagram of the exhaustion of *yin*. Long commentaries dealing with the bandits of the six lusts. The picture shows a man sitting Buddha-wise with a crown or cap on his head, gown over his shoulders, and on his chest and abdomen three symbols, above a small white circle, below another somewhat larger, and in the middle two concentric circles with radiating wavy lines.

19.) Diagram of pure *yang*. The commentary states that there is no commentary. The picture, which is without symbols, represents a man, with his gown covering both the top of his head and his shoulders, sitting in calm Buddhistic meditation.

20.) General discussion of the essentials of *chin tan*. The *Tao* 道 of *chin tan* depends upon the materials, and the materials in their turn depend upon *ching*, *ch'i* and *shên*. These are of different kinds, both primary and secondary. *Ching* is condensed by *ch'i*. *Shên* is accumulated by *ch'i*. *Ching* dissolves in *ch'i*, and *ch'i* becomes useful through the presence of *ching*. *Ch'i* can be made visible by means of *shên*, and *shên* becomes useful through the presence of *ch'i*. The great medicines are no more than *ching*, *ch'i* and *shên*.

21.) Description of the nine changes. Nine paragraphs discussing changes from the ribs to the abdomen and kidney. End.

# THE SOPHIC HYDROLITH

OR,

## WATER STONE OF THE WISE,

THAT IS, A CHYMICAL WORK, IN WHICH THE WAY IS SHEWN,  
THE MATTER NAMED, AND THE PROCESS DESCRIBED;  
NAMELY, THE METHOD OF OBTAINING THE  
UNIVERSAL TINCTURE.

*NOW PUBLISHED FOR THE FIRST TIME.*

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## A BRIEF EXPOSITION

OF THE

## WONDERFUL WATER STONE OF THE WISE,

COMMONLY CALLED

## THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE.

FROM the beginning of the world, there have always been God-enlightened men and experienced philosophers and wise Gentiles who diligently studied the nature and properties of the lower Creation. They laboriously endeavoured and fervently longed to discover whether Nature contained anything that would preserve our earthly body from decay and death, and maintain it in perpetual health and vigour. For by the light of Nature, and Divine revelation, they intuitively perceived that the Almighty, in His love to men, must have concealed in the world some wonderful arcanum by which every imperfect, diseased, and defective thing in the whole world might be renewed, and restored to its former vigour.

By the most diligent and careful search they gradually found out that there was nothing in this world that could procure for our earthly and corruptible body immunity from *death*, since death was laid upon the Protoplasts, Adam and Eve, and their posterity, as a perpetual penalty. But they did discover *one* thing which, being itself incorruptible, has been ordained of God for the good of man, to remove disease, to cure all imperfection, to purge old age, and to prolong our brief life—a boon actually enjoyed by the Patriarchs.

This wonderful remedy was industriously sought by the wise and understanding, until they discovered it, and its precious virtue. Thus, the Patriarchs used it to restore their bodily vigour, and prolong their lives; and it was no doubt revealed by God to Adam, our thrice great parent, who bequeathed the secret to all the Patriarchs who were his descendants, who thereby procured for themselves length of days and boundless wealth. When the aforesaid Gentiles had received this knowledge, they justly regarded it as a most precious gift of God, and a most holy Art, and forasmuch as they

perceived that, by God's providence, it had been revealed only to a few, and concealed from the majority of mankind, they always made it a point of conscience and honour to keep it secret.

But that the secret might not be lost, but rather continued and preserved to posterity, they expounded it most faithfully, both in their writings and in oral teaching to their faithful disciples, for the benefit of posterity; nevertheless, they so clothed and concealed the truth in allegorical language that even now only very few are able to understand their instruction and turn it to practical account. For this practice they had a very good reason; they wished to force those who seek this wisdom to feel their dependence on God (in Whose hand are all things), to obtain it through instant prayer, and, when it has been revealed to them, to give all the glory to Him. Moreover, they did not wish the pearls to be cast before swine. For they knew that if it were made known to the wicked world, men would greedily desire nothing but this one thing, neglect all labour, and give themselves up to a dissolute and degraded life.

But although the said philosophers have treated this subject with so great a variety of method, and used many peculiar and singular expressions, curious parables, and strange and fanciful words, yet they all agree in pointing out the same goal, and one and the same Matter as essential to the right conduct of the Art. Nevertheless, many students of the Art have entirely missed their meaning, and the secret Matter of which they speak. For at the present day there are (as there have always been) a large number not only of low charlatans, but of grave and learned men, who have sought this knowledge with unwearied industry, and yet have not been able to attain to it. Nay, some, angling with a golden hook, have utterly ruined themselves, and have been compelled to abandon their search in despair. Therefore, lest anyone should doubt the existence of this secret Art, or, after the manner of this wicked world, look upon it as a mere figment, I will enumerate some of the true Sages (besides those named in Holy Scripture) who really knew this Art, in the natural order of their succession. They are Hermes Trismegistus, Pythagoras, Alexander the Great, Plato, Theophrastus, Avicenna, Galen, Hippocrates, Lucian, Longanus, Rasis, Archelaus, Rupescissa, the Author of the Great Rosary, Mary the Prophetess, Dionysius, Zachaire, Haly, Morienus, Calid, Constantius, Serapion, Albertus Magnus, Estrod, Arnold de Villa Nova, Geber, Raymond Lully, Roger Bacon, Alan, Thomas Aquinas, Marcellus Palingenius; and, among moderns, Bernard of Trevisa, Frater Basil. Valentinus, Phillip Theophrastus (*i.e.*, Paracelsus), and many others. Nor is there any doubt that, among our own contemporaries, there might be found some, who, through the grace of God, daily enjoy this arcanum, though they keep it a close secret from the world. But, side by side with these great Sages who have written truly and uprightly concerning this Magistry, there are found many charlatans and imposters who falsely pretend to have a knowledge of this Art, and, by tricking out their lies in the phraseology of the Sages, throw dust into men's eyes, make their mouths water, and at length fail to make good their promises. Their dupes should well ponder the following warning: "Trust not him who distills gold out of your money-box. If you are wise you will be on your guard against such. If you would not suffer both loss and mockery, beware of these dishonest charlatans. Follow those who are simple, straightforward, and modest. He who has the good, enjoys it in silence." But where are you to find such? "Seek the good; you may know them by their excelling the rest in weight, matter, and performance." Now, since there are many students of this Art who would fain learn its secret by a true and straight path, and are yet so bewildered by these

impostors and charlatans, by their empty talk and their high pretensions, that they do not know which way to turn: therefore I have determined briefly to expound the true principles of this Art. For though I account myself unworthy to speak of so great a Mystery, yet I may say, without any self-glorification, that, through the grace of God, I have made greater progress in this Magistry than most; and I consider it as my duty not to hide the talent which my Lord and Master, the great and good God, has committed to my unworthy keeping. For this reason I am willing to show the right way, by which they may attain a true knowledge of this subject, to all lovers of chemistry, and have put forth this Brief Epitome and Declaration of the Whole Art (so far as it may be committed to writing), in the hope that through my means, God may perchance open the eyes of some, and lead them back from their preconceived notions to the right path, and so manifest to them His mighty works. For the greater convenience of the reader I will divide the work into four parts.

In the First part I will set forth the rudiments of the Art, and the best mode of preparing oneself for its study.

In the Second I will shew and describe the quality and properties of the substance required, as also the method of its preparation and manipulation.

In the Third something will be said concerning the great utility of the Art, and its unspeakable efficacy and virtue.

In the Fourth will follow a Spiritual Allegory, in which this whole Magistry is set forth, being the true form of the Heavenly, Everlasting, and Blessed Corner Stone of the Most High. It will also contain a true, brief, and simple, practical manual of the method of proceeding, for I am no friend of many specious words.

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## **PART I.**

### PSALM 25.

*"Who is he that fears the Lord? He will instruct him in the right path."*

In the first place, let every devout and God-fearing chemist and student of this Art consider that this arcanum should be regarded, not only as a truly great, but as a most holy Art (seeing that it typifies and shadows out the highest heavenly good). Therefore, if any man desire to reach this great and unspeakable Mystery, he must remember that it is obtained not by the might of man, but by the grace of God, and that not our will or desire, but only the mercy of the Most High, can bestow it upon us. For this reason you must first of all cleanse your heart, lift it to Him alone, and ask of Him this gift in true, earnest, and undoubting prayer. He alone can give and bestow it.

If the omnipotent God, who is the unerring searcher of all hearts, should find in you uprightness, faithfulness, sincerity, and a desire to know this Art, not for any selfish end, but for His true honour and glory, He will doubtless hear your prayer (according to his promise), and so lead you by His Holy Spirit that you will begin to understand

this art, and feel that this knowledge would never have entered your heart if the most gracious Lord had not answered your petition, and revealed to you the understanding even of the most elementary principles.

Then fall upon thy knees, and with a humble and contrite heart render to Him the praise, honour, and glory due for the hearing of thy prayer, and ask Him again and again to continue to thee His grace, and to grant that, after attaining to full and perfect knowledge of this profound Mystery, thou mayest be enabled to use it to the glory and honour of His most Holy Name, and for the good of thy suffering fellow men.

Moreover, as you love your soul, beware of revealing the Mystery to any unworthy or wicked man, even in the smallest particular, or by making him in any sense a partaker thereof. If you in any way abuse the gift of God, or use it for your own glorification, you will most certainly be called to account by the Almighty Giver, and you will think that it would have been better for you if you had never known it.

When you have thus, as it were, devoted yourself to God (who is not mocked), and learned to appreciate justly the aim and scope of this Art, you should, in the first place, strive to realise how Nature, having been set in order by God the Triune, now works invisibly day by day, and moves and dwells in the will of God alone. For no one should set about the study of this Art without a just appreciation of natural processes. Now Nature may truly be described as being one, true, simple, and perfect in her own essence, and as being animated by an invisible spirit. If there-fore you would know her, you, too, should be true, single-hearted, patient, constant, pious, forbearing, and, in short, a new and regenerate man.

If you know yourself to be so constituted and your nature adapted to Nature, you will have an intuitive insight into her working, such as it would otherwise be impossible to obtain.

For the study of this Art is such a perfect guide to excellence that a good knowledge of its principles will (as it were, against your will) hurry you on to an understanding of all the wonderful things of God, and teach you to rate all temporal and worldly things at their true value. But let not him who desires this knowledge for the purpose of procuring wealth and pleasure think that he will ever attain to it. Therefore, let your mind and thoughts be turned away from all things earthly, and, as it were, created anew, and consecrated to God alone. For you should observe that these three, body, soul, and spirit, must work together in harmony if you are to bring your study of this Art to a prosperous issue, for unless the mind and heart of a man be governed by the same law which develops the whole work, such an one must indubitably err in the Art.

When you are in inward harmony with God's world, outward conformity will not be wanting. Yet our artist can do nothing but sow, plant, and water: God must give the increase. Therefore, if any one be the enemy of God, all Nature declares war against him; but to one who loves God, heaven and earth and all the elements must lend their assistance. If you bear these things in mind, and know the true First Matter (of which we shall speak later on) you may at once set about the practical part of this study, calling on God for grace, direction, and guidance, so that your work may be carried successfully through all its stages.

## ECCLESIAST. XI.

*"He that abides in the fear of the Lord, and cleaves to His Word, and waits faithfully on His office, will transform tin and copper into silver and gold, and will do great things with the help of God: yea, with the grace of Jehovah, he will have power to make gold out of common refuse."*

## PART II.

### ISAIAH XXVIII.

*"Therefore, thus saith the Lord: Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious corner Stone, a sure foundation. He that has it shall not be confounded."*

The numerous writers on our most noble Art have never wearied of singing its praises, and inventing for it new and glorious names. Its most precious object they have called the PHILOSOPHER'S STONE, or the most ancient, secret, natural, incomprehensible, heavenly, blessed, beatified, and triune universal Stone of the Sages. Their reason for naming it a stone, or likening it to a stone, was this: First because its original Matter is really a kind of stone, which, being hard and solid like a stone, may be pounded, reduced to powder, and resolved into its three elements (which Nature herself has joined together), and then again may be re-combined into a solid stone of the fusibility of wax by the skilled hand of the artist adjusting the law of Nature.

The importance of starting with an exact knowledge of the first or otherwise the second Matter of the Philosophical Stone has been largely dwelt upon by all writers on this subject. This Matter is found in one thing, out of which alone our Stone is prepared (although it is called by a thousand names), without any foreign admixture; and its quality, appearance, and properties have been set forth in the following manner. It is composed of three things, yet it is only one. Likewise, having been created and made of one, two, three, four, and five, it is everywhere found in one and two. They also call it the universal Magnesia, or the seed of the world, from which all natural objects take their origin. Its properties are of a singular kind; for, in addition to its marvellous nature and form, it is neither hot and dry like fire, nor cold and wet like water, nor cold and dry like earth, but a perfect preparation of all the elements. Its body is incorruptible, and is not destroyed by any of the four elements, but its properties far exceed those of the four elements, and the four qualities, like heaven and the Quintessence. With respect to its outward appearance, figure, form, and shape, they call it a stone, and not a stone; they liken it to gum and white water, and to the water of the Ocean. It is named the water of life, the purest and most blessed water, yet not the water of the clouds, or of any common spring, but a thick, permanent, salt, and (in a certain sense) dry water, which wets not the hand, a slimy water which springs out of the fatness of the earth. Likewise, it is a double mercury and Azoth which, being supported by the vapour or exudation of the greater and lesser heavenly and the earthly globe, cannot be consumed by fire. For itself is the universal and sparkling flame of the light of Nature, which has the heavenly Spirit in itself, with which it was animated at first by God, Who pervades all things, and is called by Avicenna, the Soul of the world. For as the soul lives and moves in all the members of the body, so that spirit lives and moves in all elementary creatures, and is the

indissoluble bond of body and soul, the purest and most noble essence in which lie hid all mysteries in their inexhaustible fulness of marvellous virtue and efficacy. Moreover, they ascribe to it infinite Divine power and virtue when they say that it is the Spirit of the Lord who fills the Universe, and in the beginning moved upon the face of the waters. They also call it the spirit of truth that is hid in the world, and cannot be understood without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or the teaching of those who know it. It is found potentially everywhere, and in everything, but in all its perfection and fulness only in one thing. In short, it is a Spiritual Essence which is neither celestial nor infernal, but an aerial, pure, and precious body, in the middle between the highest and lowest, the choicest and noblest thing under heaven. But by the ignorant and the beginner it is thought to be the vilest and meanest of things. It is sought by many Sages, and found by few; suspected by those that are far away, and received by those that are near; seen by all, but known by few, as you may see from the following lines:

"Into three the great good is divided, yet it is one, and highly esteemed by the world. Men have it before their eyes, handle it with their hands, yet know it not, though they constantly tread it under their feet. It is the greatest wealth, and he who knows the Art may rival the richest."

#### AN ENIGMA OF THE SAGES,

In which the underlying substance of the Art, called the Phœnix of the Sages, is found to be thrice threefold.

"If I tell you three parts of a thing you have no cause to complain. Seek one of three, and of the three one will be there: for where there is body and soul, there is also Spirit, and there shine salt, sulphur, and mercury. Trust my word, seek the grass that is trefoil. Thou knowest the name, and art wise and [cunning](#) if thou findest it."

#### ANOTHER ENIGMA.

(Much easier.)

"There is one thing in this world which is found occasionally. It is bluish-grey and green, and, wonderful to say, there is in this thing a red and white colour. It flows like water, yet it makes not wet; it is of great weight, and of small. I might give it a thousand names, yet the thousand know it not. It is mean to look upon, yet to the Sage it is precious. He who solves it with the second and condenses it with the third, he has our glorious subject."

#### YET ANOTHER ENIGMA.

[Everything](#) contributes to the formation of this Stone. It is conceived below the earth, born in the earth, quickened in heaven, dies in time, obtains eternal glory.

Now when you have the substance indicated (which is in part heavenly, in part earthly, and in its natural state a mere confused chaos without certain name or colour), and know it well (for this knowledge the Sages have always accounted the principal part of this work), then you must give your whole mind to manipulating it in the



proper manner. But before doing anything to it with his hands, the student should remember not to begin the preparation of this great and inscrutable arcanum before he knows well the spirit that lurks in it according to its essential qualities and properties. "With this spirit," says a certain philosopher, "you should not meddle until you first have a full and exact knowledge of it. For God is marvellous in His works, and He is not mocked. I could give some instances of men who set about this matter with great levity and were heavily punished by meeting (some of them) with fatal accidents in their laboratories. For this work is no light thing, as many suppose, perhaps, because the Sages have called it child's play. Those to whom God has revealed His secret may indeed find the experiment simple and easy. But do thou carefully beware of exposing thyself to great danger by unseasonable carelessness. Rather begin thy work with reverent fear and awe and with earnest prayer, and then thou wilt be in little danger."

Now when you have exercised yourself with exceeding diligence in the oratory, the matter being ready to your hand, go into the laboratory, take the substance indicated, and set to work in the following manner.

Above all things you must let it be your first object to solve this substance (or first Entity, which the Sages have also called the highest natural good). Then it must be purged of its watery and earthy nature (for at first it appears an earthy, heavy, thick, slimy, and misty body), and all that is thick, nebulous, opaque, and dark in it must be removed, that thus, by a final sublimation, the heart and inner soul contained in it may be separated and reduced to a precious essence.

All this can be accomplished with our Pontic and Catholic water, which in its refluent course irrigates and fertilizes the whole earth, and is sweet, beautiful, clear, limpid, and brighter than gold, silver, carbuncles, or diamonds. This blessed water is enclosed and contained in our Matter.

Then the extracted Heart, Soul, and Spirit must once more be distilled and condensed into *one* by their own proper salt (which in the interior of the substance is first of a blood-red colour, but then becomes of a bright, clear, and transparent white, and is called by the Sages the Salt of Wisdom). You have thus first, by what is called the anterior process, separated the pure from the impure, and first rendered the visible invisible, then, again, the invisible visible or palpable (but yet no longer so gross and shapeless as it was at first), and it is now a bright body with a pleasant, penetrating smell, and withal so subtle and ethereal that if it were not fixed it would evaporate and vanish away. For this reason the Sages call it mercurial water, or water of the sun, or mercury of the sun, or mercury of the wise. But so long as it remains in the aforesaid form it would, if used as a medicine, produce no good effect, but rather act as a poison. If, therefore, you wish to enjoy its glorious virtue, and manifold power, you must subject it to some further chemical processes

For this purpose you must diligently observe the working of Nature (extending over a considerable period of time), and strictly follow her guidance. When you have this knowledge, you should take two parts of the aforesaid prepared aqueous matter, and again three different parts. The first two parts you should keep; but to the three parts add another matter, viz., the most precious and divinely endowed Body of Gold, which is most intimately akin to the First Matter. Of this add one twelfth for the first

fermentation; for both, the spiritual and heavenly prepared substance, and this earthly Body of Gold, must be joined together, and coagulated into *one* body.

But it should be noted that common gold is useless for this purpose, being unsuitable and dead. For though it has been declared by God the Omnipotent to be the most precious and beautiful of metals, yet so long as it lay hid in the mine its perfect growth and development was hindered. Daily use, moreover, blunts its indwelling powers, namely, sulphur, or its soul, and it is continually becoming mingled and defiled with other things that are foreign to its nature. Hence it becomes daily more and more unfit to be the subject of art. You must, therefore, seek to obtain gold which has a pure, living spirit, and of which the sulphur is not yet weakened and sophisticated, but is pure and clear (by passing through antimony, or by the heaven and sphere of Saturn, and being purged of all its defilement): otherwise the first substance, being spiritual and ethereal, will not combine with it. For this Magistry deals only with pure bodies, and suffers no unclean thing near, on, or around it.

Now when these unequal parts of the water and gold (differing not only in quality, but also in quantity, for the first is, after its preparation, ethereal, thin, subtle, and soft, while the other is very heavy, firm and hard) have been combined in a solutory alembic, and reduced to a dry liquid or amalgam, they should be left six or seven days exposed to gentle heat of at least a tepid character. Then take one part of the three parts of water, and pour it into a round, oval glass phial, similar to an egg in shape; put the tempered liquid in the midst thereof, and leave it once more for six or seven days; the Body of the Sun will then be gradually dissolved by the water. Thereupon both will begin to combine, and one will mingle with the other as gently and insensibly as ice with warm water. This union the Sages have shadowed out in various ways, and likened it, for instance, to the wedlock of a bride and bridegroom (as in the Song of Solomon). When this is done, add the third part (which you have kept) to the rest, but not all at once, or in one day, but in seven different instalments: otherwise the Body would become too liquid, and entirely corrupted by too much moisture.

For as seed, when cast into the ground, is destroyed and rendered useless by an excess of moisture and rain, so our work cannot prosper unless the water is judiciously administered. All this being done, let the phial be carefully closed and sealed, to prevent the compound from evaporating or losing its odour; and place it in the furnace, there exposing it to a gentle, continuous, airy, vaporous, and well-tempered heat, resembling the degree of warmth with which the hen hatches her eggs.

[NOTE.—The Sages have said much about vaporous fire, which they have called the fire of wisdom, which is not elementary or material, but (according to them) essential and preternatural. They also call it the Divine fire, *i.e.*, the water of mercury, roused into action by common fire.] Digest and heat it well, yet take care that none of it is sublimed, or, in the parabolic language of the Sages, that the wife does not rule the husband, and that the husband does not abuse his authority over the wife, &c.,—if you do this, the whole will proceed normally, without any interference on your part (except that, of course, you must keep up the fire). At first the earthly Body of the Sun is totally solved, and decomposed, and robbed of all strength (the Body, which was first of a muddy impurity, changing to a coal-black colour, called by the Sages the Raven's Head, within the space of forty days), and is thus despoiled of its Soul. The Soul is borne upward, and the Body, being severed from the Soul, lies for some time,

as if dead, at the bottom of the still, like ashes. But if the fire is increased, and well tempered, the Soul gradually descends again in drops, and saturates and moistens its Body, and so prevents it from being completely burned and consumed. Then, again, it ascends and descends, the process being repeated seven times. The temperature you must keep at the same point from beginning to end. Haste slowly—for it is of the greatest importance that the influence of the fire should be brought to bear gently and gradually. In the meantime you will observe various chemical changes (*e.g.*, of colour) in the distilling vessel, to which you must pay careful attention. For if they appear in due order, it is a sign that your undertaking will be brought to a prosperous issue.

First there appear granular bodies like fishes' eyes, then a circle around the substance, which is first reddish, then turns white, then green and yellow like a peacock's tail, then a dazzling white, and finally a deep red—until at last, under the rarefying influence of the fire, the Soul and Spirit are combined with their Body, that lies at the bottom, into a fixed and indissoluble Essence, which union and conjunction cannot be witnessed without unspeakable admiration and awe. Then you will behold the revived, quickened, perfected, and glorified Body, which is of a most beautiful purple colour (like cochineal), and its tincture has virtue to change, tinge, and cure every imperfect body, as we shall hereafter show more in detail. When thus, by the grace and help of God, you have happily attained the goal of your labours, and found the Phoenix of the Sages, you should once more return thanks to Him with your whole heart, and use His unspeakable gift solely for His glory, and for the advantage of your suffering brethren. Thus I have most faithfully explained to you the whole process by which this most noble Art, and highest achievement, to wit, the Egg of the Sages, or Philosopher's Stone, may be begun and successfully completed.

If, however, during the operation, any accidental mishap should occur, it must be seen to in time, or else the chemical process will never be brought to perfection. If you (1) observe that before the compound is solved and turns black, anything is sublimed, or evaporated, or something resembling a red oil floats on the surface of the substance (which is a bad sign); or (2) if before or after it has turned white, it turns red too suddenly; or (3) if, towards the end, it does not properly coagulate; or (4) if the substance is so strongly affected by the heat that, being taken out, it does not instantly *melt on red hot iron like wax*, but tinges and colours the iron, and afterwards will not remain fixed in the fire—you may regard all these indications as [symptoms](#) of a false composition and temperature, or of some kind or other of carelessness.

If these defects are not immediately seen to, they will speedily become incorrigible. A cunning adept should be acquainted with the various devices by which they may be remedied; and I will recount them here for the sake of the beginner.

If one or more of the above defects are observed, the whole compound must again be taken out of the phial, and once more solved in the aforesaid water of mercury (also called virgin's milk, or the milk, blood, and sweat of the First Matter, or the never-failing fountain, or the water of life, which nevertheless contains the most malignant poison); with this water it must once more be moistened and saturated, and then subjected to the action of the fire, until there is no longer any sublimation or formation of gaseous vapours; or till the final coagulation has duly taken place, as

described above. Of its subsequent fermentation and multiplication, and of its uses, more will be said in the third part.

Of the *time* required for the whole process, it is impossible to say anything very definite; and, indeed, the Sages have put forward the most conflicting opinions on this point—no doubt because some have been occupied with it longer than others. But if any man will carefully observe the working of Nature, and be guided by her teaching, and in all things hold a middle course, he will gain his object sooner than one that trusts too blindly to his own wisdom.

But I tell thee not to go beyond the middle point of the letter X either in the former or latter stage of the operation, but to take one half (V) for the time of the solution and the other half for the composition. Then, again, for the final union, the number XX should be thy guide (unless anything unforeseen should occur). Be satisfied with that space of time. On the other hand, do not try to hurry on the consummation, for one hour's mistake may throw thee back a whole month. If thou strivest unduly to shorten the time thou wilt produce an abortion. Many persons have, through their ignorance, or self-opinionated haste, obtained a Nihilixir instead of the hoped for Elixir.

In view of the importance of this magical science, I have thought it right to lay this before the sons of knowledge, for their careful consideration.

#### RIDDLE.

There are seven cities, seven metals, seven days, and the number seven; seven letters, seven words in order meet, seven times, and as many places; seven herbs, seven arts, and seven stones. Divide seven by three, and thou shalt be wise. No one will then strive to precipitate the half. In brief, all will proceed favourably in this number."

In the following lines the whole Process is briefly described:—

#### (I.)—THE FIRST STAGE.

"Dissolve your substance, and then let it be decomposed; then let it be distilled, and once more condensed."

#### (II.)—THE SECOND STAGE.

"Combine two things, decompose them, let them become black. Digest them and change them to white by your skill; at last let the compound change to a deep red, let it be coagulated, and fix it; and you will be a favoured man. If, afterwards, you cause it to ferment, you will have conducted the whole work prosperously. Then tinge therewith whatsoever you will, and it will multiply to you infinite treasure."

Or, more briefly, thus:—

"Seek three in one, again seek one in three. Dissolve, and condense, and thou shalt be master of the Art."

A Riddle in which also the Process is indicated:—

"A spirit is given for a time to the body, and that spirit is the life of a soul. If the spirit draw the soul to itself, they are both severed from the body. Then are there three abiding in the same place, until the precious body is dissolved, and is decomposed and dies. But after a time the spirit and the soul are brought back by gentle warmth, and hold once more their former seat. Then you have the essence; no perfection is wanting, and the work is glorified by a joyful end."

#### PROV. XXIII.

"My son, give me thy heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."

### PART III.

*Sirach xliii: "Who has seen Him that he should tell of Him? Who can exalt Him according to His greatness? We see but the smallest of His works: those that are much greater are hidden from us. For God has made all, and gives understanding thereof to those that fear Him."*

Concerning the end of this great Art, and the excellence, virtue, efficacy, and unspeakable utility of the marvellous Philosopher's Stone, much has been written: yet has no one been able to tell out its thought-surpassing glory or to adequately set forth its fame. All Sages have regarded it as the chief felicity that this earth can afford, without which no one can attain perfection in this world. For Morienus says: "He who has this Stone has all, and needs no other help." For it includes all temporal felicity, bodily health, and solid good fortune.

They have also commended the Stone for that the spirit and efficacy which lie concealed in it are the spirit of the Quintessence of all things beneath the disc of the moon; on this account they say that it upholds the sky, and moves the sea. They also describe it as the most elect, the most subtle, the purest, and noblest of all the heavenly spirits, to which all the rest yield obedience as to their King, that bestows on men all health and prosperity, heals all diseases, gives to the God-fearing temporal honour and a long life, but to the wicked, who abuse it, eternal punishment. It is also extolled by the Sages because it has never been known to fail of effecting its purpose, but is found to be in all proved, perfect, and unerring. Therefore Hermes and Aristotle call it the true, undeceiving, and unfailing arcanum of all arcana, the Divine Virtue which is hidden from the foolish. In brief, they have designated it the chief of all things under heaven, the marvellous conclusion or epilogue of all philosophic works. Hence some devout Sages have affirmed that it was Divinely revealed to Adam, and by him handed down to all the holy Patriarchs.

For by its aid Noah is said to have built the Ark, Moses the Tabernacle with all its golden vessels, and Solomon the Temple, besides accomplishing many other great deeds, fashioning many precious ornaments, and procuring for himself long life and boundless riches.

Moreover, the Sages own that through its means they invented the seven liberal arts, and sought and obtained sustenance for themselves. God gave them this gift that they might not be hindered in their researches by poverty, or driven to flatter the rich for the sake of gain, and thus become contemptible, and as a jest or by-word in His sight.

The Stone enabled them to discern the great mysteries of the Divine wonders, and the inexhaustible riches of the Divine Glory, By it their hearts were roused and stirred up to a more intimate knowledge of God. For they sought not to obtain great wealth, or the honour and pleasures of this world, but all their delight was to search out and contemplate the marvellous secrets of Nature. They regarded the works of God with very different eyes, and in a very different manner than most men in our own times, who, alas, look on them like cows or calves, and pursue the study of our noble Art for the sake of wealth, and temporal advantage and pleasure. But they will never find what they seek. For God gives not this gift to the wicked, who despise His word, but to the godly who strive to live honestly and quietly in this wicked and impure world, and to lend a helping hand to the needy [brethren](#); or, in the words of the poet:—

"God gives this Art to the sincere and good, nor can the world purchase it with all its gold. The vulgar know nothing of this Mystery, for if any man be impious, he seeks the Stone in vain. He who holds it in silence dwells where he would, and fears neither accidents, nor thieves, nor any evil. For this reason this sacred gift is granted to few: it is in the hands of God, and He gives it to whomsoever He will."

Much has been said concerning the operation, virtue, and utility of this Art in a variety of writings which have heretofore seen the light, as, for example, unto what extent the said Stone, prepared and made more than perfect, becomes a medicine which is above every medicine. It has been denominated the universal panacea, to which not only all diseases yield (as, for instance, leprosy and gout), but by the use of which old men may become young again, recover their lost faculties, and their former strength, and by which those who are already half dead may be revived and quickened. But, as I am no physician, I will forbear to give an opinion on this point. That the Stone has this virtue, every one that possesses it can discover for himself. I prefer to set down a few observations concerning those qualities and uses of the Stone which are known to me by daily experience.

In the first place, the practice of this Art enables us to understand, not merely the marvels of Nature, but the nature of God Himself, in all its unspeakable glory. It shadows forth, in a wonderful manner, how man is the image of the most Holy Trinity, the essence of the Holy Trinity, and the Oneness of Substances in that Trinity, as well as the difference of Persons; the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, His Nativity, Passion, Death, and Resurrection; His Exaltation and the Eternal Happiness won by Him for us men; also our purification from original sin, in the absence of which purification all good actions of men would be vain and void—and, in brief, all the articles of the Christian faith, and the reason why man must pass through much tribulation and anguish, and fall a prey to death, before he can rise again to a new life. All this we see in our Art as it were in a mirror, as we shall take occasion to set forth in our Fourth Part.

Secondly, its earthly and natural use consists in changing all imperfect metals, by means of its tincture, into pure and solid gold, as I will try to show as briefly as I can.

The Stone or Elixir cannot be used for this purpose in the form in which we left it at the completion of the previous stage of our process; but it should be still further fermented and augmented in the following manner, as otherwise it could not be conveniently applied to imperfect metals and bodies.

Take one part of the Essence, and add to it three parts of purest gold, which has been purged and melted by means of antimony, and reduced to very thin plates. Let them be placed together in the crucible.

Thereupon the whole compound will be transformed into a pure and efficacious Tincture, which, when applied to base metals, in the ratio of 1 :: 1000, will change them into pure gold.

NOTE.—The purer the metals are, and the greater their affinity to our substance, the more easily are they received by the Tincture, and the more perfect and rapid is the process of regeneration. For the transformation consists in all that is impure and unsuitable being purged off, and rejected like dross. In the same manner flawed stones can be transmuted into precious diamonds, and common crystal can be so tinged as to become equal to the most precious stones. Moreover, many other things may be done with the Tincture which must not be revealed to the wicked world. These virtues of the Stone, and others of a like kind, are looked upon as the least important by the Sages, and by all Christians on whom God has bestowed this most precious gift. Such men think them vile indeed when compared with the knowledge of God and of His works which is afforded by the Stone.

For let me tell you that he on whom the Most High has conferred the knowledge of this Mystery esteems mere money and earthly riches as lightly as the dirt of the streets. His heart and all his desires are bent upon seeing and enjoying the heavenly reality of which all these things are but a figure; as Solomon, the wisest of wise Kings, testifies in chapter vii. of the Book of Wisdom, where he says: "I preferred wisdom before sceptres and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. Neither compared I unto her any precious stone, because all gold in respect of her is as a little sand, and silver shall be counted as clay before her." Those, therefore, that desire this Art as a means of procuring temporal honour, pleasure, and wealth, are the most foolish of men; and they can never obtain that which they seek at so great an expense of money, time, and trouble, and which fills their hearts, their minds, and all their thoughts. For this reason the Sages have expressed a profound contempt for worldly wealth (not as though it were in itself a bad thing, seeing that it is highly commended in Holy Scripture as an excellent gift of God, but because of its vile abuse). They despised it because it seemed to hinder men from following the good and the true, and to introduce a mischievous confusion into their conceptions of right and wrong. These abuses of money the illustrious Marcellus Palingenius Stellatus has graphically described in the poem entitled the "Zodiac of Life," under the sign of Sagittarius, where he draws a vivid picture of the evils of avarice. To this poem I would therefore refer the gentle reader.

From this poem we may gather how lightly this distinguished man, though evidently a possessor of the Stone, as appears out of his "Zodiac of Nature," held gold and silver, and all things temporal, in respect of virtue.

Nor is his case by any means exceptional. All Sages have regarded wisdom, and the knowledge of heavenly things, as far better than the transient things of earth, and have so ordered their lives and actions that at the last they might obtain immortality and eternal glory. This feeling is well expressed by Solomon, in his Book of Proverbs (cp. xvi.), where he says: "How much better is it to get wisdom than gold! and to get

understanding rather to be chosen than silver!"—and again in the xxii: chapter: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and knowledge rather than silver and gold." The same aspiration prompted the following words of the son of Sirach: "See that thou keep a good name, for it is better than a thousand treasures of gold."

By reason of these and other virtues which result from the philosophy of the Stone, the Sages have never wearied of extolling its marvellous excellence; and they have taken great pains to make it known to the worthy, in order that its wisdom might be accepted and practically exhibited by them. But to the foolish everything is obscure and difficult to be understood. This is the gist of the first six chapters of Solomon's Book of Proverbs, where he says that men should strain every nerve to attain to our wisdom. In the Book of Ecclesiastes, too, he uses the following words: "My son, be satisfied with a lowly station: for it is better than all that this world desires. The greater thou art, the more humble thyself, and God will give thee grace. For the Lord is a most High God, and does great things through the lowly."

#### **PART IV.**

##### **PSALM LXXVIII. AND MATTH. XIII.**

*"I will open my mouth in parables, and declare things hidden from the foundation of the world."*

When it pleases Almighty God by His Divine Word to make known unto the human race His marvellous, deep, and celestial mysteries, He is wont to do so in parables, and to shadow forth His meaning in things familiar to our eyes which are depicted visibly before us. For instance, when pronouncing upon Adam in Paradise, after the Fall, the sentence of death, He told him that as he was made and formed of dust, he should also return to dust—dust being a thing which in itself has no life. Again, when promising to Abraham an innumerable posterity, He illustrated His meaning by pointing to the stars of the heavens, the sand of the sea shore, and the dust of the earth. In the same manner, God made use of divers precious types in declaring His will to the children of Israel through the Prophets. This practice was also adopted in the New Testament by Christ Himself—the Foundation and Express Image of the Truth—who set forth His teaching in parables in order that it might be better understood. So He compares His Divine and Blessed Gospel—the highest happiness of man—to seed that is sown in a field, amongst which the enemy scatters evil seed; to a hidden treasure; to a pearl of great price; to a grain of wheat; to a mustard seed; to leaven, etc.

[Cp. Luke viii. Matthew xiii. and xxii. Luke xix. Matthew xx.]

The Kingdom of Heaven He describes under the image of a great Wedding Feast. The Christian Church, again, He compares to a Vineyard, and to a King calling upon his servants to render up an account. He also uses the similitude of a noble lord who entrusted his goods to his servants, of a lost sheep, a prodigal son, and others of a similar nature.

[Cp. Matthew xviii. Luke xvi. Matthew xxv. Luke xviii. Mark xii. Luke xviii. Luke x.]



These types and similitudes were given to us on account of our human infirmity, which prevents us from understanding and picturing to ourselves the things of heaven. And since it is God's wont to reveal His mind in parables and figures, we can but regard it as of a piece with all the other dealings of God, that the Chief Good, His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who by His obedience saved all mankind from eternal death and restored to us the Kingdom of Heaven, should have expressed His nature in a concrete bodily form. This is the greatest mystery of Almighty God, and the highest and worthiest object of knowledge.

[Ephes. iii. Col. i. Isaiah xlv.: "*Let the heavens drop down from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness. Let the earth open and bring forth the Saviour.*"]

And although this great Good had been prefigured to us in the Old Testament by types such as the sacrifice of Isaac, the ladder of Jacob, the betrayal and wonderful exaltation of Joseph the brazen serpent, Samson, David, and Jonah; yet, besides all these, Almighty God deigned to give us a fuller revelation and a corporal, visible, and apprehensible Idea of His heavenly treasures and gifts in the Person of His Son. This earthly and bodily manifestation He plainly foretold in the Prophet Isaiah (cp. xxviii.): "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a corner stone, a tried stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." To the same effect the Royal Seer David speaks, through the Holy Spirit, in Psalm cxviii.: "The Stone which the builders rejected is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." This type, the aforesaid Corner Stone, Christ applies to Himself (Matth., cp. xxi.) when He says: "Have ye never read in the Scriptures? The Stone that the builders rejected is become the chief stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. And whosoever shall fall on this Stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall it shall grind him to powder." And Peter (Acts, cp. iv.) and Paul in his Epistle to the Romans (cp. ix.) repeat almost the same words.

This tried, blessed, and heavenly Stone Jesus Christ was longingly expected from the beginning of the world by the Fathers and Holy Patriarchs; God-enlightened men prayed that they might be accounted worthy to see the promised Christ in His bodily and visible form. And if they rightly knew Him by the Holy Spirit, they were comforted by His presence in their lives, and had an invisible Friend on whom they could stay themselves, as upon a spiritual fulcrum, in trouble and danger even unto the end of their life.

But although that heavenly Stone was bestowed by God as a free gift on the whole human race, the rich as well as the poor (Matth. xi., 6.); yet to this very day comparatively few have been able to know and apprehend Him. To the majority of mankind He has always been a hidden secret, and a grievous stumbling block, as Isaiah foretold in his eighth chapter: "He shall be for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, a gin and a snare, so that many shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." The same was revealed to the aged Simeon, when he spake thus to Mary, the Mother of the Corner Stone: "Behold, He shall be for a fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be spoken against." To this S. Paul also bears witness (ad. Rom. ix.): "They fell from the Stone of offence, and the rock of stumbling. He that believes in Him shall not be confounded." This Stone is precious to them that believe, but to the unbelieving "a stone of offence and

stumbling, seeing that they are broken against the word, and believe not in Him on whom they are founded (Eccl. xliii.)." In all these respects the Precious, Blessed, and Heavenly Stone agrees most wonderfully with our earthly, corporal, and philosophical Stone; and it is, therefore, well worth our while to compare our Stone with its Heavenly prototype. We shall thus understand that the earthly philosophical Stone is the true image of the real, spiritual, and heavenly Stone Jesus Christ.

Thus, then, those who would truly know and prepare the first Matter of the Philosopher's Stone (the chief and principal mystery of this earth) must have a deep insight into the nature of things, just as those who would know the Heavenly Stone (*i.e.*, the indissoluble, triune essence of the true and living God) must have a profound spiritual insight into the things of heaven: hence we said in our first part, that the student of our Art must first have a thorough knowledge of Nature and her properties. If a man would come to know the highest good, he must rightly know, first God, and then himself (Acts xvii.: "For in Him we live," etc.). If anyone learn to know himself and God (*i.e.* our duty as men, our origin, the end of our being, and our affinity to God), he has the highest scholarship, without which it is impossible to obtain happiness, either in this world, or in the world to come.

If we would find that high and heavenly Stone, we must remember that, as our earthly Philosophical Stone is to be sought in one thing and two things, which are met with everywhere, so we must look for Him nowhere but in the eternal Word of God, and the Holy Scripture (consisting of the Old and New Testaments)—as God the Father testified at His Transfiguration on Mount Tabor (Mark ix., Luke ix.), when He said: "This is My Beloved Son: hear ye Him." In the same way Christ, the essential and eternal Word of God, speaks of Himself: "No one comes to the Father, but by Me"—according to the Scripture, the infallible testimony of the Divine Word (Isaiah xxxiv.). In Isaiah viii. we find the words: "to the Law and the Testimony." And Christ, the aforesaid Corner Stone, bears witness to the necessity of Scripture, when He says: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye believe that ye have eternal life, and it is they that testify of Me." Therefore, David says in Psalm cxix., long before the coming of Christ: "My delight, O Lord, is in Thy commandments, for they are my counsellors; Thy word is a lamp unto my feet; I rejoice in the way of Thy testimonies more than in great riches. Also, I consider Thy ways, and walk in Thy testimonies."

[Cp. Gen. xiii. Psal. xlv. Isaiah ix., 49. Jerem. xxxii. John x., 14. Rom. ix. I. Cor. v.]

Moreover, when and where the First Matter of this heavenly Stone was founded ("from the beginning of the world"), is expressly set forth in several passages of Holy Scripture, especially in the fifth chapter of Micah: "Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." When the Jews asked the Corner Stone Himself who He was, He answered: "I that speak to you was from the beginning," and again: "Before Abraham was, I am." From these passages it follows that He had His being, without a beginning, from all eternity, and that He will abide throughout all eternity.

And although this knowledge is to be found and obtained nowhere but in the Old and New Testaments, nevertheless he

who would gain it must proceed with the greatest care (II. Timothy, iii.), for one false step may render all our subsequent labour useless. He who would gain a golden understanding of the word of truth, should have the eyes of his soul opened, and his mind illumined by the inward light (I. John, v.) which God has kindled in our hearts from the beginning; for he who strives to obtain this knowledge without the Divine light, may easily mistake Saul for Paul, and choose a false road instead of the right path. This happens continually in regard to our earthly Stone. Ten persons may read the same description of it, and yet only one may read the words aright. So the majority of mankind daily miss the knowledge of the Heavenly Stone; not because it is not before their eyes, but because they have not eyes to see it. Therefore Christ says: (Luke xi.) "The eye is the light of the body, and if the eye be dark the whole body will be full of darkness." In the seventeenth chapter of the same Gospel He says: "Behold the kingdom of God is within you." From these words it most clearly appears that the knowledge of the light in man must come from within, and not from without.

The external object, as they say, or the letter, is written for the sake of our infirmity, as a further aid to the implanted light of grace (Matth. xxiv.), as also the outward spoken word is used as an auxiliary means for the conveyance and advancement of knowledge. For example, if a white and a black tablet were put before you, and you were asked to say which was white and which black, you would not be able to answer the question if you had no previous knowledge of those colours; your ability to do so, comes, not from looking at the tablets, but from the knowledge that before was in your mind. The object only stirs up your perceptive faculty, and calls out the knowledge that before was in you, but does not of itself afford that knowledge. In the same way, if any one put into your hand a flint, and asked you to bring outward and visible fire out of it for him, you would be unable to do so without the steel that belongs to it, with which you would have to elicit the spark slumbering in the stone. Moreover, you would have to catch and fan it into flame on a piece of tinder—or else the spark would immediately vanish again. If you do this, you will have a bright fire, and so long as you keep it up, you will be able to do with it whatever you like. In the same manner, the heavenly light slumbers in the human soul, and must be struck out by outward contact, namely, by the true faith, through reading and hearing, and through the Holy Spirit whom Christ restored to us, and promised to give us (John xiv.: "No man comes to the Father but by me"), and to put into our dark, but still glowing hearts, as into a kind of tinder, where He may be fanned and kindled into a bright flame, working the will of God in our souls. For He delights to dwell in light unapproachable, and in the hearts of believers. Although no man ever has, or ever can, see God with his outward bodily eyes, yet with the inward eyes of the soul He may well be seen and known. But notwithstanding that inward light casts its bright beams over the whole world, and into the heart of every man without any difference, the world, by reason of its innate corruptness, cannot see it rightly, and refuses to acknowledge it; and on this account so many false and pernicious notions are current concerning it. But we shall do well to consider that God has, not without a good purpose, furnished our heads with two eyes and two ears; for He would thereby teach us that man has a double vision and a double hearing; namely, the outward and the inward. With the inward he is to judge spiritual things, and the outward is also to perform its own proper office. The same distinction we find in the spirit and the letter of Scripture. For this reason I thought fit to explain this matter for the sake of students of the simple sort, who might otherwise be at a loss to apprehend the full significance of the triune Stone.

Again, as the substance of the earthly Stone is nothing accounted of in the world, and rejected by the majority of mankind, so Christ, the eternal Word of the Father, and the Heavenly Triune Stone, is lightly esteemed in this world, and scarcely even looked at; nay, we may say that nothing is so profoundly and utterly despised by mankind, as the Saving Word of God. Hence (Cor. i., 2) it is called foolishness by the wise of this world. Nor is it only contemned and regarded as worthless; it is even proscribed and laid under a ban, like some false heretical doctrine, and it is [grievous](#) for a God-fearing man to listen to the blasphemous words that are spoken against it. But the believer must be tried by it, and the world sifted by its appearance. So S. John says (cp. i.): "He came unto His own, and they received Him not;" and again: "He was in the world, and the world knew Him not."

Again, as the physical and earthly water-Stone of the Sages has, on account of its unsearchable excellence, been called by a great variety of names by the multitude of philosophers, so the Heavenly Light, the one Noumen and Illuminant, whose riches and glory are past finding out, is designated in Holy Scripture by a large number of titles. We will go through the most important names of both. The Philosopher's Stone is called the most ancient, secret or unknown, natural, incomprehensible, heavenly, blessed, sacred Stone of the Sages. It is described as being true, more certain than certainty itself, the arcanum of all arcana—the Divine virtue and efficacy, which is hidden from the foolish, the aim and end of all things under heaven, the wonderful epilogue or conclusion of all the labours of the Sages—the perfect essence of all the elements, the indestructible body which no element can injure, the quintessence; the double and living mercury which has in itself the heavenly spirit—the cure for all unsound and imperfect metals—the everlasting light—the panacea for all diseases—the glorious Phoenix—the most precious of treasures—the chief good of Nature—the universal triune Stone, which is naturally composed of three things, and, nevertheless, is but one—nay, is generated and brought forth of one, two, three, four, and five. In the writings of the Sages we may also find it spoken of as the Catholic Magnesia, or the seed of the world, and under many other names and titles of a like nature, which we may best sum up and comprehend in the perfect number of one thousand. And as the earthly Philosopher's Stone and its substance have a thousand names, so an infinite variety of titles is even more justly predicated of the Chief Good of the Universe. For He is God, the Word of God, the Eternal Son, the real, eternal, tried, and precious corner and foundation Stone which the builders refused and rejected. He is true, and more ancient than all things seeing that He was before the foundation of the world, and from everlasting. He is the true, hidden, and unknown God, supernatural, incomprehensible, heavenly, blessed, and highly

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praised. He is the only Saviour, and the God of Gods (Deut. x.). Sure He is, and true, and cannot lie (Nu. xxiii., Rom. iii.). He is the only Potentate who does what He will, according to His good pleasure. He is secret and eternal, and in Him lie hid all the treasures and mysteries of knowledge (Rom. xvi., Col. ii.). He is the only Divine virtue and omnipotence, which is unknown to the foolish, or the wise of this world. He is the only true essence of all elements, seeing that of Him all things are and were created (Rom. ii., Ja. i.). He is the quintessence, the essence of all essences, and yet Himself not an essence of anything. He has in Himself the Heavenly Spirit which quickens all things with life itself (Wisd. vii., Isaiah xlii., John xiv.). He is the one

perfect Saviour of all imperfect bodies and men, the true heavenly physician of the soul, the eternal light that lights all men (Isaiah lx., John i.), the universal Remedy of all diseases, the true spiritual panacea. He is the glorious Phœnix that quickens and restores with His own blood His little ones whom the old Serpent, the Devil, had wounded and killed. He is the greatest treasure, and the best thing in heaven or upon earth, the triune universal essence, called Jehovah—of one, the Divine essence—of two, God and Man—of three, namely three Persons—of four, namely three Persons, and one Divine Substance—of five, namely of three Persons, one

Divine, and one Human Substance. He is also the true Catholic Magnesia, or universal seed of the world, of Whom, through Whom, and to Whom are all things in heaven and upon earth—the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, says the Lord that is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty (Apoc. i.).

But again, as in the case of the philosophical work, it is not enough for anyone to know its substance and its triune essence, with the quality and property thereof, if he does not also know where to obtain it, and how to become a partaker of its benefits—which can only be done, as we said above, by dissolving the substance into its three parts, decomposing it, and so depriving it of its caliginous shadow and hirsute essence, subliming its inner hidden heart and soul by means of the sweet, universal, fiery, marine water (extracted from itself) into a volatile essence--so we cannot know that glorious triune Essence, called Jehovah, unless the image of Him is first dissolved and purified in our own souls, the veil of Moses (*i.e.*, our own desperate sinfulness which prevents us from seeing God as He is) being taken away, and our inner heart and soul being purified, cleansed, and sublimed by the Divine illumination of Him that dwells within, namely, Christ, who washes our hearts like pure water (Isaiah xliv.), and fills them with His sweet and gentle comfort. So you first behold the wrath, but afterwards the love of God.

Once more: As our Matter, in the philosophical work, after being dissolved into its three parts or principles, must again be coagulated and reduced into its own proper salt, and into *one* essence, which is then called the salt of the Sages: so God, and His Son, must be known as One, by means of their essential substance, and must not be regarded as two or three Divinities, possessing more than one essence. When you have thus known God through His Son, and united them by the bond of the Holy Spirit, God is no longer invisible, or full of wrath, but you may feel His love, and, as it were, see Him with your eyes, and handle Him with your hands, in the person of Jesus Christ, His Son and express image. But even this knowledge of the Triune God will avail you little, unless you continue to advance and grow in His grace, for God otherwise will be still terrible, and as it is said of Him (Deut. vii., 18), "a consuming fire." For as the substance of the Sages, after all the changes that it has undergone, will do more harm than good as a medicine applied to the body, without the final preparation, so unless you fully and perfectly apprehend Christ, the mere knowledge of Him will tend to your condemnation rather than to the salvation of your soul (I. John, iv.). Therefore if you wish to become a partaker of Christ, and if you desire to possess and enjoy His heavenly gifts and treasures, you must advance in the personal knowledge of Christ, and look upon Him, not merely as a pure and immaterial Spirit, but as the Saviour who in the fulness of time took upon Himself a human body, and became the Son of Man, as well as the Son of God.

For as in our philosophical work another most noble and cognate metallic body must be united to our first substance (if it is to be rendered effectual for the perfecting of other metals), and joined together with it into one body, so the Divine Nature of the Son of God had to take upon itself, as it were, another kindred "metallic" body, namely our human nature, our human flesh and blood (which, having been created in the image of God, has the greatest affinity with Him), and to be joined with it into one indissoluble whole, in order that He might have the power of bringing imperfect men to perfection.

But again, we said that common gold, on account of its imperfection and impurity, would not combine with our substance, because its manifold defects had rendered it "dead" and useless for our purpose, and that, for this reason, it must first receive a bright and pure body (not adulterated or weakened by the presence of bad internal sulphur). In the same way, the Divine essence of the Son of God could not be joined to common human nature, which is conceived in sin, defiled with hereditary uncleanness, and many actual sins and besetting infirmities (though all these are no integral part of human nature as such), but required a pure, sinless, and perfect humanity.

For if the earthly Adam, before the Fall (though after all only a created being), was holy, perfect, and sinless, how much more must the heavenly Adam, to whom the only begotten Son of God was joined, have a perfect humanity? Therefore the heavenly, eternal, fundamental Corner Stone, Jesus Christ (like the earthly Philosophical Stone), is now One, uniting in Himself, after an inscrutable manner, a dual nature of admirable generation and origin, and the properties both of God and of man. For according to His Divine Nature, He is true God, of the Substance of His heavenly and eternal Father, and the Son of God, whose goings out (as the Scripture says) were from everlasting (Mic. v.). According to His human nature, on the other hand, He was born in the fullness of time as a true and perfect man, without sin, but with a real body and soul (Matth. xxvi.). Therefore He now eternally represents the indissoluble and personal union of the Divine and the human substance, the oneness of the natures of God and man.

It is much to be wished that the eyes of our self-opinionated doctors were opened, or the nebulous film, or sophistical mask, which obscures their vision, taken away, that so they might see more clearly. I am particularly alluding to the Aristotelians, and other blind theological quibblers, who spend their lives in wrangling and disputing about Divine things in a most unchristian manner, and put forth no end of manifold distinctions, divisions, and confusions, thus obscuring the Scriptural doctrine concerning the union of natures and communication of substances in Christ. If they will not believe God and His Holy Word, they might at least be enlightened by a study of our chemical Art, and of the union of two waters (viz., that of mercury and that of the Sun) which our Art so strikingly and palpably exhibits. But the scholastic wisdom of their Ethnic philosophy is entirely based upon pagan philosophy, and has no foundation in Holy Scripture or Christian Theology. Their Aristotelian precepts, their "substances" and "accidents," entirely blind them to the true proportions of things, and they forget Tertullian's saying "that philosophers are the patriarchs of heresy." But we do not think it worth while to pursue this subject any further.

Again, as our chemical compound (in which the two essences have been combined) is subjected to the action of fire, and is decomposed, dissolved, and well digested, and as this process, before its consummation, exhibits various chromatic changes, so this Divine Man, and Human God, Jesus Christ, had, by the will of His heavenly Father, to pass through the furnace of affliction, that is, through many troubles, insults, and sufferings, in the course of which His outward aspect was grievously changed; thus He suffered hunger when, after His Baptism and His entrance upon the ministry of the Word, the Holy Spirit led Him into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil, and there waged with Him a threefold contest, as an example to all baptized Christian men, who, having declared themselves followers of Christ, are, like Him, tempted, and have to sustain the shock of various grievous assaults. Again, He was subject to weariness, He shed tears, He trembled, He wrestled with death, He shed drops of sweat mingled with blood, He was taken captive and bound, was struck in the face by the high priest's servant, was mocked, derided, spitted upon, scourged, crowned with thorns, condemned to die upon the Cross, which He had to bear Himself; was nailed to it between two malefactors, received vinegar and gall to drink, cried out with a loud voice, commended His spirit into the hands of His Father—and so gave up the ghost and died upon the Cross. These and other tribulations, which are faithfully related by the Evangelists, He had to bear in the course of His earthly life.

And as the Sages say that the above mentioned process of chemical digestion is generally completed within forty days, so the same number seems to have a most peculiar significance in Scripture, more particularly in connection with the life of our Lord. The Israelites remained forty years in the wilderness; Moses was forty days and forty nights on Mount Sinai; Elijah's flight from Ahab occupied the same length of time. Christ fasted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness; He spent forty months in preaching upon earth; He lay forty hours in the grave—appeared to His disciples forty days after His Resurrection. Within forty years from Christ's Ascension Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, and made level with the ground.

Then again, the Sages have called our compound, while undergoing the process of decomposition, the Raven's Head, on account of its blackness. In the same way, Christ (Isaiah liii.) had no form nor comeliness—was despised and rejected of men a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief—so despised, that men hid, as it were, their faces from Him; and in the 22nd Psalm He complains that He "is a worm, and no man," "a scorn and laughing-stock of the people." We may also see an analogy to Christ in the fact that the decomposed body of the sun lies for some time dead and lifeless, like burnt-out ashes, at the bottom of the phial, and that its "soul" gradually descends to it under the influence of greater heat, and once more saturates, as it were, the dead and decaying body, and saves it from total destruction. For when, on the Mount of Olives, and on the Cross, Christ had experienced a feeling of utter dereliction, He was afterwards comforted and strengthened, and nourished (as it were) with Divine nectar from above. And when at length He had given up the ghost, and all the strength forsook His body, so that He went down to the parts below the earth, even there He was preserved, refreshed, and filled with the quickening power of the eternal Deity, and thus, by the reunion of His spirit with His dead body, quickened, raised from the dead, lifted up into heaven, and appointed Lord and King of all—where, sitting at the right hand of His Father, He now rules, governs, preserves, and quickens all things with the power of His Word. This marvellous Union and Divine Exaltation angels and men in heaven, upon earth, and under the earth can scarce think upon without holy

fear, and trembling awe—Whose power, strength, and purple Tincture (*i.e.*, Blood) changes us imperfect men and sinners in body and soul, and is a marvellous medicine for all our diseases, as we shall see further on.

We have briefly and simply considered the most obvious analogies that serve to establish the typical connection between Jesus Christ, the heavenly Corner Stone, and our earthly Philosopher's Stone, and to illustrate its figurative resemblance to the Incarnation of the Saviour of men. We will now proceed to shew that the earthly Stone also shadows forth His transmuting, strengthening, healing, and quickening power towards us sinful, wretched, and imperfect human beings.

For though God created man at the beginning in His own image, and made him more glorious and perfect than other creatures, and breathed into him a living and immortal soul, yet by the fall the image of God was defaced, and man was changed into the very reverse of what God had intended that he should be.

But in order that we might be restored to our former glorious state, God in His great mercy devised the following remedy: As the perfect earthly Stone, or Tincture, after its completion extends its quickening efficacy, and the perfecting virtue of its tincture to other imperfect metals, so Christ, that blessed heavenly Stone, extends the quickening influence of His purple Tincture to us, purifying us, and conforming us to the likeness of His perfect and heavenly Body. For, as S. Paul says: (Rom. viii.), He is the first-born among many brethren, as He is also the first-born before all creatures, through whom all things in heaven and earth were created, and reconciled to God. If we who are by Nature impure, imperfect, and mortal, desire to become pure, immortal and perfect, this transmutation can be effected only through the mediation of the Heavenly Corner Stone Jesus Christ, who is the only holy, risen, glorified, heavenly King, both God and man in the unity of one Person.

For as the Philosopher's Stone, which is the Chemical King, has virtue by means of its tincture and its developed perfection to change other imperfect and base metals into pure gold, so our heavenly King and fundamental Corner Stone, Jesus Christ, can alone purify us sinners and imperfect men with His Blessed ruby-coloured Tincture, that is to say, His Blood, from all our natural filth and uncleanness, and perfectly heal the malignant disease of our nature; seeing that there is no salvation but in Him, and that no other name is given under heaven whereby men can obtain happiness and perfection.

The blind and insensate world has, indeed, through the craft and deceit of the Devil, tried many other ways and methods of obtaining everlasting salvation, and has toiled hard to reach the goal; but Christ nevertheless is and remains the only true Saviour and Mediator, who alone can make us appear just in the sight of God, and purify us from our spiritual leprosy—just as, upon earth, there is only one royal, saving, chemical Stone by which all imperfect metals must be brought to perfection and all bodily diseases healed (especially that fearful, and otherwise incurable leprosy). All other spiritual remedies—such as those invented and used by Jews, Turks, heathens, and heretics—may be compared to the devices of false and sophistical alchemists; for by them men are not purified, but defiled--not quickened, but enfeebled, and given over to a state of more helpless spiritual deadness. So the pseudo alchemists, or malchemists, as they may be more appropriately termed, discover many tinctures and



colours by which men are not only deceived, but, as daily experience teaches, often ruined in fortune, body, and soul.

Again, if we men would be purified and cleansed of our original sin and the filth of Adam (in whom, through the subtilty of the Cacodæmon, our whole race was corrupted in the very Protoplast), we can obtain perfection and eternal happiness only through the regeneration of water and the Spirit, as the royal chemical substance is regenerated by water and its spirit. In this new and spiritual regeneration, which is performed in baptism through water and the Spirit, we are washed and purified with the Blood of Christ, united to His Body, and clothed with Him as with a garment (Col. iii., Eph. v.). For, as the Philosophical Stone becomes joined to other metals by means of its tincture and enters into an indissoluble union with them, so Christ, our Head, is in constant vital communion with all His members through the ruby tincture of His Blood, and compacts His whole Body into a perfect spiritual building which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Now, that regeneration which is wrought in baptism through the operation of the Holy Spirit is really nothing but an inward spiritual renewal of fallen man, by which we become God's friends instead of His enemies, and thus heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ (i. Cor. ii., Rom. xii., Ephes. ii., Hebr. iii.). For to this end Christ died and rose again, that through this means, namely, through His passion, death, resurrection, and ascension, He might enter the Holy Place made without hands, and prepare for us the way to our everlasting Fatherland. Therefore, we, too, as His brothers and sisters, should follow His passion, and grow like Him in love, humility, and all other virtues, till we are conformed to His glorified body, and until, having lived and died with Him, we also reign with Him, and share His everlasting glory.

But this inward quickening and imitation of Christ, our heavenly King, in our daily lives, is not the outgrowth of our own merit or natural will (for by nature all men are blind, deaf, and dead, as to spiritual things), but is produced solely through the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us through the blessed laver of regeneration. In like manner, the minerals and metals are in themselves gross and dead, and cannot purify or ameliorate themselves, but are purified, renewed, dissolved, and perfected through the agency of the spagyric spirit. Now when we have been incorporated in the Body of our heavenly King, and washed and cleansed of original sin through His purple Tincture, and so rendered capable of bringing forth the first fruits of the Holy Spirit, we are fed up, like little children, and nourished with the pure and health-giving milk of grace, until at length we become living stones, fit for the heavenly building and the highest priesthood, which consists in offering up spiritual sacrifices such as are acceptable to God the Father, through Jesus Christ. For even a Christian, though regenerated through water and the Word, cannot grasp or apprehend all things at once, but must grow gradually, and daily, in the knowledge of God and of Christ.

For as, in our philosophical experiment, the union of the two essences, namely of the earthly gold and the heavenly prepared Matter, which have first been reduced to a kind of dry liquid, or amalgam, in a solutory alembic, does not take place all at once (seeing that the different parts are added gradually and at stated intervals), so we must expect the growth of the quickened spirit to be slow and gradual. For when the spiritual union of a man with Christ in baptism has once taken place, and he is united once for all with His Body, he must gradually advance in the Christian faith, and

assimilate in his soul one article after another, until he has obtained perfect knowledge, and is firmly established in all the fulness of conviction.

Now the Christian faith, like the prepared aqueous substance, consists of twelve articles, according to the number of the Apostles, and these again fall into three principal sections, viz. (1) that which treats of our creation, (2) that which deals with our redemption, and (3) that which describes our sanctification. All these articles the Christian must, one by one, and little by little, make his own. He cannot master them all at once; for if too much spiritual nourishment were administered to him at a time, his soul might begin to loathe its food, and he might be entirely estranged from the faith. Therefore, the third article, for instance, should be divided into seven parts, and taught in seven different lessons (just as the matter was not put into the phial all at once). When a man has made the whole faith thoroughly his own, he must carefully preserve it pure from all corruption and falsification.

Moreover, in the chemical process, the Stone cannot bring its influence to bear on imperfect metals, unless it is first combined with three several parts of highly refined and purified gold, not because the tincture of the Stone itself is imperfect, but on account of the grossness of the metals which otherwise could not receive its subtle influence. The Stone itself is perfect; but the base metals are so feeble and dead that they cannot apprehend the angelical and spiritual perfection of the Tincture, except through the more congenial medium of gold, refined and fused through Antimony. In the same way, our heavenly King, Jesus Christ, has, through His obedience to His Father's will, once for all delivered us from sin and impurity, and made us sons and heirs of God; nevertheless, His saving Blood, the true purple Tincture, cannot be received by us, on account of our inborn infirmity and gross sinfulness, except through three media appointed by God for this purpose, namely: (1), His Holy Word, which is better and purer than earthly gold seven times refined; (2), saving faith, which is a marvellous gift of God, comes through the Word of God, unites the hearts of men, and is tried in the fire of affliction; (3), unfeigned love towards God and our neighbour, which is also a gift of God, the fulfilment of the law, and a perfect imitation of God's nature. If we have and possess in a proper manner these three things, the Word, faith, and love, Christ can operate rightly upon us with his heavenly Tincture, and celestial Unction, make their blessed influence felt throughout our imperfect natures, and thus, by pervading our entire being, cause us to be partakers of His own heavenly nature. But Satan, that grim pseudo-alchymist, ever lies in wait to draw those whom Christ has regenerated, and made sons of God by faith through baptism, and who are warring the good warfare, and keeping faith and a good conscience, away from the right path—and in this attempt he and his faithful servants, our sinful flesh, and the wicked, seductive world, are, alas, very frequently successful (for even the just man falls seven times a day. Prov. xxiv.). For as he lay in wait for Christ, our Lord, Master, and Guide, and soon after His Baptism made a violent assault upon Him; so to the present day he spreads his crafty nets and pernicious snares in the Christian Church. Our Lord he first endeavoured to delude into doubting the Word of God, and questioning His Father's love, by pointing to the want, hunger, and bodily affliction, that God suffered Him to endure in the wilderness. But if Christians do not yield to this temptation, Satan attacks them on another point, and tries to induce them to place a foolhardy confidence (such as is not warranted by God's word) in their heavenly Father, just as he strove to persuade Christ to cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, seeing that God would surely protect

Him. If this device does not succeed, the Evil One is not ashamed to try a third expedient: he promises us all the riches of this world, and the glory thereof, if we will forsake God, become idolators, and worship Satan himself—a proposal which he actually had the hardihood to make to Christ. These Satanic machinations God, in His inscrutable wisdom, permits, in order that men may thereby be exercised in faith, hope, patience, and true prayer, and prepared for the agony of death which the old man will one day have to undergo—that thus they may gain a final victory over their hereditary foe. This victory they will gain if they are taught by the grace of God how to encounter the Devil's deceitful and crafty wiles.

For since, as S. Paul says, we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places; we cannot successfully oppose our own strength to their spiritual assaults, but we must, after the example of our Standard-bearer, Jesus Christ, arm ourselves against our spiritual foes with spiritual weapons, such as the Word of God, and the sword of the Spirit. We must take from the armoury of the Holy Spirit the breast-plate of righteousness, and have our loins girt with truth, our feet shod with the preparedness of the Gospel of peace; and we must cover ourselves with the great shield of faith, with which we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one: for faith in Jesus Christ is a most strong shield which no weapon of the Evil Demon has power to pierce.

Again, we saw that in our chemical operation the regulation of the fire, and a most patient and careful tempering of its heat, was of the greatest importance for the proper digestion of the substance. We also spoke of the "fire of the Sages" as being one of the chief agents in our chemical process, and said that it was an essential, preternatural, and Divine fire, that it lay hid in our substance, and that it was stirred into action by the influence and aid of the outward material fire. In like manner, the true Word of God, or the Spirit of God, whom Jeremiah compares to a fire, lies hid in our hearts, having been planted in our souls by Nature, and only defaced and obscured by the fall. This spirit must be aided, roused into action, and fanned into a bright flame, by another outward fire, viz., the daily fire of godliness, the exercise of all the Christian virtues in good days and in evil, and the study of the pure Divine Word, if, indeed, the internal light of grace, or the Spirit of God, is to work in us, instead of being extinguished. For as an earthly craftsman polishes iron, which in itself is cold, till it is heated by continual friction, and as a lamp must go out if it is not constantly fed with oil; so the inward fire of man, unless it is assiduously kept up, gradually begins to burn low, and is at length completely extinguished. Therefore it is indispensable for a Christian diligently to hear, carefully to study, and faithfully to practice the Word of God.


Again, what we said of spiritual sight, viz., that it must take place not with the outward eyes of the body, but with the inward eye of the soul, is equally applicable to spiritual hearing. I speak of listening, not to the outward speech of men, or to the Pharisaic leaven of the new Scribes, which nowadays, alas, is substituted for the sincere and unadulterated Word of God, but to the Voice of God Himself. I speak of the thrice refined Word of God (Psalm cxix.), which proceeds out of the mouth of God, and is declared by His Holy Spirit—which is not, as these false teachers presumptuously assert, a vain and empty sound, but the Spirit, the life, and the saving power of God to all that believe. Of it the Royal Seer David speaks as follows: "I will

hear what the Lord shall say unto me." Of this inward and Divine hearing of the Word of God, as from a kind of fountainhead, good and living faith, which works by love, takes its source. For it is, as S. Paul says (Rom. x.): "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."

Now if the Word is pure and undefiled, the hearing, too, may be pure and undefiled, and the faith which comes of such hearing will also be true, and show itself by love and humble obedience to the will of God in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. It will also find expression in all good works towards our neighbour. To the exercise of this love Christ exhorts us in His long valedictory discourse (John xiii.), and leaves it with us as His farewell saying: "This is my commandment that ye love each other, even as I also loved you." "If any one say, I know God, and love not his brother, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But he who keeps the Word of God, in him the love of God is perfected" (I. John, ii.). And again (I. John, iv.): "God is love, and he that abides in love abides in God, and God in him." From these passages we learn that love is the bond of perfection by which we are united to Christ, and by which we are in Him, He in His Father, and His Father in Him. "If any one," says Christ, "will keep my word, this is he that loves me, and I will love him, and we will come to him and take up our abode with him." Again: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." But this our love to God must also find expression towards our neighbour. For "if any one love not his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God, whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have of Him, that he that loves God love his brother also." The nature of this love is described by S. Paul (i. Cor. xiii.) in the following words: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, and never fails." Hence it appears that there is no true love which does not show itself in works of kindness towards our fellow men; and hence also it appears that the good works which are acceptable to God cannot precede faith, but are its outgrowth and precious fruit; works do not make faith good and acceptable, but it is faith that gives their real value to works—for we are justified and obtain eternal life by faith alone. And if a regenerate man bear himself thus lovingly and humbly in all his life, he will never lack fruit in due season. For such a man is placed by God in the furnace of affliction, and (like the hermetic compound) is purged with the fire of suffering until the old Adam is dead, and there arises a new man created after God in righteousness and true holiness, as S. Paul says (Rom. vi.): "We are buried with Christ by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, even so we also should walk in newness of life." When this has been accomplished, and a man is no longer under the dominion of sin, then there begins in him something analogous to the solution of the gold added to the substance of our chemical process. The old nature is destroyed, dissolved, decomposed, and, in a longer or shorter period of time, transmuted into something else. Such a man is so well digested and melted in the fire of affliction that he despairs of his own strength and looks for help and comfort to the mercy of God alone. In this furnace of the Cross, a man, like earthly gold, attains to the true black Raven's Head, *i.e.*, loses all beauty and reputation in the eyes of the world; and that not only during forty days and nights, or forty years, but often during his whole life, which is thus often more full of sorrow and suffering than of comfort and joy. And, through this spiritual dying, his soul is taken from him, and lifted upon high; while his body is still upon earth, his spirit and heart are already in his eternal Fatherland; and all his actions have a heavenly source, and seem no longer to belong to this earth. For he lives no longer according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit, not in the unfruitful works of darkness, but in the light and in the day—in works that

stand the test of fire. This separation of body and soul is brought about by a spiritual dying. For as the dissolution of body and soul is performed in the regenerated gold, where body and soul are separated from one another, and yet remain close together in the same phial, the soul daily refreshing the body from above, and preserving it from final destruction, until a set time: so the decaying and half-dead bodily part of man is not entirely deserted by its soul in the furnace of the Cross, but is refreshed by the spirit from above with heavenly dew, and fed and preserved with Divine nectar. (For our temporal death, which is the wages of sin, is not a real death, but only a natural and gentle severing of body and soul). The indissoluble union and conjunction of the Spirit of God, and the soul of the Christian, are a real and abiding fact. And here again we have an analogy to the (sevenfold) ascending and descending of the soul in the chemical process. For the tribulations and temporal sufferings of God's people have now lasted six thousand years; but during this whole time, men have again and again been refreshed, comforted, and strengthened by the Spirit of God—and so it is now, and ever will be, until the great universal Sabbath and rest-day of the seventh [millennium](#). Then this occasional spiritual refreshing will cease, and everlasting joy will reign, since God will be all in all.

While the digestion of the dead spiritual body in man goes forward, there may be seen (as in the chemical process) many variegated colours and signs, *i.e.*, all manner of sufferings, afflictions, and tribulations, including the ceaseless assaults of the Devil, the world, and the flesh. But all these signs are of good omen, since they show that such a man will at length reach the desired goal. For Scripture tells us that all that are to obtain the eternal beatitude of Christ must be persecuted in this world, and we must enter into the kingdom of heaven through much tribulation and anguish. This truth is well expressed in the following words of S. Augustine: "Marvel not, brother, if after becoming a Christian you are assailed by many troubles. For Christ is our Head, and, as His members, we must follow and imitate, not only Him, but His life and sufferings. The life of Christ was closely beset with all manner of tribulations, poverty, insult, mockery, scorn, sorrow, and acute bodily suffering; and it is clear that if you would obtain the life of Christ, you must, like Him, become perfect through suffering. For without these afflictions and tribulations we cannot come to God. A man who would enter Paradise must go through fire and water, whether he be Peter, to whom the keys of heaven were entrusted, or Paul, a chosen vessel of God, or John, to whom all the secrets of God were revealed. Every brother must enter the kingdom of heaven through much tribulation."

It should further be observed that the Antimony of the Sages with which the gold must be refined before being added to the Elixir, or royal chemical substance (or before undergoing a sudatory bath with ancient grey-headed Saturn) is expressed by the sign . In the same way, a ball with a cross upon it is put into the hands of the Lord of the Holy Roman Empire, whereby it is indicated that he, too, must experience, and be tried by the tribulations of this world, before he can be peacefully seated upon his throne. To all this we may find an analogy in the aforesaid School of the Cross, and the tribulations and persecutions through which all Christians must pass, and the struggle which they must wage with grey-headed Saturn, that is to say, the old Adam and Satan, before they can enter into everlasting joy and rest.

Besides the aforesaid sorrows and afflictions, there are also in this world certain signs and marvels, and great mundane revolutions, which we must diligently consider and

perpend. We must first hear of wars, and rumours of wars, various sects, plagues, and famines; for all these things are the true forerunners and heralds of our redemption. Then must come the general resurrection of the dead, by which those who obtain the victory through the Blood of the Lamb (for this second regeneration is begun and rendered possible by their first regeneration in this life) pass into a new and unending life through the final indissoluble union of their bodies, souls, and spirits. For by the power and effectual working of Christ, our almighty heavenly King (to whom we are joined in a supernatural manner by faith), we shall be endued with pure spiritual health, strength, glory, and excellence. This marvellous union of body, soul, and spirit, this Divine glorification and exaltation of the elect, is a consideration fraught with reverential and unspeakable awe (like the sight of the final chemical transformation); it is a sight at which the very angels will stand rapt in inexpressible wonder; and then they will see us pass into the heavens to reign with Christ, and with them, and the ministering spirits, in everlasting glory, and joy unspeakable, world without end.

To conclude—as, in our chemico-philosophical process, it was possible and necessary to correct at once any defect or irregularity, since otherwise the whole compound would be corrupted and rendered useless; so, in the Christian life, every fault must at once be carefully corrected, and put away, lest it afford a loophole for Satan, the world, and the flesh, to creep in again, and to cause in us, so to speak, a pernicious sublimation, or a premature redness (corresponding to the first and second chemical defects), or to make us despair of God's mercy when we consider our many grievous sins, or to stir up in us a spirit of murmuring against the great furnace heat of God's discipline (which two latter failings correspond to the third and fourth chemical defects). If any of these unfortunate accidents happen to our souls, they must be dissolved again (after the analogy of the chemical compound), by repentance, by the solutory key of holy Absolution, and thus, as often as is required, be purged of sin and post-baptismal defilement by Absolution, as well as by the pure heavenly milk of the Lord's Supper, which is the sweat of the heavenly Lamb, and water and blood, the fountain of life—which (like the mercurial water of the chemical process) is, to the unworthy and wicked, the most deadly poison, but food, drink, and a source of strength to the repentant believer. Thus he may still attain to what corresponds to the final coagulation and perfect chemical condensation, namely, to the heavenly perfection of eternal beatitude. These two most wholesome remedies for post-baptismal sin (viz., Absolution and the Lord's Supper), God in his mercy has ordained, and entrusted to the keeping of His most Beloved Church, for the healing of repentant Christian men. Through her, we are either, by absolution, pronounced free from guilt, or, if we remain impenitent, and persist in our wicked course, we are, by excommunication, delivered over to Satan, that by the destruction of the flesh, our souls may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

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## EPILOGUE.

Thus, gentle and well-wishing reader, I have briefly and simply set forth to you the perfect analogy which exists between our earthly and chemical and the true and heavenly Stone, Jesus Christ, whereby we may attain unto certain beatitude and perfection, not only in earthly but also in eternal life. I might have done so more

grandly and copiously; but you must know that I am neither a theologian, nor, according to the modern fashion, an Aristotelico-theologian, but a simple and unsophisticated layman. For the knowledge which God has committed to me, I have obtained, not at any learned academy, but in the universal school of Nature, and by perusing the open book of God. For this reason I have expressed my thoughts simply, and not tricked them out in sesquipedalian words, as is the manner of professional theologians; nor do I pretend to have exhausted the subject; all that I have done is to throw out some hints for the guidance of those who wish to investigate it more carefully. In doing my best, I have also endeavoured to do my duty; for every lover of the truth is bound to praise God by revealing the knowledge entrusted to him. Besides all this, I desired to profess publicly my belief in the true Christian faith; since at the present time many devout and godly Christians are falsely represented and decried by lying slanderers as heretics. Let not the blasphemies and reckless judgment of the wicked world trouble the true Christian, against whom they are directed; for the Devil and his servants have at all times done to the followers of Christ what they did to Christ Himself. Therefore I will say no more on this subject, but I will leave it to be decided by the Judge of all the world.

As to the earthly Stone itself I must ask the reader to study diligently what has gone before in our treatise as to this subject. For as in an excellent poem a verse is sometimes repeated at least once, so on this point we are accustomed to do the same, because the reader ought not to direct his aims and thoughts to the earthly Philosophical Stone until he has attained a right knowledge of the Celestial Stone, and has prepared it, or, at least, has commenced with the utmost zeal the preparations of both together. For the earthly Stone is a gift from God, descending by the clemency of the Celestial Stone. I agree with all the Sages that it would be folly to attempt the study of so profound a mystery without a good previous knowledge of Nature and her properties. But I also say that it is not merely difficult, but quite impossible, to prepare the Philosopher's Stone without a true knowledge of Christ, the heavenly Corner Stone, in whom all Nature lives and moves, and has its being. This warning should be duly considered; and he who would not expose himself to the certainty of ignominious failure, should reflect that the mastery of any art requires persevering exercise, and that, before setting about this search after the Philosopher's Stone, he must prepare himself by careful and patient study. If any neglect this warning, his failure will be the result of his own ignorance and mental immaturity.

But I wonder still more that there are to be found some men, who not only study this Art, but even try to practice it, and yet do not quite know whether it proceeds by natural and legitimate magic, or whether it is not after all a necromantic, or black art, which is exercised by the illegitimate aid of the powers of hell. No, my good friend. The Devil, wicked angels, and wicked men, have no power but that which God suffers them to possess—and with our present glorious Art they positively have nothing whatever to do. It is entirely in the hand of God, who imparts it to whom He will, and takes it away from whom He will; and He does not suffer any votaries of pleasure, or evil spirits, to partake of it. He gives it only to the pure, true, and humble of heart. This excellence is neither known, nor understood, by the majority of the present generation; and when the sound of it strikes upon their ears, and they do not comprehend it, they straightway call it foolishness. On account of this their blindness, that spirit will always be hidden from their minds, and will at length be entirely taken away from them.

Let me, however, be permitted to impress one thing on the minds of my pious and devout readers. In so far as a man orders his life, soul, heart, and actions aright in the sight of God, in so far will he perceive that he is making good progress in the discovery, preparation, and use of the Stone. This assertion is the result of my own personal experience during many years, and it embodies my deliberate conviction. Therefore, the best preparation for this study is, in my judgment, a diligent amendment of heart and life.

I am aware that I here lay myself open to the objection that it is possible to enumerate several men who actually possessed this Stone, or Tincture, and with it transmuted base metals into gold and silver; and who yet were not good men, but vain, profligate, and without knowledge of God. To this objection, I answer that from whencesoever these men may have obtained the Tincture, I certainly never will believe that they prepared it—*i.e.*, the true and right Tincture—themselves. The tragic end of many of these men, and the headlong destruction brought upon them by their Tincture, prove but too clearly the truth of what I say. Moreover, all that call themselves alchemists are not therefore necessarily true possessors of the Stone. For, as in other branches of knowledge, there are found many different schools and sects, so all that are in search of this precious Tincture are called alchemists, without necessarily deserving the name.

In this tract I have spoken of true, natural, and scientific alchemy, which teaches us to distinguish the evil and impure from the good and pure, and thus, to aid the weakness, and correct the corruption, of Nature. We help the metals to arrive at maturity, just as a gardener may assist fruit, which by some accident is prevented from ripening, or as a seed or grain of corn may easily be multiplied by being sown in the ground. Of pseudo-alchemy I neither pretend, nor care, to know anything, because I perceive that the ways of its teachers are crooked, and that they promise mountains of gold, without being able to redeem the least part of their pledge; I also see that those who follow them incur great expense, [ceaseless](#) toil, and are often ruined in body and soul. Therefore, if you encounter alchemists of this description, who speak boastfully of their Art, and offer to teach it you for money, I warn you to be on your guard against them. For with such men there is mostly a serpent lurking in the grass (Mic. ii.).

I think I may confidently assert that the cost of preparing the Tincture (apart from your own daily maintenance, and the fuel required) does not exceed three florins. For the Matter, as has already been said, is for most part, very common, and may be everywhere obtained in abundance; and the labour is easy and simple. In brief, the whole design can present no difficulty whatever to those whom God has chosen for this purpose, *i.e.*, to those who love Him; but to the wicked it is beset with insuperable impediments. In conclusion, let me tell you that if God in His gracious mercy should vouchsafe to reveal to you this open secret, it will then become your sacred duty to use it well, and to conceal your knowledge from the unworthy, to put a seal upon your lips, and to preserve unbroken silence about it. If you neglect this well-meant warning, you may bring upon yourself the anger of God, and persecutions of wicked men, and be justly punished with temporal and eternal ruin.

"If any one seek riches by means of this sacred Art, let him be devout, and simple-hearted, silent, and wise. He who strives not after these virtues, will receive the opposite of that which he



desires: he will be poor, needy, naked and wretched."

All this, beloved Reader, I desired to enjoin upon you as a farewell admonition. I devoutly hope that God has opened your eyes, and that you have completely apprehended my meaning. To explain the matter more clearly and openly than I have done, I am forbidden by my vow. I can only ask you once more to peruse this treatise carefully, and to ask God to enlighten your understanding.

### **APPENDIX.**

If, after obtaining this knowledge, you give way to pride or avarice (under the pretext of economy and prudence), and thus gradually turn away from God, the secret will most certainly fade out of your mind in a manner which you do not understand. This has actually happened to many who would not be warned.

### **RECAPITULATORY LINES.**

"If you will follow my teaching, and if you are a devout Christian man, you may take the substance which I have before indicated, and, by following the directions I have given, you may possess all the riches of the whole world."

To this end—if you are worthy—may God in His mercy vouchsafe you His blessing. This prayer I offer up for you from the bottom of my heart.

### **PRAYER.**

Almighty, everlasting God, Father of heavenly light, from Whom proceed all good and perfect gifts: we pray Thee, of Thine infinite mercy, to reveal to us Thine eternal wisdom, which is evermore about Thy throne, and by which all things were created and made, and are still governed and preserved: send it down to us from heaven, and from the throne of Thy glory, that it may be with us, and work with us, seeing that it is the teacher of all heavenly and secret arts, and knows and understands all things. Let it accompany us in all our works, that by Thy Spirit we may attain a true understanding and certain knowledge of this Blessed Art, and of the marvellous Stone of the Sages, which Thou art wont to reveal only to Thine elect, and hast concealed from the world. And so further us with Thy wisdom, that we may begin, continue, and complete this work without any error, and enjoy its fruits for ever with great joy—through the Heavenly and Eternal Foundation and Corner Stone, Jesus Christ, Who with Thee and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Joshua xxi., 43-44.

"And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which He sware to give unto their fathers; and there failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass."

Deuteronomy xxxii., 3.

"Ascribe the Glory unto God Alone!"

AMEN.

### EPIGRAM.

"It is an easy matter to prepare gold in the furnace out of metals: at times there is found a man to whom the secret is revealed. Why is not every alchemist rich? The reason is that one thing is wanting which many seek with anxious care. Common gold is not fixed, and, when brought to the test of fire, quickly disappears and perishes. But he who knows the fixed gold, which at all times remains the same, and from which nothing is lost, he is the possessor of the true Art, and may be called a good and practical Sage and Chemist."

### ANOTHER EPIGRAM.

"Theology without alchemy is like a noble body without its right hand. This is graphically shewn and exhibited in the picture before us. First look at the helmet and the two wings, which signify the love of the Art. They bear us onward to Sophia (Wisdom), who is bright like Phœbus. Her body is naked because she is ardently loved. She is loved because she has at her disposal the riches of the whole world. He that gazes upon her beauteous form cannot refrain himself from loving her, goddess as she is. Although this love is, as it were, hidden, yet it is constant; and that is indicated by the mask. Her heart is sincere, her words are modest, righteousness upholds her steps, she is free from malice and guile. Her valiant appearance shews that she is of an open mind. Yet she seems to be falling, too: that is because the base world hates her, and with fierce truculence tries to cast her down to the ground. But evermore she bravely rises on high, though ambition moves her not. She is beloved by God and man. Though mockery is to her for a garment, as is shewn by the noisy cymbals, yet she cares nothing for it, but cleaves all the more faithfully to wisdom; to it she lifts her eyes, to it she directs her steps. For she knows that it is the only true salvation, and therefore she occupies herself with it by day and by night. She is not anxious for worldly praise, nor does she heed the hatred and injustice of men, or care for their opinion too little or too much. Much suffering and tribulation are inflicted upon her by this wicked world, yet she bears it with a valiant heart and holds it in disdain. For she possesses the treasure which gives her all that she desires, and avarice dwells not in her thoughts. That in which the world delights, she accounts as the dirt beneath her feet, since fortune is a wheel, and its revolutions are swift. Therefore she delights to tread the path of thorns, until, leaving the world, she finds rest in the tomb. Then her righteous soul will soar aloft to heaven, and for a just reward there shall be given unto her a diadem of stars. After her death, her praise and glory shall wax bright in the world, like unto the glorious splendour of the sun; nor will it ever pale, but become more intense as the years advance, and her name shall shine like a bright star for evermore." \*

UNTO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY.

AMEN.

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## Footnotes

[120:](#)\* NOTE.—The Latin original contains no engraving illustrative of this Epigram.

# The True Book of the learned Greek Abbot Synesius Taken out of the Emperor's Library

Synesius of Cyrene was the Bishop of Ptolomais, a neo-Platonist, active during the fourth century A.D. (died about 414). Synesius pursued his higher studies at Alexandria, where he became a devoted disciple of the famous Hypatia, to whom several of his letters are addressed and for whom he entertained a life-long devotion. After serving some time in the army he settled in his native land, studying philosophy, mathematics, and astronomy. He was thus a respected ancient figure and a fine candidate for having an alchemical work attached to his name.

The True Book of the learned Greek Abbot Synesius was probably created some time in the late 16th. There are a number of manuscript copies most of which are from the 17th century probably copying from the printed books. There is a 16th century manuscript in Leiden (MS. Vossianus Chym. F. 3.)

The work appears to have been first published in 1612 in Paris.

*Trois traitez de la philosophie naturelle non encore imprimez. Scavoir le secret livre du tres-ancien philosophe Artephius, traitant de l'art occulte et transmutation metallique latin-françois. Plus, les figures hieroglyphiques de Nicolas Flamel... au cimetiere des Innocens à Paris... avec l'explication d'icelles par iceluy Flamel. Ensemble, le vray livre du docte Synesius... sur le mesme subiect, le tout traduit par P. Arnauld.*

This book contained three works purporting to have been written in an earlier age, the Artephius supposedly in the 12th century, the Flamel supposedly recording alchemical writings from the late 14th and early 15th century, and the Synesius supposed as from the fourth century Greco-Egyptian period. The Synesius also turns up attached to the 1678 English edition of Basil Valentine's *Triumphant Chariot of Antimony*.

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Though the ancient Philosophers have written diversely of this science, concealing under a multitude of names the true principles of the Art; yet have they not done it but upon important considerations, as we shall hereafter make appear. And though they are different in their expressions, yet are they not any way discordant one from another, but all aiming at one end, and speaking of the same thing, they have thought fit (above all the rest) to name the proper Agent, by a term, strange, nay sometimes contrary to its nature and qualities.

Know then, my Son, that almighty God together with this Universe, created two stones, that is to say, the White and the Red, both which are under one and the same subject, and afterwards multiplied in such abundance, that everyone may take as much as he please thereof. The matter of them is of such a kind, that it seems to be a mean between a metal and Mercury, and is partly fixed and partly not fixed, otherwise it could not be a mean between metals and Mercury; and this matter is the instrument whereby our desire is accomplished, if we do but prepare it. Hence, it comes that

those who bestow their endeavors in this art without the said medium, lose their labour, but if they are acquainted with the Medium, they shall find all things feasible and fortunate.

Know then, that this Medium, being aerial, is found among the celestial bodies, and that it is only there are found the Masculine and Feminine gender, (to speak properly) having a constant, strong, fixed and permanent virtue, of the essence whereof Philosophers have expressed themselves only by similitudes and figures, as I have told you. This they did, so that the science might not be discovered by the ignorant, which if it should once happen, all were lost: but that it might be comprehended only by those patient souls, and subtilised understandings, which being sequestered from the soilness of this world, are cleansed from the filth of that terrene dunghill of avarice, whereby the ignorant are chained to the earthiness of this world, which is (without this admirable quintessence) the receptacle of poverty; it being certain, that those divine souls, when they have dived into Democritus' Fountain, that is to say, into the truth of Nature, would soon discover what confusion might happen in all estates and conditions, if everyone could make as much gold as he would himself. Upon this ground was it that they were pleased to speak by figures, types, and analogies, that so they might not be understood except by such as are discreet, religious, and enlightened by (divine) Wisdom. All which notwithstanding, they have left in their writings a certain method, way and rule, by the assistance whereof, the wise man may comprehend whatever they have written most obscurely and in time arrive at the knowledge of it, though happily wading through some error, as I have done, praised be God for it. And whereas the vulgar ignorant person ought to submit to these reasons, and consequently adore, what is too great, to enter into his brain, he on the contrary accuses the philosophers of imposture and impiety, by which means and the scarcity of wise men, the art falls into contempt.

But for my part, I tell you, they have always expressed themselves according to certain truth, though very obscurely, and sometimes fabulously, all which I have deciphered in this little treatise, and after such a manner that the earnest desirer of science shall understand what has been mystically delivered by the Philosophers. And yet if he pretend to understand me and know not the nature of the Elements and things created, as also our rich Metal, he does but lose his labour: but if he understand the concord and discord of natures, he will by God's assistance arrive to the rest. It is therefore my suit to God, that he who shall understand the present secret may work to the glory and praise of the sacred Divinity.

Know then, my dear Son, that the ignorant man cannot comprehend the secret of the Art, because it depends upon the knowledge of the true body, which is hidden from him. Know then, my Son, pure and impure, the clean and unclean natures, for there cannot come from any thing that which it has not. For things, that are not or have not, cannot give but their own Nature. Make use then of that which is most perfect and nearest in kind, you shall meet with, and it shall suffice. Avoid then that which is mixed, and take the simple, for that proceeds from the Quintessence.

Note that we have two bodies of very great perfection, full of Mercury: Out of these extract your Mercury, and of that you shall make the Medicine, called by some Quintessence, which is a virtue or power that is imperishable, permanent, and perpetually victorious, nay it is a clear light, which sheds true goodness into every

Soul that once has tasted of it. It is the knot and link of all the Elements, which it contains in itself, as being also the Spirit which nourishes all things, and by the assistance whereof Nature works in the Universe. It is the force, the beginning and end of the whole work, and to lay all open to you in a word, know, that the Quintessence and the hidden things of our Stone is nothing else than our viscous, celestial and glorious Soul drawn by our magistry out of its mine, which engenders itself, and that it is not possible for us to make that water by Art, but Nature alone begets it, and that water is the most sharp Vinegar, which makes Gold to be a pure spirit, nay it is that blessed Nature which engenders all things, which through its putrefaction is become a Tri-unity, and by reason of its viridity causes an appearance of diverse colours.

And I advise you, my Son, make no account of any other things, as being vain, labour only for that water, which burns to blackness, whitens, dissolves and congeals. It is that which putrifies, and causes germination, and therefore I advise you, that you wholly employ yourself in the decoction of this water, and quarrel not at the expense of time, otherwise you shall have no advantage. Decoct it, gently by little and little, until it have changed its false colour into a perfect, and have a great care at the beginning that you burn not its flowers and its vivacity, and make not too much haste to come to an end of your work. Shut your vessel well, that what is within may not breathe out, and so you may bring it to some effect. And note, that to dissolve, to calcine, to tinge, to whiten, to renew, to bath, to wash, to coagulate, to imbibe, to decoct, to fix, to grind, to dry, and to distil, are all one, and signify no more than to concoct Nature, until such time as it be perfect. Note further that to extract the soul, or the spirit, or the body, is nothing else than the above said Calcinations, in regard they signify the operation of Venus. It is therefore through the fire of the extraction of the soul that the spirit comes forth gently, understand me.

The same may also be said of the extraction of the Soul out of the Body, and the reduction of it afterwards upon the same Body, until the whole be drawn to a commixtion of all the four Elements. And so that which is below, is like that which is above, and consequently there are made therein two luminaries, the one fixed the other not, whereof the fixed remains below, and the volatile above, moving itself perpetually, until that which is below, which is the male, get upon the female, and all be fixed, and then issues out an incomparable luminary. And as in the beginning, there was only one, so in this matter, all proceeds from one and returns to one, which is called a conversion of the Elements, and to convert the Elements, is as much as to make the humid dry, and the volatile fixed, that so that which is thick may be made thin, and weaken the thing that fixes the rest, the fixative part of the thing remaining entire. Thus happens the life and death of the Elements, which composed, germinate and produce, and so one thing perfects another, and assists it to oppose the Fire.

## The True Book

### THE PRACTICE

My Son, it is necessary that you work with the Mercury of the Philosophers and the wise, which is not the Vulgar, nor has anything of the Vulgar, but, according to them, is the first Matter, the Soul of the World, the cold Element, the blessed Water, the

Water of the Wise, the Venomous Water, the most sharp Vinegar, the Mineral Water, the Water of celestial grace, the Virgin Milk, our Mineral and corporeal Mercury. For this alone perfects both the stones, the White and the Red. Consider what Geber says, "that our Art consists not in the multitude of several things, because the Mercury is but one only thing", that is to say, one only Stone wherein consists the whole Magistry; to which you shall not add any strange thing, save that in the preparation thereof you shall take away from it whatsoever is superfluous, by reason that in this matter, all things requisite to this Art are contained. And therefore it is very observable that he says, "we must add nothing that is strange, save the Sun and Moon for the red and white Tincture, which are not strange (to it) but are its Ferment by which the work is accomplished". Lastly, mark my Son, that these Suns and Moons are not the same with the vulgar Gold and Silver, for that our Suns and Moons are better in their nature than the Vulgar Suns and Moons. For our Suns and Moons are in their nature living, and those of the vulgar are dead in comparison of ours, which are existent and permanent in our Stone.

Whence you may observe that the Mercury drawn out of our bodies, is like the aqueous and common Mercury, and for that reason enjoys itself and takes pleasure in its like, and is more glad of its company, as it happens in the simple and compound, which thing has not been discovered by the Philosophers in their books. And the advantage therefore which is in this Art, lies in the Mercury, Sun and Moon. Diomedes says, make use of such a matter as to which you must not introduce any strange thing, neither powder nor water, for that several things do not improve our Stone, and thereby he sufficiently instructs him, who understands him, that the tincture of our Stone is not drawn from any thing but the Mercury of the Philosophers; which is their principle, their root, and their great tree, sprouting forth into boughs and branches.

### The First Operation

#### SUBLIMATION

It is not vulgar but Philosophical, whereby we take away from the Stone whatever is superfluous, which, in effect is nothing else but the elevation of the non-fixed part by fume and vapor, for the fixed part should remain in the bottom, nor would we that one should be separated from the other, but that they remain and be fixed together. Know also that he, who shall sublime our Philosophical Mercury (wherein is all the vertue of our Stone) as it ought to be done, shall perfect the Magistry. This gave Geber reason to say that all perfection consists in Sublimation, and in this Sublimation all other operations, that is to say, Distillation, Assation, Destruction, Coagulation, Putrefaction, Calcination, Fixation, Reduction of the White and Red Tinctures, procreated and engendered in one furnace and in one vessel, and this is the ready way to the final consummation, whereof the Philosophers have made divers chapters, purposely to amuse the ignorant.

Take then in the name of the great God, the venerable matter of the Philosophers, called the first Hyle of the Sages, which contains the above named Philosophical Mercury, termed, the first matter of the perfect Body, put it into its Vessel, which must be clear, diaphanous and round, and closely stopped by the Seal of Seals, and make it hot in its place, well-prepared, with temperate heat, for the space of a

Philosophical Month, keeping it six weeks and two days in the sweat of Sublimation until it begins to be putrefied, to ferment, to be coloured and to be congealed with its metallic humidity, and be fixed so far, that it do no more ascend in aery fumous substance, but remain fixed in the bottom, turned from what it was, and divested of all viscous humidity, putrefied and black, which is called the sable robe, Night, or the Head of the Crow.

Thus when our stone is in the vessel, and that it mounts up on high in fume, this is called Sublimation, and when it falls down from on high, Distillation, and Descension. When it begins to participate of the fumous substance, and to be putrefied, and that by reason of the frequent ascent and descent it begins to coagulate, then it is Putrefaction and devouring Sulphur, and lastly through the want or privation of the humidity of the radical water is wrought Calcination and Fixation both at the same time, by decoction alone, in only one vessel, as I have already said. Moreover in this sublimation is wrought the true separation of the Elements, for in our Sublimation the Elixir is turned from Water into a terrestrial Element dry and hot, by which operation it is manifest, that the separation of the four Elements in our Stone is not vulgar but Philosophical. Hence also is it, that in our Stone there are but two formal Elements, that is to say, Earth and Water; but the Earth has in its grossness, the virtue and drought of Fire; and the Water contains in itself the air with its humidity. Thus we have in our Stone visibly but two elements, but effectually there are four. And by this you may judge, that the separation of the four Elements is absolutely physical not vulgar and real, such as the ignorant daily employ themselves in.

Continue therefore its decoction with a gentle fire, until all the black matter appearing in the superficies be quite dissipated by the Magistry, which blackness is by the Philosophers called the dark mantle of the Stone, which afterwards becoming clear is termed the cleansing water of the earth, or rather the Elixir. And note, that the blackness which appears is a sign of putrefaction. And the beginning of the dissolution is a sign of the conjunction of both natures. And this blackness appears sometimes in forty days, more or less, according to the quantity of the matter, and the industry of the operator, which contributes much to the separation of the said blackness.

Now my Son, by the grace of God you are acquainted with one Element of our Stone, which is the black earth, the Raven's head, by some called the obscure shadow, upon which earth, as upon a base, all the rest is grounded. This terrestrial and dry Element, is called, Laton, the Bull, black dregs, our Metal, our Mercury. And thus by the privation of the adust [dry] humidity, which is taken away by Philosophical sublimation, the volatile is fixed, and the moist is made dry and earth; nay, according to Geber, there is wrought a change of the complexion, as of a cold and humid Nature, into dry choler; and according to Alphidius, of a liquid into a thick. Whence is apprehended what the Philosophers mean when they say, that the operation of our Stone is only a transmutation of Nature and a revolution of Elements. You see then how that by this incorporation the humid becomes dry, the volatile fixed, the Spiritual corporeal, the liquid thick, water fire, air earth, and that there happens an infallible change in their true nature, and a certain circulation of the four Elements.



## The Second Operation

DEALBATION: To make White.

It converts our Mercury into the white Stone, and that by decoction only. When the earth is separated from its water, then must the vessel be set on the ashes, as is usual in a distilling furnace, and the water be distilled by a gentle fire at the beginning, so that the water come so gently that you may distinctly number as far as forty names, or pronounce fifty six words, and let this order be observed in all the distillations of the black earth, and that which is in the bottom of the vessel, that is, the faeces remaining to be imbibed, with the new water, will be dissolved, which water will contain three or four parts more than those faeces, that so all may be dissolved and converted into Mercury and Argent vive. I tell you that this must be done so often, that there shall remain nothing but the Mercury. For this distillation there is no time limited, but it is done sooner or later according to the greater or lesser quantity of the water, proportionably to the quantity of the fire.

Then take the earth which you shall have reserved in a vessel of glass, with its distilled water, and with a soft and gentle fire, such as was that of Distillation, or purification, or rather one somewhat stronger, continue it, till such time as the earth be dry and white, and by reason of its drought, drunk up all its water. This done, put to it some of the abovesaid water, and so, as at the beginning, continue on the same decoction, until that earth is become absolutely white, cleansed and clear, and have drunk all its water. And note that the said earth will be washed from its blackness by the decoction, as I have said, because it is easily putrefied by its own water, and is cleansed, which is the end of the Magistry, and then be sure to keep that white earth very carefully. For that is the White Mercury, White Magnesia, Foliated earth.

Then take this white earth rectified as abovesaid, and put it into its vessel upon the ashes, to a fire of Sublimation, and let it have a very strong fire until all the coagulated water which is within, come into the alembic, and the earth remain in the bottom well calcined. Then you have the earth, the water, and the air, and though the earth have in it the nature of the fire, yet is it not apparent in effect, as you shall see, when by a greater decoction you shall make it become red. So that then you shall manifestly see the fire in appearance, and such must be the proceeding in order to Fermentation of the white earth, that the dead body may be animated and enlivened, and its virtue be multiplied to infinity. But note, that the Ferment cannot enter into the dead body, but by the means of the water, which has made a contract and a marriage between the Ferment and the white earth.

And know that in all fermentation the weight is to be considered, that so the quantity of the volatile exceed not the fixed, and that the marriage pass away in fume. For, as Senior says, if you convert not the earth into water, and the water into fire, there cannot be a conjunction of the spirit and body. To do this take a red hot lamen or plate and cast on it a drop of our Medicine, which penetrating, it shall be of a perfect colour, and will be a sign of perfection. If it happen it does not tinge, reiterate the dissolution and coagulation, until it does tinge and penetrate. And note, that seven imbibitions, at the most, are sufficient, and five at the least, that so the matter may be liquified, and without smoke, and then the matter is perfect as to whiteness, for as much as the matter sometimes requires a longer time to be fixed, and sometimes is

done in a shorter, according to the quantity of the Medicine. And note that our Medicine from the creation of our Mercury requires the term of seven months to compass the whiteness, and, to arrive at the redness, five; which put together make twelve.

#### Of the Third Operation.

#### RUBIFICATION

Take of the white Medicine, as much as you will, and put it with its glass upon the hot ashes, till it becomes as dry as the ashes. Then put to it some water of the Sun, which you have kept purposely for that end, and continue the fire to the second degree, until it becomes dry, then put to it again some of the abovesaid water, and so successively imbibe and dry, until the matter be rubified, and fluxible as wax, and cover with it the red lamen, as has been said, and the matter shall be perfect as to redness. But note that at every time, you need put no more of the water of the Sun than is barely necessary to cover the body, and this is done that the Elixir sink not and be drowned, and so the fire must be continued unto dessication, and then must there be made a second imbibition, and so proceed in order to the perfection of the Medicine, that is to say, until the force of the digestion of the fire convert it into a very red powder, which is the true Hyle of the Philosophers, the bloody Stone, the purple red Coral, the precious Ruby, red Mercury and the red Tincture.

#### PROJECTION

The oftner you shall dissolve and coagulate it, the more will the virtue of it be multiplied to infinity. But note that the medicine is multiplied later by Solution, then by Fermentation. Wherefore the thing dissolved operates not well, if it be not before fixed in its ferment. Nevertheless the multiplication of the Medicine by solution is more abundant than that of the Ferment, by reason there is more subtilization. Yet I advise you that in the multiplication you put one part of the work upon four of the other, and in a short time there will be made a powder, all Ferment.

#### THE EPILOGUE ACCORDING TO HERMES

Thus "you are to separate the earth from the fire, the gross from the subtle gently, with great judgement", that is to say, separate the parts that are united to the furnace, by the dissolution and separation of the parts, as "the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross", that is to say, the more pure substance of the Stone, until you have got it clean, and free from all spots or filth. And when he says, "it ascends from the earth up into Heaven and returns again into the earth", there is no more to be understood by it than the Sublimation of the bodies. Further, to explain what distillation is, he says "the Wind carries it in its belly", that is, when the water is distilled by the alembic, where it first ascends by a wind full of fume and vapour, and afterwards returns to the bottom of the vessel in water again. When he would also express the congelation of the matter, he says, "its force is absolute, if it be turned into earth", that is to say, be converted by decoction. And to make a general demonstration of all halt been said, he says, "It shall receive both the inferior and Superior force", that is to say that of the Elements, for as much as, if the Medicine receive the force of the lighter parts, that is to say, air and fire, it shall also receive that of the more grave and weighty parts, changing itself into water and earth, to the end, that the Matters being thus perpetually

joined together, may have permanence, durance, constancy, and stability. Glory be to God.



3VI.  
911.

ALCHEMY

THE

TURBA PHILOSOPHORUM

*M. Gaster*

OR

ASSEMBLY OF THE SAGES

CALLED ALSO THE BOOK OF TRUTH IN THE  
ART AND THE THIRD PYTHAGORICAL SYNOD

AN ANCIENT ALCHEMICAL TREATISE TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN, THE CHIEF  
READINGS OF THE SHORTER CODEX, PARALLELS FROM THE GREEK  
ALCHEMISTS, AND EXPLANATIONS OF OBSCURE TERMS

BY

ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE

TRANSLATOR OF "THE HERMETIC AND ALCHEMICAL WRITINGS  
OF PARACELSUS."

London

GEORGE REDWAY

1896

## PREFACE.

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*THE Turba Philosophorum* is indisputably the most ancient extant treatise on Alchemy in the Latin tongue, but it was not, so far as can be ascertained, originally written in Latin; the compiler or editor, for in many respects it can scarcely be regarded as an original composition, wrote either in Hebrew or Arabic; however, the work, not only at the present day, but seemingly during the six or seven centuries when it was quoted as an authority by all the alchemical adepts, has been familiar only in its Latin garb. It is not, of course, certain that the original is irretrievably lost, the Arabic and Syriac manuscripts treating of early chemistry are preserved in considerable numbers in the various libraries of Europe, and have only been imperfectly explored. Unfortunately, the present editor has neither the opportunity nor the qualifications for undertaking such a task.

There are two codices or recensions of *The Turba Philosophorum*, which differ considerably from one another. What is called in the following pages the second recension, is appreciably shorter, clearer, and, on the whole, the less corrupt of the two, but they are both

in a bad state. The longer recension has been chosen for the text of the following translation, because it seemed desirable to give the work in its entirety. The variations of the second recension are appended usually in foot-notes, but where the reading of the text is so corrupt as to be quite untranslatable, the editor has occasionally substituted that of the alternative version, and has in most cases indicated the course pursued.

Monsieur Berthelot's invaluable text and translation of the Byzantine Alchemists has been largely made use of, to illustrate the striking analogies between the Greek Hermetic writers of the fourth century and the Turba. It is to this great scholar and scientist that we owe the discovery of these analogies, some of which are very clearly indicated in a chapter devoted to the subject, and forming part of his "Essai sur la Transmission de la Science Antique au Moyen Age." It follows from M. Berthelot's researches, that Latin Alchemy, which has always been rightly referred to an Arabian source, connects with the Greek Alchemy which preceded Arabian Science, because the latter was itself derived from Greece. We are also enabled to identify, for the first time, and that with perfect certainty, those ancient sages, to whom all the Latin literature makes

requent and reverent allusion ; we now know that they are Zosimus, the Panopolite, the adepts of the school of Democritus, and the other writers preserved in the Byzantine collection. M. Berthelot, however, infers that the Greek influence found in *The Turba Philosophorum* was not a direct influence, but was derived mediately through channels which are now unknown. In any case the Turba summarises the author's preceding Geber, and is therefore the most valuable, as it is the most ancient, treatise on Alchemy, which exists in the Latin language.

The chief printed versions of *The Turba Philosophorum*, are those of the "Theatrum Chemicum," the "Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa," and that of the smaller collection entitled "Artis Auriferæ Tractatus." There are some translations of the work existing in German and some also in French. Those in the latter language are specially remarkable for the very slender way in which they represent the original. The versions contained in Salmon's "Bibliothèque des Philosophes Alchimiques," and in the "Trois Anciens Traictés de la Philosophie Naturelle," are instances in point. One English version in manuscript is known to the present editor, and it will be found in the British Museum amongst the treasures of the Sloane collection. It is rendered, however, from the French, and



has been found useless for the purposes of this translation.

It may be added that the great collections of Alchemy, such as the "Theatrum Chemicum" and Mangetus, contain colloquies, commentaries, and enigmas which pretend to elucidate the mysteries of *The Turba Philosophorum*. While they are of a considerably later date, they at the same time belong to the early period of Latin Alchemy. It may be added also that the editor has collected a considerable amount of material concerning this curious work, which the limits of the present volume preclude him from utilising.

ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE.



THE TURBA PHILOSOPHORUM,  
TAKEN FROM AN ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT CODEX,  
MORE PERFECT THAN ANY EDITION  
PUBLISHED HERETOFORE.

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*The Epistle of Arisleus, prefixed to the Words  
of the Sages, concerning the purport of this  
Book, for the Benefit of Posterity, and the  
same being as here follows :—*

**A** RISLEUS,\* begotten of Pythagoras, a disciple of the disciples by the grace of thrice great Hermes, learning from the seat of knowledge, unto all who come after wisheth health and mercy. I testify that my

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\* An ancient gloss describes Arisleus as the son of Abladus. M. Berthelot supposes him to be synonymous with the Aristenes of the second recension (*Eleventh Dictum*) and of the *Exercitationes* on the *Turba*, which are found in the first volume of the *Bibliotheca Chémica*. Beyond the similarity of the name, and the fact that most names are mutilated in the *Turba*, there seems no reason to suppose that the compiler intended to connect Pythagoras with alchemical traditions through Aristeus, the sophist of the time of Antoninus.

*The Turba Philosophorum.*

master, Pythagoras,\* the Italian, master of the wise and chief of the Prophets, had a greater gift of God and of Wisdom than was granted to any one after Hermes. Therefore he had a mind to assemble his disciples, who were now greatly increased, and had been constituted the chief persons throughout all regions for the discussion of this most precious Art, that their words might be a foundation for posterity. He then commanded Iximidrus, of highest council, to be the first speaker, who said :†—

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\* The Greek alchemists of the Byzantine Collection make no mention of Pythagoras, and the tradition which describes him as an adept of the Hermetic Mystery must be referred to an Arabian origin, to the treatises of El Habib, the Kitâb-al-Firhirst, and the true Geber, where alchemical writings attributed to this sage are freely quoted.

† The French version of Salmon has the following distinct variations :—“ The beginning of the book, the Turba of the Philosophers, in which Arisleus has gathered together the sayings of the more prudent among the scholars, by introducing Pythagoras the Philosopher, that Master collecting the opinions of the scholars. The book is also called the Third Pythagorical Synod, instituted concerning

*The First Dictum.*

IXIMIDRUS *saith*:—I testify that the beginning of all things is a Certain Nature, which is perpetual, coequalling all things, and that the visible natures, with their births and decay, are times wherein the ends to which that nature brings them are beheld and summoned.\* Now, I instruct you that the stars are igneous, and are kept within bounds by the air. If the humidity and density of the air did

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Occult Philosophy. But Pythagoras commanded his scholar, Eximidrius, to begin the discourse," &c. The French translator seems to have summarised the recensions which he had collected, and to have put them, to some extent, in his own words. Here, however, he follows mainly the text of the second recension, the chief variation being that instead of "Occult Philosophy" the original reads "the vegetable stone."

\* The same French Translation interprets this obscure passage as follows:—"The beginning of all things is a certain nature; it is perpetual, infinite; it nourishes and decocts all things. But this nature and the times of corruption and generation are, as it were, the terms by which it is attained unto, and which the universal nature nourishes and decocts." The second recension varies the last passage, as follows:—"The actions and passions thereof are known and understood only by those to whom a knowledge of the Sacred Art is given."

not exist to separate the flames of the sun from living things, then the Sun would consume all creatures. But God has provided the separating air, lest that which He has created should be burnt up. Do you not observe that the Sun when it rises in the heaven overcomes the air by its heat, and that the warmth penetrates from the upper to the lower parts of the air? If, then, the air did not presently breathe forth those winds whereby creatures are generated, the Sun by its heat would certainly destroy all that lives. But the Sun is kept in check by the air, which thus conquers because it unites the heat of the Sun to its own heat, and the humidity of water to its own humidity. Have you not remarked how tenuous water is drawn up into the air by the action of the heat of the Sun, which thus helps the water against itself? If the water did not nourish the air by such tenuous moisture, assuredly the Sun would overcome the air. The fire,

therefore, extracts moisture from the water, by means of which the air conquers the fire itself. Thus, fire and water are enemies between which there is no consanguinity, for the fire is hot and dry, but the water is cold and moist. The air, which is warm and moist, joins these together by its concurring medium; between the humidity of water and the heat of fire the air is thus placed to establish peace. And look ye all how there shall arise a spirit from the tenuous vapour of the air, because the heat being joined to the humour, there necessarily issues something tenuous, which will become a wind. For the heat of the Sun extracts something tenuous out of the air, which also becomes spirit and life to all creatures. All this, however, is disposed in such manner by the will of God, and a coruscation appears when the heat of the Sun touches and breaks up a cloud.

*The TURBA saith:—*Well hast thou described the fire, even as thou knowest



concerning it, and thou hast believed the word of thy brother.

*The Second Dictum.*

EXUMDRUS saith:—I do magnify the air according to the mighty speech of Iximidrus, for the work is improved thereby. The air is inspissated, and it is also made thin; it grows warm and becomes cold. The inspissation thereof takes place when it is divided in heaven by the elongation of the Sun; its rarefaction is when, by the exaltation of the Sun in heaven, the air becomes warm and is rarefied. It is comparable with the complexion of Spring,\* in the distinction of time, which is neither warm nor cold. For according to the mutation of the con-

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\* A similar comparison is used in the Arabian *Book of Crates*, where it is enjoined that the operation of the philosophical fire upon the philosophical matter should be regulated after the same manner as Nature regulates the influence of the four seasons; and the same treatise, moreover, represents still older expositions of alchemical philosophy as using the same illustration. It is probable that the *Turba* in its original form antedated the *Book of Crates*.

stituted disposition with the altering distinctions of the soul, so is Winter altered. The air, therefore, is inspissated when the Sun is removed from it, and then cold supervenes upon men.

*Whereat the TURBA said:—*Excellently hast thou described the air, and given account of what thou knowest to be therein.

*The Third Dictum.*

ANAXAGORAS saith:—I make known that the beginning of all those things which God hath created is weight and proportion,\* for weight rules all things, and the weight and spissitude of the earth is manifest in proportion; but weight is not found except in body. And know, all ye Turba, that the spissitude of the four elements reposes in the earth; for the spissitude of

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\* The original is *pietas et ratio*, but the technical use of the term *pietas* by the Hebrew or Arabic original seems obviously to connect it with the sense of the Hebrew *Paz*, signifying compactness. Compare also the Greek verb *Piezo*, to press or squeeze down.

fire falls into air, the spissitude of air, together with the spissitude received from the fire, falls into water; the spissitude also of water, increased by the spissitude of fire and air, reposes in earth. Have you not observed how the spissitude of the four elements is conjoined in earth? The same, therefore, is more inspissated than all. *Then saith the TURBA:*—Thou hast well spoken. Verily the earth is more inspissated than are the rest. Which, therefore, is the most rare of the four elements and is most worthy to possess the rarity of these four? *He answereth:*—Fire is the most rare among all, and thereunto cometh what is rare of these four. But air is less rare than fire, because it is warm and moist, while fire is warm and dry; now that which is warm and dry is more rare than the warm and moist. *They say unto him:*—Which element is of less rarity than air? *He answereth:*—Water, since cold and moisture inhere therein, and



every cold humid is of less rarity than a warm humid. *Then do they say unto him* :—Thou hast spoken truly. What, therefore, is of less rarity than water? *He answereth* :—Earth, because it is cold and dry, and that which is cold and dry is of less rarity than that which is cold and moist. PYTHAGORAS *saith* :—Well have ye provided, O Sons of the Doctrine, the description of these four natures,\* out of which God hath created all things. Blessed, therefore, is he who comprehends what ye have declared, for from the apex of the world he shall not find an intention greater than his own! Let us, therefore, make perfect our discourse. *They reply* :—Direct every one to take up our speech in turn. Speak thou, O Pandolfus!

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\*“You have been told . . . that the ancients discoursed of four elements. Know that it is by means of these four elements that humid and dry things are constituted, as also things warm and cold, the male and the female. Two [elements] rise up and two fall down. The two ascending elements are fire and air; the two descending elements are earth and water.”—Olympiodorus *On the Sacred Art*.

*The Fourth Dictum.*

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*But PANDOLFUS saith:—*I signify to posterity that air is a tenuous matter of water, and that it is not separated from it. It remains above the dry earth, to wit, the air hidden in the water, which is under the earth. If this air did not exist, the earth would not remain above the humid water. *They answer:—*Thou hast said well; complete, therefore, thy speech. *But he continueth:—* The air which is hidden in the water under the earth is that which sustains the earth, lest it should be plunged into the said water; and it, moreover, prevents the earth from being overflowed by that water. The province of the air is, therefore, to fill up and to make separation between diverse things, that is to say, water and earth, and it is constituted a peacemaker between hostile things, namely, water and fire, dividing these, lest they destroy one another. *The TURBA saith:—*If you gave an illustration hereof, it would be

clearer to those who do not understand. *He answereth* :—An egg is an illustration, for therein four things are conjoined ; the visible cortex or shell represents the earth, and the albumen, or white part, is the water.\* But a very thin inner cortex is joined to the outer cortex, representing, as I have signified to you, the separating medium between earth and water, namely, that air which divides the earth from the water. The yolk also of the egg represents fire ; the cortex which contains the yolk corresponds to that

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\* The allegory of the philosophical egg can be traced to the Greek alchemists. A short treatise is still extant under this title, and another on the *Nomenclature of the Egg*, which is described as the Mystery of the Art. It is composed of four elements, because it is the image of the world. It is the stone which is not a stone, the stone of copper, the Armenian stone, &c. The shell is likened to the earth, being cold and dry ; it has been named copper, iron, tin, lead. The white of the egg is divine water, water of the sea, water of alum, &c. The yolk is copperas, native sulphur, mercury, &c. The oily part (? the chicken) is fire. But the egg, symbolical, as it is, is sometimes itself described symbolically, after the similitude of a seed ; the shell is likened to the skin which covers the seed ; the white and the yolk are the flesh, and the watery part is the breath, or air.

other air which separates the water from the fire. But they are both one and the same air, namely, that which separates things frigid, the earth from the water, and that which separates the water from the fire. But the lower air is thicker than the upper air, and the upper air is more rare and subtle, being nearer to the fire than the lower air. In the egg, therefore, are four things—earth, water, air, and fire. But the point of the Sun, these four excepted, is in the centre of the yolk, and this is the chicken. Consequently, all philosophers in this most excellent art have described the egg as an example, which same thing they have set over their work.

*The Fifth Dictum.*

ARISLEUS *saieth* :—Know that the earth is a hill and not a plain, for which reason the Sun does not ascend over all the zones of the earth in a single hour; but if it were flat, the sun would rise in a moment over the whole earth.

PARMENIDES *saith* :—Thou hast spoken briefly, O Arisleus! *He answereth* :—Is there anything the Master has left us which bears witness otherwise? Yet I testify that God is one, having never engendered or been begotten, and that the head of all things after Him is earth and fire, because fire is tenuous and light, and it rules all things on earth, but the earth, being ponderous and gross, sustains all things which are ruled by fire.

*The Sixth Dictum.*

LUCAS *saith* :—You speak only about four natures; and each one of you observes something concerning these. Now, I testify unto you that all things which God hath created are from these four natures, and the things which have been created out of them return into them. In these living creatures are generated and die, and all things take place as God hath predestinated. DEMOCRITUS, *the disciple of* LUCAS, *answereth* :—Thou hast well spoken, O



Lucas, when dealing with the four natures ! *Then saith* ARISLEUS :—O Democritus, since thy knowledge was derived from Lucas, it is presumption to speak among those who are well acquainted with thy master ! LUCAS *answereth* :—Albeit Democritus received from me the science of natural things, that knowledge was derived from the philosophers of the Indies and from the Babylonians ; I think he surpasses those of his own age in this learning. *The TURBA answereth* :—When he attains to that age\* he will give no small satisfaction, but being in his youth he should keep silence.

*The Seventh Dictum.*

LOCUSTA *saith* :—All those creatures which have been described by Lucas are two only, of which one is neither

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\* Whether the age indicated is that of the Indian and Babylonian adepts does not appear, but the entire episode is remarkable when it is borne in mind what great importance evidently attached to the Democritic school of Greek alchemy. It seems to indicate that the TURBA PHILOSOPHORUM represents a tradition hostile to the tradition of

known nor expressed, except by piety, for it is not seen or felt. PYTHAGORAS saith :—Thou hast entered upon a subject which, if completed, thou wilt describe subtly. State, therefore, what is this thing which is neither felt, seen, nor known. *Then he* :—It is that which is not known, because in this world it is discerned by reason without the clients thereof, which are sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. O Crowd of the Philosophers, know you not that it is only sight which can distinguish white from black, and hearing only which can discriminate between a good and bad word! Similarly, a wholesome odour cannot be separated by reason from one which is fetid, except through the sense of smell, nor can sweetness be discriminated from bitterness save by means of taste, nor smooth from rough unless

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Democritus, who, accordingly, figures merely as a promising tyro, and, in fact, remains silent throughout the rest of the deliberations. For “those of his own age” the second recension reads “his contemporaries.”

by touch. *The TURBA answereth:—*Thou hast well spoken, yet hast thou omitted to treat of that particular thing which is not known, or described, except by reason and piety. *Saith he:—*Are ye then in such haste? Know that the creature which is cognised in none of these five ways is a sublime creature, and, as such, is neither seen nor felt, but is perceived by reason alone, of which reason Nature confesses that God is a partaker. *They answer:—*Thou hast spoken truly and excellently. *And he:—*I will now give a further explanation. Know that this creature, that is to say, the world, hath a light, which is the Sun, and the same is more subtle than all other natures, which light is so ordered that living beings may attain to vision. But if this subtle light were removed, they would become darkened, seeing nothing, except the light of the moon, or of the stars, or of fire, all which are derived from the light of the Sun, which causes all creatures to give light.



For this God has appointed the Sun to be the light of the world, by reason of the attenuated nature of the Sun. And know that the sublime creature before mentioned has no need of the light of this Sun, because the Sun is beneath that creature, which is more subtle and more lucid. This light, which is more lucid than the light of the Sun, they have taken from the light of God, which is more subtle than their light. Know also that the created world is composed of two dense things and two rare things, but nothing of the dense is in the sublime creature. Consequently the Sun is rarer than all inferior creatures. *The TURBA answereth* :—Thou hast excellently described what thou hast related. And if, good Master, thou shalt utter anything whereby our hearts may be vivified, which now are mortified by folly, thou wilt confer upon us a great boon !\*

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\* The shortened version of the second Recension offers some conspicuous variations, and is literally as

*The Eighth Dictum.*

PYTHAGORAS *saith* :—I affirm that God existed before all things, and with Him was nothing, as He was at first. But know, all ye Philosophers, that I declare this in order that I may fortify your opinion concerning these four elements and arcana, as well as in the sciences thereof, at which no one can arrive save by the will of God. Understand, that when God was alone, He created four things—fire, air, water, and earth, out of which things He afterwards

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follows :—“ Two natures alone are described by Lucas, one of which is neither known nor realised, save by piety and reason ; the other is not seen and is not described, for it is heaven. But there is a third connected nature, which is felt, seen, and known, and this is that which contains whatsoever is in heaven or earth. Now, reason perceives by the help of the five senses, &c. . . . What ensues is substantially the same as the text, till towards the close, which is as follows :—As to that nature which is perceived by none of these, the same is sublime ; it is known by reason and piety only, and is God Most High, who made the light which is the Sun. Know that the Sun is more subtle than all creatures, to the end that it may light the world, which consists of two dense things and two rare. Nothing of the dense is in the sublime creation, because He himself is more rare than the Sun and all inferior creatures.”

created all others, both the sublime and the inferior, because He predestinated from the beginning that all creatures extracted from water should multiply and increase, that they might dwell in the world and perform His judgments therein. Consequently, before all, He created the four elements, out of which He afterwards created what He willed, that is to say, diverse creatures, some of which were produced from a single element.\* *The TURBA saith*:—Which are these, O Master? *And he*:—They are the angels, whom He created out of fire. *But the TURBA*:—Which, then, are created out of two? *And he*:—Out of the elements of fire and air are the

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\* In the *Book of Balances*, one of the genuine Arabian works of Geber, there is a passage which has some analogy with this *dictum*:—"After God had created all things of the four elements . . . He caused the four qualities to issue from the ancient worlds: namely, heat, cold, moisture, and dryness. The combination of these elements produced fire, which contains heat and dryness; water, which possesses cold and moisture; air, which has warmth and humidity; earth, which is cold and dry. By the help of these elements God created the superior and inferior worlds."

sun, moon, and stars composed. Hence the angels are more lucid than the sun, moon, and stars, because they are created from one substance, which is less dense than two, while the sun and the stars are created from a composition of fire and air. *The TURBA saith*:—And what concerning the creation of Heaven? *Then he*:—God created the Heaven out of water and air, whence this is also composed of two, namely, the second of the rarer things, which is air, and the second of the denser things, which is water. *And they*:—Master, continue thy discourse concerning these three, and rejoice our hearts with thy sayings, which are life to the dead. *But the other answereth*:—I notify to you that God hath further made creatures out of three and out of four; out of three are created flying things, beasts, and vegetables; some of these are created out of water, air, and earth, some out of fire, air, and earth. *But the TURBA saith*:—Distinguish these divers crea-

tures one from another. *And he* :—Beasts are created out of fire, air, and earth; flying things out of fire, air, and water, because flying things, and all among vegetables which have a spirit, are created out of water, while all brute animals are from earth, air, and fire. Yet in vegetables there is no fire, for they are created out of earth, water, and air. *Whereat the TURBA saith* :—Let us assume that a fire, with your reverence's pardon, does reside in vegetables. *And he* :—Ye have spoken the truth, and I affirm that they contain fire. *And they* :—Whence is that fire? *He answereth* :—Out of the heat of the air which is concealed therein; for I have signified that a thin fire is present in the air, but the elementary fire concerning which you were in doubt is not produced, except in things which have spirit and soul. But out of four elements our father Adam and his sons were created,\* that is, of fire, air,

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\* The treatise of Olympiodorus *On the Sacred Art* observes that Adam was the issue of the four elements, and



water, and likewise earth. Understand, all ye that are wise, how everything which God hath created out of one essence dies not until the Day of Judgment. The definition of death is the disjunction of the composite, but there is no disjunction of that which is simple, for it is one. Death consists in the separation of the soul from the body, because anything formed out of two, three, or four components must disintegrate, and this is death. Understand, further, that no complex substance which lacks fire eats, drinks, or sleeps, because in all things which have a spirit fire is that which eats.\*

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terms him virgin earth, igneous earth, carnal earth, and sanguineous earth, making reference to the libraries of Ptolemy. There are similar references in Zosimus, by whom he is identified with death. But the carnal Adam of Zosimus signifies material humanity in general, and therein is contained the spiritual man, whose name no one knoweth except Nicotheos, and that mysterious personage, the alchemist himself acknowledges to be undiscoverable. The substitute for his true name signifies light and fire.

\* The nature of the angels, and the question whether they eat and sleep, does not seem to have been discussed either by Greek, Syriac, or Arabian alchemists. Zosimus narrates that the art of alchemy was revealed to mortals by

*The TURBA answereth* :—How is it, Master, that the angels, being created of fire, do not eat, seeing thou assertest that fire is that which eats ! *And he* : Hence ye doubt, each having his opinion, and ye are become opponents, but if ye truly knew the elements, ye would not deny these things. I agree with all whose judgment it is that simple fire eats not, but thick fire. The angels, therefore, are not created out of thick fire, but out of the thinnest of very thin fire ; being created, then, of that which is most simple and exceedingly thin, they neither eat, drink, nor sleep. *And the TURBA* :—Master, our faculties are able to perceive, for by God's assistance we have

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the fallen angels ; it is to them that the tradition of the art must be referred as to a primary source ; and it was they also who wrote the primeval books of alchemy. It will be remembered that magic was also one of the mysteries unfolded by the same intelligences. In the discourse of Isis to Horus, the Mother of the Gods appears as a prophetess who obtained initiation into the mysteries of alchemy from the great angel Amnaël, who desired to possess her.

exhausted thy sayings, but our faculties of hearing and of sight are unable to carry such great things. May God reward thee for the sake of thy disciples, since it is with the object of instructing future generations that thou hast summoned us together from our countries, the recompense of which thou wilt not fail to receive from the Judge to come! *ARISLEUS saith* :— Seeing that thou hast gathered us together for the advantage of posterity, I think that no explanations will be more useful than definitions of those four elements which thou hast taught us to attain. *And he* :—None of you are, I suppose, ignorant that all the Wise have propounded definitions in God. *The TUREA answereth* :—Should your disciples pass over anything, it becomes you, O Master, to avoid omissions for the sake of future generations. *And he* :—If it please you, I will begin the disposition here, since envious men in their books have separated that, or otherwise I will put



it at the end of the book.\* *Whereat the TURBA saith*:—Place it where you think it will be clearest for future generations. *And he*:—I will place it where it will not be recognised by the foolish,† nor ignored by the Sons of the Doctrine, for it is the key, the perfection and the end.

*The Ninth Dictum.*

EXIMENUS *saith*:—God hath created all things by his word, having said unto them: Be, and they were made, with the four other elements, earth, water, air, and fire, which He coagulated, and things contrary were commingled, for we see that fire is hostile to water, water

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\* The necessity of concealing the Art is one of the chief anxieties of the Greek alchemists. Isis herself is sworn to secrecy by heaven and earth and hell, by the four elements, by the height and the depth, by Hermes, by Anubis, and by the howlings of Kerkoros. "An oath has been required of us to reveal nothing clearly to any [un-initiated] person," says Democritus in the *Epistle of Synesius to Dioscorus*.

† The reader will not fail to observe the artless way in which this passage betrays the whole dialogue as a literary composition.

hostile to fire, and both are hostile to earth and air. Yet God hath united them peacefully, so that they love one another. Out of these four elements, therefore, are all things created—heaven and the throne thereof; the angels; the sun, moon, and stars; earth and sea, with all things that are in the sea, which indeed are various, and not alike, for their natures have been made diverse by God, and also the creations. But the diversity is more than I have stated; each of these natures is of diverse nature, and by a legion of diversities is the nature of each diverse. Now this diversity subsists in all creatures, because they were created out of diverse elements. Had they been created out of one element, they would have been agreeing natures. But diverse elements being here mingled, they lose their own natures, because the dry being mixed with the humid and the cold combined with the hot, become neither cold nor hot; so also the humid being mixed with the dry becomes neither dry nor

humid. But when the four elements are commingled, they agree, and thence proceed creatures which never attain to perfection, except they be left by night to putrefy and become visibly corrupt. God further completed his creation by means of increase, food, life, and government. Sons of the Doctrine, not without purpose have I described to you the disposition of these four elements, for in them is a secret arcanum ; two of them are perceptible to the sense of touch and vision, and of these the operation and virtue are well known. These are earth and water. But there are two other elements which are neither visible nor tangible, which yield naught, whereof the place is never seen, nor are their operations and force known, save in the former elements, namely, earth and water ; now when the four elements are not commingled, no desire of men is accomplished. But being mixed, departing from their own natures, they become another thing. Over these let us meditate very carefully. *And the*

TURBA:—Master, if you speak, we will give heed to your words. *Then he*:—I have now discoursed, and that well. I will speak only useful words which ye will follow as spoken. Know, all present, that no true tincture is made except from our copper.\* Do not therefore, exhaust your brains and your money, lest ye fill your hearts with sorrow. I will give you a fundamental axiom, that unless you turn the aforesaid coppert† into

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\* At this point there appears to be a sudden transition from cosmology to alchemy, but it must be remembered that it is one of the Hermetic Methods to describe the processes of the great work in the language of cosmology, and this not only in the Latin mediæval writers, but also in the Greek. For example, the Byzantine fragment entitled *The Nomenclature of the Egg* affirms that the egg is the image of the world, and hence is composed of the four elements.

† The philosophical copper is a subject of continual reference throughout all alchemy. Among the earliest authorities, the *Book of Crates* says that copper, like man, has a spirit, soul, and body. It appears from the same treatise that the term is symbolical, and applies to a stage of the alchemical process. Another passage describes it as the essential substance. Gold is said to transform only with lead and copper. The *Lexicon of Chrysopeia* explains that white copper is crude sulphur.

white, and make visible coins\* and then afterwards again turn it into redness,† until a Tincture‡ results, verily, ye accomplish nothing. Burn therefore the copper, break it up, deprive it of its blackness by cooking, imbuing, and washing, until the same becomes white. Then rule it.

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\* M. Berthelot has pointed out that the use of the term *nummus* by the Latin alchemists is a misconception of the meaning of anterior writers. The reference is to *Asem*, an alloy of gold and silver.

† Numerous preparations for whitening and reddening will be found in the Collection of Ancient Greek Alchemists, as, for example, the *Combination of the White Preparation* in the Address of *Isis to Horus*, the recipe in the twenty-first paragraph of the *Natural Questions* of Democritus, again in the *Book of Synesius, the Philosopher, addressed to Dioscorus*, and elsewhere in many places. It is invariably an operation with copper. The book addressed by Democritus to Leucippus says that the alchemical work comprises the process of making white and making yellow (red), as also the softening and coction of the mineral of copper. According to Synesius, the process of whitening is a calcination, and making yellow is an igneous regeneration.

‡ The Greek Lexicon of Chrysopeia distinguishes two species of tincture, that which so permeates and seaks into a substance as to change its nature, and that which produces a superficial colouring.



*The Tenth Dictum.*

ARISLEUS saith:—Know that the key of this work is the art of Coins.\* Take, therefore, the body which I have shewn to you and reduce it to thin tablets. Next immerse the said tablets in the Water of our Sea,† which is permanent Water,‡ and, after it is covered,§ set it over a gentle fire until the tablets are melted and become waters or Etheliæ,

\* In this instance the term appears to be used as the equivalent of tablets or *lamina*—the thin strips into which later alchemy frequently directs a metal to be cut before it is subjected to a given treatment.

† Pelagus, cited by Olympiodorus in the *Treatise on the Sacred Art*, quotes Zosimus in definition of the sea as the hermaphrodytic element.

‡ The Book of *El-Habib* says that the virtue of eternal water is that of a spiritual blood. It is identified with æriform water, azure water, and water of sulphur. It is also primal sulphur. When boiled, it transforms the male (arsenic) into silver, and afterwards into gold. It is also said that copper is water of silver, which, after preparation, becomes eternal water. Interpreting later writers, Rulandus says that it is the philosophical solution of two perfect bodies, and he enumerates the contradictory names which have been assigned to it in alchemy.

§ The reference is apparently to the closing of the mouth of the vessel.

which are one and the same thing. Mix, cook, and simmer in a gentle fire until Brodium is produced, like to Saginatum. Then stir in its water of Etheliæ until it be coagulated, and the coins become variegated, which we call the Flower of Salt. Cook it, therefore, until it be deprived of blackness, and the whiteness appear. Then rub it, mix with the Gum of Gold, and cook until it becomes red Etheliæ. Use patience in pounding lest you become weary. Imbue the Ethelia with its own water, which has preceded from it, which also is Permanent Water, until the same becomes red. This, then, is Burnt Copper,\* which is the Leaven of Gold and the Flower thereof. Cook the same with Permanent Water, which is

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\* A short excursus *On the Diversity of Burnt Copper* is preserved among the writings of Zosimus, where it is noted that many persons prepare it by means of sulphur, and a process with sulphurated iron is quoted with high approbation from Democritus. Burnt copper is elsewhere defined by the same author as "the metal rendered blood-colour (in view of whitening) and tinged within and without."

always with it, until the water be dried up. Continue the operation until all the water is consumed, and it becomes a most subtle powder.

*The Eleventh Dictum.*

PARMENIDES *saieth* :—Ye must know that envious men have dealt voluminously with several waters, brodiums, stones, and metals, seeking to deceive all you who aspire after knowledge. Leave, therefore, all these, and make the white red, out of this our copper, taking copper and lead, letting these stand for the grease, or blackness, and tin for the liquefaction. Know ye, further, that unless ye rule the Nature of Truth, and harmonize well together its complexions and compositions, the consanguineous with the consanguineous, and the first with the first, ye act improperly and effect nothing, because natures will meet their natures, follow them, and rejoice. For in them they putrefy and are generated, because Nature is ruled by Nature, which



destroys it, turns it into dust, reduces to nothing, and finally herself renews it, repeats, and frequently produces the same. Therefore look in books, that ye may know the Nature of Truth, what putrefies it and what renews, what savour it possesses, what neighbours it naturally has, and how they love each other, how also after love enmity and corruption intervene, and how these natures should be united one to another and made at peace, until they become gentle in the fire in similar fashion. Having, therefore, noticed the facts in this Art, set your hands to the work. If indeed, ye know not the Natures of Truth, do not approach the work, since there will follow nothing but harm, disaster, and sadness. Consider, therefore, the teaching of the Wise, how they have declared the whole work in this saying:—Nature rejoices in Nature, and Nature contains Nature. In these words there is shewn forth unto you the whole work. Leave, therefore, manifold and superfluous things, and take

quicksilver,\* coagulate in the body of Magnesia,† in Kuhul, or in Sulphur which does not burn ; make the same nature white, and place it upon our Copper, when it becomes white. And if ye cook still more, it becomes red, when if ye proceed to coction, it becomes gold. I tell you that it turns the sea itself into red and the colour of gold. Know ye also that gold is not turned into redness save by Permanent Water, because Nature rejoices in Nature.‡

\* Mercury, according to the Greek Epistle of Synesius, is like wax, which readily assumes any colour that is imparted to it, for Mercury whitens all bodies and attracts their souls ; it digests them by coction, and takes complete possession of them.

† The Magnesia of Alchemy is not common Magnesia, and this remark applies equally to the Greek Alchemists, who are the inspiration of the *Turba Philosophorum*, to that treatise, and to the later adepts. In one of the treatises belonging to the school of Democritus the sign of Cinnabar follows the term. The body of Magnesia is mentioned in the discourse of Synesius and Dioscorus ; and on the Metallic Body of Magnesia, Zosimus has a special treatise with reference to the method by which it is whitened. According to Synesius it signifies the mixture of substances.

‡ The formulæ which are so frequently repeated in the *Turba Philosophorum* : Nature rejoices in Nature : Nature

Reduce, therefore, the same by means of cooking into a humour, until the hidden nature appear. If, therefore, it be manifested externally, seven times imbue the same with water, cooking, imbuing, and washing, until it become red. O those celestial natures, multiplying the natures of truth by the will of God! O that potent Nature, which overcame and conquered natures, and caused its natures to rejoice and be glad!\* This, therefore, is that special and spiritual nature to which the God thereof can give what fire cannot. Consequently, we glorify and magnify that [species], than which nothing is more precious in the true tincture, or the like in the smallest degree to be found. This is that truth

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overcomes nature: Nature contains Nature: Nature is ruled by Nature: are derived literally from the Greek Alchemists.

\* These alchemical Grand Antiphons in O are either literally borrowed from the Greek alchemists, or are formed on the model of precisely similar exclamations in those writers:—"O, Supreme Wonder! O, most happy and Sovereign Matter," &c.

which those investigating wisdom love. For when it is liquefied with bodies, the highest operation is effected. If ye knew the truth, what great thanks ye would give me ! Learn, therefore, that while you are tingeing the cinders, you must destroy those that are mixed. For it overcomes those which are mixed, and changes them to its own colour. And as it visibly overcame the surface, even so it mastered the interior. And if one be volatile but the other endure the fire, either joined to the other endures the fire. Know also, that if the vapours have whitened the surfaces, they will certainly whiten the interiors. Know further, all ye seekers after Wisdom, that one matter overcomes four, and our Sulphur\* alone consumes all things. *The Turba answereth* : Thou hast spoken excellently

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\* Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt figure in all Hermetic literature as the most indispensable principles of the *Magnum Opus*. The later writers never weary of affirming that they are not the substances commonly so called, but this does not appear so plainly in earlier and especially in Greek Authors.

well, O Parmenides, but thou hast not demonstrated the disposition of the smoke to posterity, nor how the same is whitened!

*The Twelfth Dictum.*

LUCAS saith: I will speak at this time, following the steps of the ancients. Know, therefore, all ye seekers after Wisdom, that this treatise is not from the beginning of the ruling!\* Take quicksilver,† which is from the male, and coagulate according to custom. Observe that I am speaking to you in accordance with custom, because it has been already coagulated. Here, therefore, is not the beginning of the ruling, but I prescribe this method,

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\* A further insight into the artificial character of the book is afforded at this point. The meaning which is designed to be conveyed is, that in common with many other alchemical works, the instruction begins in the middle of the process—for the more complete confusion of the uninitiated.

† It should be noted in this connection that the attribution of the seven metals to the seven planets is not found in the *Turba*. Thus, quicksilver is never spoken of as Mercury, nor gold as Sol, &c.



namely, that you shall take the quicksilver from the male, and shall either impose upon iron, tin, or governed copper, and it will be whitened.\*

White Magnesia is made in the same way, and the male is converted with it. But forasmuch as there is a certain affinity between the magnet and the iron, therefore our nature rejoices.† Take, then, the vapour which the Ancients commanded you to take, and cook the same with its own body until tin is produced. Wash away its blackness according to custom, and cleanse and roast at an equable fire until it be whitened. But every body is whitened with governed quicksilver, for Nature converts Nature. Take, therefore, Magnesia, Water of Alum, Water of Nitre, Water of the Sea, and Water of Iron; whiten with smoke.‡ What-

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\* The second recension reads: "Ye shall impose upon copper, that is, governed iron, and it shall be whitened."

† The alternative reading is: "Therefore Nature also rejoices in Nature."

‡ Hermes, as quoted by Olympiodorus, defines smoke as intermediary between the warm and the dry.

soever ye desire to be whitened is whitened with this smoke, because it is itself white, and whitens all things. Mix, therefore, the said smoke with its fæces until it be coagulated and become excessively white.\* Roast this white copper till it germinates of itself, since the Magnesia when whitened does not suffer the spirits to escape, or the shadow of coppert† to appear, because Nature contains Nature. Take, therefore, all ye Sons of the Doctrine, the white sulphureous nature, whiten with salt and dew, or with the Flower of White Salt,‡ until it become

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\* The alternative reading is: "until it shall become a white coin or tablet."

† The shadow of copper is the flower of copper, *i.e.*, M. Berthelot explains, protoxide, verdegris. The epistle of Democritus to Leucippus explains that a metal without shadow is a brilliant metal. Zosimus says that the act of burning is called the destruction of the shadow. Pelagus defines the shadow of copper as the black tinge which it produces in silver. Democritus also gives a recipe for the removal of the shadow from copper.

‡ The second recension in the edition of Mangetus reads Sol throughout for Sal, but it is a printer's error.

excessively white. And know ye, that the Flower of White Salt is Ethel from Ethelia. The same must be boiled for seven days, till it shall become like gleaming marble, for when it has reached this condition it is a very great Arcanum, seeing that Sulphur is mixed with Sulphur, whence an excellent work is accomplished, by reason of the affinity between them, because natures rejoice in meeting their own natures. Take, therefore, Mardek and whiten the same with Gadenbe,\* that is, wine and vinegar, and Permanent Water. Roast and coagulate until the whole does not liquefy in a fire stronger than its own, namely, the former fire. Cover the mouth of the vessel securely, but let it be associated with its neighbour, that it may kindle the whiteness thereof, and beware lest the fire blaze up, for in

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\* Though Martinus Rulandus endeavoured honestly to explain all the barbarous terms of Alchemy in his laborious lexicon, and though he was evidently well acquainted with the *Turba*, he omits both Mardeck and Gadenbe.



this case it becomes red prematurely, and this will profit you nothing, because in the beginning of the ruling you require the white. Afterwards coagulate the same until you attain the red. Let your fire be gentle in the whitening, until coagulation take place. Know that when it is coagulated we call it the Soul, and it is more quickly converted from nature into nature. This, therefore, is sufficient for those who deal with the Art of Coins, because one thing makes it but many operate therein. For ye need not a number of things, but one thing only, which in each and every grade of your work is changed into another nature. *The TURBA saith*: Master, if you speak as the Wise have spoken, and that briefly, they will follow you who do not wish to be wholly shut in with darkness.

*The Thirteenth Dictum.*

PYTHAGORAS *saith*:—We posit another government which is not from another

root, but it differs in name. And know, all ye seekers after this Science and Wisdom, that whatsoever the envious may have enjoined in their books concerning the composition of natures which agree together,\* in savour there is only one, albeit to sight they are as diverse as possible. Know, also, that the thing which they have described in so many ways follows and attains its companion without fire, even as the magnet follows the iron, to which the said thing is not vainly compared, nor to a seed, nor to a matrix, for it is also like unto these. And this same thing, which followst† its companion without fire, causes many colours to appear when embracing it, for this reason, that the said one thing enters into every regimen, and is found everywhere, being a stone, and also not a stone; common and precious; hidden and concealed,

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\* The shorter recension reads: "concerning the harmony of the elements."

† According to the second recension, the subject in question causes many colours to appear in complexion, according as it is governed in every regimen.

yet known by everyone; of one name and of many names, which is the Spume of the Moon. This stone, therefore, is not a stone, because it is more precious; without it Nature never operates anything; its name is one, yet we have called it by many names on account of the excellence of its nature.\*

*The TURBA answereth* :—O ! Master ! wilt thou not mention some of those

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\* Zosimus explains that the uncommunicated mystery which no one among the prophets has dared to divulge by word, but has revealed only to the initiates, is a process upon the stone Alabastron by means of vinegar. By the *Lexicon of Chrysopeia* in the Byzantine Collection—that earliest dictionary of alchemy, which has remained unknown to all later Hermetic lexicographers—Alabastron is defined to be the calx obtained from eggshells, saltpetre, a variety of natron, and common salt. The inquirer after the uncommunicated secret may take his choice among these substances, and it does not follow that the *Lexicon* is a correct exponent of Zosimus. However this may be, it appears that the stone Alabastron, either before or after the operation with vinegar, is the symbolical encephalous stone which is not a stone, the unknown thing which is known by all, the despised thing which is most precious, the thing given and not given by God. The preparation indicated is the Mythraic Mystery. The perplexities of the *Turba* at this point are, therefore, a device of the Greek alchemists, and they were fond of recurring to it.

names for the guidance of seekers? *And he* :—It is called White Ethelia, White Copper, and that which flies from the fire and alone whitens copper. Break up, therefore, the White Stone, and afterwards coagulate it with milk.\* Then pound the calx in the mortar, taking care that the humidity does not escape from the vessel ; but coagulate it in the vessel until it shall become a cinder. Cook also with Spume of Luna and regulate. For ye shall find the stone broken, and already imbued with its own water.† This, therefore, is the stone which we call by all names, which assimilates the work and drinks it, and is the stone out of which also all colours appear. Take, therefore, that same gum,‡ which is from the

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\* The second recension adds : “ that is, after the manner that milk is coagulated.” The symbolical use of milk in alchemy is, like so much of the terminology of the *Turba*, of Greek origin. It will be found in the discourse of Synesius.

† The second recension has a preferable reading : “ Ye shall find the stone formed, which imbue with its own water.”

‡ The second recension says : “ Gum of Scotia,” most

scoriæ, and mix with cinder of calx, which you have ruled, and with the fæces which you know, moistening with permanent water. Then look and see whether it has become a powder, but if not, roast in a fire stronger than the first fire, until it be pounded. Then imbue with permanent water, and the more the colours vary all the more suffer them to be heated. Know, moreover, that if you take white quicksilver, or the Spume of Luna, and do as ye are bidden, breaking up with a gentle fire, the same is coagulated, and becomes a stone. Out of this stone, therefore, when it is broken up, many colours will appear to you. But

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probably a misprint for Scoria. Rulandus identifies philosophical gum with Ferment, Mercury, &c. The term is much used in alchemy, and is found in Zosimus, but without explanatory context. The *Turba Philosophorum* is not very clear on the subject of the philosophical gum, but it is as clear as the Greek Alchemists, for the *Lexicon of Chrysopeia* defines gum as the yolk of the egg, speaking philosophically and not literally; but the treatise on the *Nomenclature of the Egg* says that the white of egg is gum, among other things, speaking also philosophically, and without regard to the *Lexicon*.



herein, if any ambiguity occur to you in our discourse, do as ye are bidden, ruling the same until a white and coruscating stone shall be produced, and so ye find your purpose.

*The Fourteenth Dictum.*

ACSUBOFEN\* *saith*: Master, thou hast spoken without envy, even as became thee, and for the same may God reward thee! PYTHAGORAS *saith*: May God also deliver thee, ACSUBOFEN, from envy! *Then he*: Ye must know, O Assembly of the Wise, that sulphurs are contained in sulphurs, and humidity in humidity.† *The TURBA answereth*: The envious, O Acsubofen, have uttered something like unto this! Tell us, therefore, what is this humidity? *And he*: Humidity is a venom, and when venom‡ penetrates a body, it

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\* In the second recension the name is Assuberes.

† A Formula of the Greek Alchemists: Sulphurs are mastered by Sulphurs, &c.

‡ The theriac and poison of the stone are favourite subjects of discourse among early Latin Alchemists, like Petrus Bonus and, indeed, the sovereign remedy seems with all authors to have had a destructive as well as

tinges it with an invariable colour, and in no wise permits the soul to be separated from the body, because it is equal thereto. Concerning this, the envious have said: When one flies and the other pursues, then one seizes upon the other, and afterwards they no longer flee, because Nature has laid hold of its equal, after the manner of an enemy, and they destroy one another. For this reason, out of the sulphureous mixed sulphur is produced a most precious colour, which varies not, nor flees from the fire, when the soul enters into the interior of the body and holds the body together and tinges it. I will repeat my words in Tyrian dye.\* Take the Animal which is

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a constructive aspect. A Syriac treatise, fixed by M. Berthelot as belonging to the tenth or eleventh century, says that "the elixir resembles a poison, because of its violence and subtlety," and Arabian alchemy contains many references to the *venenum ignis*. The Greek equivalent is *ios*, and this is recurring continually in the Byzantine Alchemical collection.

\* This process, worded in the language of the Tyrian dye, may be compared with a similar recipe for the purple tincture, which occurs at the beginning of the *Natural and*

called Kenckel, since all its water is a Tyrian colour, and rule the same with a gentle fire, as is customary, until it shall become earth, in which there will be a little colour. But if you wish to obtain the Tyrian tincture, take the humidity which that thing has ejected, and place it therewith gradually in a vessel, adding that tincture whereof the colour was disagreeable to you. Then cook with that same marine water\* until it shall become dry.† Afterwards moisten with that humour, dry gradually, and cease not to imbue it, to cook, and to dry, until it be imbued with all its humour. Then leave it for several days in its own vessel, until the most precious Tyrian colour shall come out from it to the surface. Observe how I describe the regimen to you! Prepare it with the urine of boys, with

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*Mystic Questions of Democritus.* In this, also, urine plays an important part.

\* The use of sea water is specified in one of the Democritic treatises.

† The second recension reads: "until it shall become moistened, after which evaporate the moisture."



water of the sea, and with permanent clean water, so that it may be tinged, and decoct with a gentle fire, until the blackness altogether shall depart from it, and it be easily pounded. Decoct, therefore, in its own humour until it clothe itself with a red colour. But if ye wish to bring it to the Tyrian colour, imbue the same with continual\* water, and mix, as ye know to be sufficient, according to the rule of sight; mix the same with permanent water sufficiently, and decoct until rust absorb the water. Then wash with the water of the sea which thou hast prepared, which is water of desiccated calx;† cook until it imbibe its own moisture; and do this day by day. I tell you that a colour will thence appear to you the like of which the Tyrians have never made. And if ye wish that it should be a still more exalted colour, place the gum in the permanent water, with which ye shall dye it alternately, and

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\* The second recension reads: "with water of snow."

† The alternative reading is: water of talc.

afterwards desiccate in the sun. Then restore to the aforesaid water and the black Tyrian colour is intensified. But know that ye do not tinge the purple colour except by cold. Take, therefore, water which is of the nature of cold, and steep wool\* therein until it extract the force of the tincture from the water. Know also that the Philosophers have called the force which proceeds from that water the Flower. Seek, therefore, your intent in the said water; therein place what is in the vessel for days and nights, until it be clothed with a most precious Tyrian colour.

*The Fifteenth Dictum.*

FRICTES saith :—O all ye seekers after Wisdom, know that the foundation of this Art, on account of which many have perished, is one only.† There is

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\* The second recension substitutes *Luna* for *Lana*, *i.e.*, Moon for wool.

† The one nature, the one matter, the one way, are all conceptions of Greek Alchemy. “The furnace is one, the way which must be followed is one, and one is also the

one thing which is stronger than all natures, and more sublime in the opinion of philosophers, whereas with fools it is more common than anything. But for us it is a thing which we reverence. Woe unto all ye fools! How ignorant are ye of this Art, for which ye would die if ye knew it! I swear to you that if kings were familiar with it, none of us would ever attain this thing. O how this nature changeth body into spirit! O how admirable is Nature, how she presides over all, and overcomes all! PYTHAGORAS saith:—Name this Nature, O Frictes! *And he*:—It is a very sharp vinegar,\* which makes

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work," says the *Assembly of the Philosophers*. "The ONE furnishes blood to the OTHER, and the ONE engenders the OTHER. Nature rejoices nature; nature charms nature; nature triumphs over nature; nature masters nature; and this not for one such nature opposed to another such, but for one only and same nature, proceeding by chemical process from itself with pain and great labour."—*The Serpent Ourobobos*.

\* The Greek *Assembly of the Philosophers* explains that the philosophical vinegar is obtained by the coction of the Stone. It appears to be an oil which rises to the surface during the process, but the explanation is by no

gold into sheer spirit, without which vinegar, neither whiteness, nor blackness, nor redness, nor rust can be made. And know ye that when it is mixed with the body, it is contained therein, and becomes one therewith; it turns the same into a spirit, and tinges with a spiritual and invariable tincture, which is indelible. Know, also, that if ye place the body over the fire without vinegar, it will be burnt and corrupted. And know, further, that the first humour is cold. Be careful, therefore, of the fire, which is inimical to cold. Accordingly, the Wise have said: Rule gently until the sulphur becomes incombustible.\* The Wise

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means clear. M. Berthelot supposes a reference to the Mercurial Water.

\* The Greek Alchemists give the following recipe for the production of incombustible sulphur: Take unburnt Sulphur, diluted in the urine of a person who has not reached puberty; then taking an equal quantity of brine, boil till the sulphur rises to the surface, and then it becomes incombustible. Prove it by reasoning and examining (? with fire) until it becomes incombustible, that is to say, until you see that it no longer burns. Take the same incombustible water (of sulphur), pour on flower of salt, dilute as

men have already shewn to those who possess reason the disposition of this Art, and the best point of their Art, which they mentioned, is, that a little of this sulphur burns a strong body. Accordingly they venerate it and name it in the beginning of their book, and the son of Adam thus described it. For this vinegar burns the body, converts it into a cinder, and also whitens the body, which, if ye cook well and deprive of blackness, is changed into a stone, so that it becomes a coin of most intense whiteness. Cook, therefore, the stone until it be disintegrated, and then dissolve and temper with water of the sea. Know also, that the beginning of the whole work is the whitening, to which succeeds the redness, finally the perfection of the work; but after this, by means of vinegar, and by the will of God, there follows a complete perfection. Now, I have shewn to you, O disciples of

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in the case of the incombustible sulphur. This is the divine mystery.



this Turba, the disposition of the one thing, which is more perfect, more precious, and more honourable, than all natures, and I swear to you by God that I have searched for a long time in books so that I might arrive at the knowledge of this one thing, while I prayed also to God that he would teach me what it is. My prayer was heard, He shewed me clean water, whereby I knew pure vinegar, and the more I did read books, the more was I illuminated.

*The Sixteenth Dictum.*

SOCRATES saith:—Know, O crowd of those that still remain of the Sons of the Doctrine, that no tincture can be produced without Lead, which possesses the required virtue. Have ye not seen how thrice-great Hermes infused the red into the body, and it was changed into an invariable colour?\* Know, therefore, that the first virtue is vinegar,

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\* The second recension reads: "Have ye not seen, says thrice-great Hermes, that so often as it is infused into the body, the same body is changed into an invariable colour?"

and the second is the Lead\* of which the Wise have spoken, which if it be infused into all bodies, renders all unchangeable, and tinges them with an invariable colour. Take, therefore, Lead which is made out of the stone called Kuhul; † let it be of the best quality, and let it be cooked till it becomes black. Then pound the same with Water of Nitre until it is thick like grease, and cook again in a very bright fire until the spissitude of the body is destroyed,

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\* M. Berthelot tells us that lead was regarded by the Egyptian alchemists as the generator of the other metals and the first matter of transmutation, which he explains by the appearances it possesses in common with a number of other simple bodies and metallic alloys. Zosimus, the Panopolite, may be cited in confirmation of this point; he says: All substances were recognised by the Egyptians as produced by lead alone, for it is from lead that the three other bodies are derived, *i.e.*, copper, iron, and tin.—Zosimus *On the Substances and Non-substances of Art.*

† The significance of the term Kuhul, or more accurately Kohol, is to be found in Syriac alchemy; it is the equivalent of alcool and sulphurated antimony in the form of an impalpable powder. Kuhul, or Koheul, is explained by Rulandus to be the Lead of the Philosophers. The Alcohol mentioned by M. Berthelot seems to be different from Alcool of wine, and is, in fact, the pure part of any body separated from that which is impure.

the water being rejected. Kindle, therefore, above it until the stone becomes clean, abounding in precious metal, and exceedingly white. Pound it afterwards with dew and the sun, and with sea and rain water for 21 days, for 10 days with salt water, and 10 days with fresh water,\* when ye shall find the same like to a metallic stone. Cook the same once more with water of nitre until it become tin by liquefaction. Again cook until it be deprived of moisture, and become dry. But know that when it becomes dry it drinks up what remains of its humour swiftly, because it is burnt lead. Take care, however, lest it be burnt. Thus we

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\* The second recension reads: "Afterwards pound it with dew, salt, and rain water for 29 days, again with salt water for 20 days, and yet again with fresh water for 10 days." The explanation of all Rosicrucian mysteries has been referred to the dew of the alchemists, and the *ros philosophorum* certainly plays an important part in the Great Mystery. In the *Natural and Mysterious Questions* of Democritus, dew is mentioned in connection with a process of whitening, and in the fragment on the *Philosophical Egg* it is tabulated as a name of the white or philosophical albumen, but here M. Berthelot suspects the additions of a later hand.



call it incombustible sulphur. Pound the same with the sharpest vinegar, and cook till it becomes thick, taking care lest the vinegar be changed into smoke and perish; continue this coction for 150 days. Now, therefore, I have demonstrated the disposition of the white lead, all which afterwards follows being no more than women's work and child's play. Know, also, that the arcanum of the work of gold proceeds out of the male and the female, but I have shewn you the male in the lead, while, in like manner, I have discovered for you the female in orpiment.\* Mix, therefore, the orpiment with the lead, for the female rejoices in receiving the strength of the male, because she is assisted by the male. But the male receives a tingeing spirit from the female. Mix them, therefore,

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\* M. Berthelot indentifies orpiment with the arsenic of the ancients. The word itself does not occur in the Greek writers, but there is a fifteenth century translation from Latin to Greek of the *Semita Recta*, ascribed to Albertus Magnus, who reappears as Peter Theoctonicos, in which it is found.

together, place in a glass vessel, and pound with Ethelia and very sharp vinegar; cook for seven days, taking care lest the arcanum smoke away, and leave throughout the night. But if ye wish it to put on mud (colour), seeing that it is already dry, again imbue with vinegar. Now, therefore, I have notified to you the power of orpiment, which is the woman by whom is accomplished the most great arcanum. Do not shew these unto the evil, for they will laugh. It is the Ethelia of vinegar which is placed in the preparation, by which things God perfects the work, whereby also spirits take possession of bodies, and they become spiritual.

*The Seventeenth Dictum.*

ZIMON\* saith : O Turba of Philosophers and disciples, now hast thou spoken about making into white, but it yet remains to treat concerning the reddening ! Know, all ye seekers after

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\* Otherwise Zenon, according to the second recension.

this Art, that unless ye whiten, ye cannot make red, because the two natures are nothing other than red and white. Whiten, therefore, the red, and redden the white!\* Know, also, that the year is divided into four seasons; the first season is of a frigid complexion, and this is Winter; the second is of the complexion of air, and this is Spring; then follows the third, which is summer, and is of the complexion of fire; lastly, there is the fourth, wherein fruits are matured, which is Autumn. In this manner, therefore, ye are to rule your natures, namely, to dissolve in winter, to cook in spring, to coagulate in summer, and to gather and tinge the fruit in autumn. Having, therefore, given this example, rule the tingeing natures, but if ye err, blame no one save yourselves. *The TURBA answereth*: Thou hast treated the matter extremely

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\* A commentary introduced into the text of Zosimus on Virtue and Interpretation, observes: If thou dost commence by making white, the yellowing will be perfect, perfect and solid.

well; add, therefore, another teaching of this kind for the sake of posterity. *And he*: I will speak of making lead red.\* Take the copper which the Master ordered you to take at the beginning of his book, combine lead therewith, and cook it until it becomes thick; congeal also and desiccate until it becomes red. Here certainly is the Red Lead of which the wise spake; copper and lead become a precious stone; mix them equally, let gold be roasted with them, for this, if ye rule well, becomes a tingeing spirit in spirits.† So when the male and the female are conjoined there is not produced a volatile wife, but a spiritual composite. From the composite turned into a red spirit is produced the beginning of the world.

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\* The various substances which alchemists confounded under the names of Minium, Rubric, etc., are enumerated by M. Berthelot, including, in addition to the sur-oxyde of lead, which is the modern name of minium, not only vermilion, cinnabar, realgar, etc., but some oxydes of iron.

† The second recension reads: "becomes a mighty spirit among spirits."

Behold this is the lead which we have called Red Lead, which is of our work, and without which nothing is effected!

*The Eighteenth Dictum.*

MUNDUS saith to the TURBA: The seekers after this Art must know that the Philosophers in their books have described gum in many ways, but it is none other than permanent water, out of which our precious stone is generated.\* O how many are the seekers after this gum, and how few there are who find it! Know that this gum is not ameliorated except by gold alone. For there be very many who investigate these applications, and they find certain things, yet they cannot sustain the labours because they are dimi-

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\* It appears from Zosimus on *The Detailed Exposition of the Work*, that with the addition of a little [philosophical] gum any species of body may be tinged. And when Mundus identifies Gum with Permanent Water he is in agreement with the same authority, for in the context of the passage just cited we find the following words: That which tinges tinctures and things tinged is Divine water, the great mystery. The gum of gold is mentioned in a fragment attributed to Agathodemon.



nished. But the applications which are made out of the gum and out of the honourable stone, which has already held the tincture, they sustain the labours, and are never diminished. Understand, therefore, my words, for I will explain unto you the applications of this gum, and the arcanum existing therein. Know ye that our gum is stronger than gold, and all those who know it do hold it more honourable than gold, yet gold we also honour, for without it the gum cannot be improved. Our gum, therefore, is for Philosophers more precious and more sublime than pearls, because out of gum with a little gold we buy much. Consequently, the Philosophers, when committing these things to writing that the same might not perish, have not set forth in their books the manifest disposition, lest every one should become acquainted therewith, and having become familiar to fools, the same would not sell it at a small price. Take, therefore, one part of the most intense white gum ;

one part of the urine of a white calf; one part of the gall of a fish; and one part of the body of gum, without which it cannot be improved; mix these portions and cook for forty days. When these things have been done, congeal by the heat of the sun till they are dried. Then cook the same, mixed with milk of ferment, until the milk fail; afterwards extract it, and until it become dry evaporate the moisture by heat. Then mix it with milk of the fig, and cook it till that moisture be dried up in the composite, which afterwards mix with milk of the root of grass, and again cook until it be dry. Then moisten it with rainwater, then sprinkle with water of dew, and cook until it be dried. Also imbue with permanent water, and desiccate until it become of the most intense dryness. Having done these things, mix the same with the gum which is equipped with all manner of colours, and cook strongly until the whole force of the water perish; and the entire body be deprived

of its humidity, while ye imbue the same by cooking, until the dryness thereof be kindled. Then dismiss for forty days. Let it remain in that trituration or decocting until the spirit penetrate the body. For by this regimen the spirit is made corporeal, and the body is changed into a spirit. Observe the vessel, therefore, lest the composition fly and pass off in fumes. These things being accomplished, open the vessel, and ye will find that which ye purposed. This, therefore, is the arcanum of gum, which the Philosophers have concealed in their books.

*The Nineteenth Dictum.*

DARDARIS *saieth*: It is common knowledge that the Masters\* before us have described Permanent Water. Now, it behoves one who is introduced to this Art to attempt nothing till he is familiar with the power of this Per-

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\* The reference to the Masters, which occurs twice in this dictum, is to be understood not of previous speakers in the Assembly, but of the older philosophers, namely, the Greek Alchemists.



manent Water, and in commixture, contrition, and the whole regimen, it behoves us to use invariably this famous Permanent Water. He, therefore, who does not understand Permanent Water, and its indispensable regimen, may not enter into this Art, because nothing is effected without the Permanent Water. The force thereof is a spiritual blood, whence the Philosophers have called it Permanent Water, for, having pounded it with the body, as the Masters before me have explained to you, by the will of God it turns that body into spirit.\* For these, being mixed together and reduced to one, transform each other; the body incorporates the spirit, and the spirit incorporates the body into tinged spirit, like blood. And know ye, that whatsoever hath spirit the same hath blood also as well. Remember, therefore, this arcanum!

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\* The second recension adds: "and the spirit into body."

*The Twentieth Dictum.*

BELUS saith :—O disciples, ye have discoursed excellently !\* PYTHAGORAS answers :—Seeing that they are philosophers, O Belus, why hast thou called them disciples ? He answereth :—It is in honour of their Master, lest I should make them equal with him. Then PYTHAGORAS saith :—Those who, in conjunction with us, have composed this book which is called the *Turba*, ought not to be termed disciples. Then he :—Master, they have frequently described Permanent Water, and the making of

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\* The whole of this Dictum recalls a passage in Zosimus, *On Virtue and Interpretation*.—It is for these reasons that my excellent master, Democritus, makes himself the following distinction ; “ Take that stone which is not a stone, that precious thing which has no value, that polymorphous object which is without form, that unknown thing which is known to everyone, which has many names and has no name, I refer to aphroselinon.” For this stone is not a stone, and while it is exceedingly precious, at the same time it has no money value ; its nature is one, its name one. Nevertheless, many denominations have been given it, I do not say absolutely speaking, but according to its nature, so that whether it is called the being which flees the fire, or white smoke, or white copper, no falsehood is uttered.

the White and the Red in many ways, albeit under many names; but in the modes after which they have conjoined weights, compositions, and regimens, they agree with the hidden truth. Behold, what is said concerning this despised thing! A report has gone abroad that the Hidden Glory of the Philosophers is a stone and not a stone, and that it is called by many names, lest the foolish should recognise it. Certain wise men have designated it after one fashion, namely, according to the place where it is generated; others have adopted another, founded upon its colour, some of whom have termed it the Green Stone;\* by other some it is called the Stone of the most intense Spirit of Brass, not to be mixed with bodies; by yet others its description has been further varied, because it is sold for coins by lapidaries who are called *saven*; some have named it Spume of Luna;† some have distin-

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\* The second recension reads: "Green Lion."

† Sputum Lunæ does not seem to be a term which found favour with Latin alchemy, and accordingly it is

guished it astronomically or arithmetically; it has already received a thousand titles, of which the best is:—“That which is produced out of metals.” So also others have called it the Heart of the Sun, and yet others have declared it to be that which is brought forth out of quicksilver with the milk of volatile things.

*The Twenty-first Dictum.*

PANDOLFUS saith:—O Belus, thou hast said so much concerning the despised

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wanting in the Lexicons. It is very curious to note that Rulandus, who quite frequently quotes the *Turba*, seems seldom to have troubled himself about the significance of its bizarre terms. In Zosimus, *On Virtue and Interpretation*, there is a prescription from Hermes concerning “that which falls from the moon when it is waning,” and he is referred to as describing where it is to be found, and how it has the quality of resisting the fire. In fact, says Hermes, “you will find it with me and with Agathodaimon.” M. Berthelot supposes this passage to allegorise upon the volatilisation of mercury. But the expression in the *Turba* recalls the passage of Synesius. Note also the mythology of Selenite, Lapis Arabicus, Aphroselinum, &c., supposed not only to reflect the likeness of the Moon, but to be “made from dew by the foam of the Moon.”—*Rulandus.*

stone\* that thou hast left nothing to be added by thy brethren! Howsoever, I teach posterity that this despised stone is a permanent water, and know, all ye seekers after Wisdom, that permanent water is water of mundane life,† because, verily, Philosophers have stated that Nature rejoices in Nature, Nature contains Nature, and Nature overcomes Nature. The Philosophers have constituted this short dictum the principle of the work for reasonable persons. And know ye that no body is more precious or purer than the Sun, and that no tingeing venom‡ is gene-

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\* The *Turba Philosophorum* does not betray anywhere the hand of a Christian compiler, and although the reference to the despised stone suggests the stone which the builders have rejected, the idea is derived from Zosimus, and not from the New Testament, except in so far as Zosimus himself may have drawn it from that source. Treating, in his dictum on the subject of calx, concerning the uncommunicated mystery of the encephalous stone, the Greek adept calls it the despised thing which is most precious, and so on through a number of contradicting denominations.

† The second recension reads: "clean water."

‡ The symbolism of the venom of the philosophers is also found in Zosimus, commenting upon Democritus.



rated without the Sun and its shadow. He, therefore, who attempts to make the venom of the Philosophers without these, already errs, and has fallen into that pit wherein his sadness remains. But he who has tinged the venom of the wise out of the Sun and its shadow\* has arrived at the highest Arcanum. Know also that our coin when it becomes red, is called gold; he, therefore, who knows the hidden Cambart† of the Philosophers, to him is the Arcanum already revealed. *The TURBA answereth*:—Thou hast even now intel-

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The Greek word signifies, says an annotation of M. Berthelot, the *rouille* of metals, the specific virtue of bodies, and the venom of serpents. According to Zosimus, it is the spirit separated from the substance of a body.—*On Virtue and Interpretation.*

\* A quotation from Mary (the first) in Zosimus *On the Measure of Yellowing* runs thus:—Copper when burned with sulphur, treated with oil of natron, and recovered after having undergone the same process several times, becomes an excellent gold without shadow.

† This oriental term is referred to by M. Berthelot in his *Essay on the Transmission of Ancient Science* without explanation of its significance, and it is not found in any of the Lexicons of Alchemy. In an ancient alchemical treatise, entitled *The Code of Truth*, it figures as the name of an adept.

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ligibly described this stone, yet thou hast not narrated its regimen nor its composition. Return, therefore, to the description. *He saith* :—I direct you to take an occult and honourable arcanum, which is White Magnesia,\* and the same is mixed and pounded with wine, but take care not to make use of this except it be pure and clean; finally place it in its vessel, and pray God that He may grant you the sight of this very great stone.† Then cook gradually, and, extracting, see if it has become a black stone, in which case ye have ruled excellently well. But rule it thus for the white, which is a great arcanum, until it becomes Kuhul, closed up with

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\* The *Chemistry of Moses* gives the following process for the whitening of Magnesia :—“ Taking Magnesia and an equal quantity of Cappadocian salt, place in a vessel of burnt clay. Let it stay there from evening till morning. Then, if it be black, let it be cooked till it whitens, but it is far better to cook it in a glass-maker’s furnace. Hide this mystery, for it comprises everything which concerns whitening by decoction.”

† It does not appear that the conception of the Philosopher’s Stone as a medicine of metals and of men was familiar to Greek alchemy.

blackness, which blackness see that it does not remain longer than forty days. Pound the same, therefore, with its confections, which are the said flower of copper, gold of the Indies whose root is one, and a certain extract of an unguent, that is, of a crocus, that is, fixed exalted alum, or  $\frac{1}{2}$  ;\* cook the four, therefore, permanently for 40 or 42 days. After these days God will show you the principle (or beginning) of this stone, which is the stone Atitos, of which favoured sight of God there are many accounts. Cook strongly, and imbue with the gum that remains. And know ye that so often as ye imbue the cinder, so often must it be desiccated and again humectated, until its colour turns into that which ye desire. Now, therefore, will I complete that which I have

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\* The authenticity of this sign is extremely doubtful, and the marginal note which is appended to most printed editions does not help it out. It is no doubt really a misreading of the word *Hoc*, which is required to make sense of the sentence immediately following. The second recension confirms this view.



begun, if God will look kindly on us.\* Know also that the perfection of the work of this precious stone is to rule it with the residue of the third part of the medicine, and to preserve the two other parts for imbuing and cooking alternately till the required colour appears.† Let the fire be more intense than the former; let the matter be cerated, and when it is desiccated it coheres. Cook, therefore, the wax until it imbibes the gluten of gold, which being desiccated, imbue the rest of the work seven times until the other two-thirds be finished, and true earth imbibe them all. Finally, place the same on a hot fire until the earth extract its flower and be satisfactory. Blessed are ye if ye understand! But, if not, I will repeat to you the perfection of

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\* The original is untranslatable; the conjectural emendation given in the text has no authority, and is only introduced to provide a meaning.

† The reading of the second recension has been substituted, owing to the corrupt state of the longer text.

the work. Take the clean white, which is a most great arcanum, wherein is the true tincture; imbue sand therewith, which sand is made out of the stone seven times imbued, until it drink up the whole, and close the mouth of the vessel effectually, as you have often been told. For that which ye seek of it by the favour of God, will appear to you, which is the stone of Tyrian colour. Now, therefore, I have fulfilled the truth, so do I conjure you by God and your sure Master, that you show not this great arcanum, and beware of the wicked!

*The Twenty-Second Dictum.*

THEOPHILUS *saith*: Thou hast spoken intelligently and elegantly, and art held free from envy. *Saith the TURBA*: Let your discretion, therefore, explain to us what the instructing Pandolfus has stated, and be not envious. *Then he*: O all ye seekers after this science, the arcanum of gold and the art of the coin is a dark vestment, and no one

knows what the Philosophers have narrated in their books without frequent reading, experiments, and questionings of the Wise. For that which they have concealed is more sublime and obscure than it is possible to make known in words, and albeit some have dealt with it intelligibly and well, certain others have treated it obscurely; thus some are more lucid than others. *The TURBA answereth:* Thou hast truly spoken. *And he:* I announce to posterity that between boritis and copper there is an affinity, because the boritis of the Wise liquefies the copper, and it changes as a fluxible water. Divide, therefore, the venom into two equal parts, with one of which liquefy the copper, but preserve the other to pound and imbue the same, until it is drawn out into plates; cook again with the former part of the venom, cook two to seven in two; cook to seven in its own water for 42 days;\*

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\* This unintelligible passage is better rendered in the first recension:—"Cook with the former part of the venom

finally, open the vessel, and ye shall find copper turned into quicksilver; wash the same by cooking until it be deprived of its blackness, and become as copper without a shadow. Lastly, cook it continuously until it be congealed. For when it is congealed it becomes a very great arcanum. Accordingly, the Philosophers have called this stone Boritis;\* cook, therefore, that coagulated stone until it becomes a matter like mucra. Then imbue it with the Permanent water which I directed you to reserve, that is to say, with the other portion, and cook it many times until its colours manifest. This, therefore, is the very great putrefaction which extracts (or contains in itself) the very great arcanum. *Saith the TURBA:*

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until it shall have absorbed both, and do this seven times." But *donec duas ebibat* does not agree with the subsequent directions found in each version.

\* Boritis, according to Rulandus, is the White Stone after the black state, and it reduces earth to water. A late French Lexicon observes that the name was applied by Philosophers to their Mercury when it had reached the extreme black stage. It is the Laton which must be whitened. The word is of Oriental origin.

Return to thine exposition, O Theophilus! *And he:* It is to be known that the same affinity which exists between the magnet and iron, also exists assuredly between copper and permanent water. If, therefore, ye rule copper and permanent water as I have directed, there will thence result the very great arcanum in the following fashion. Take white Magnesia and quicksilver,\* mix with the male, and pound strongly by cooking, not with the hands, until the water become thin. But dividing this water into two parts, in the one part of the water cook it for eleven, otherwise, forty days, until there be a white flower, as the flower of salt in its splendour and coruscation: but strongly close the mouth of the vessel, and cook for forty days, when ye will find it water whiter than milk; deprive it of all blackness by cooking; continue the cooking until its whole nature be disintegrated, until the de-

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\* The second recension reads:—"Take quicksilver mixed with the male."



filement perish, until it be found clean, and is wholly broken up (or becomes wholly clean). But if ye wish that the whole arcanum, which I have given you, be accomplished, wash the same with water, that is to say, the other part which I counselled you to preserve, until there appear a crocus, and leave in its own vessel. For the Iksir pounds (or contains) itself; imbue also with the residue of the water, until by decoction and by water it be pounded and become like a syrup of pomegranates; imbue it, therefore, and cook, until the weight of the humidity shall fail, and the colour which the Philosophers have magnified shall truly appear.

*The Twenty-third Dictum.*

CERUS\* *saith* : Understand, all ye Sons of the Doctrine, that which Theophilus hath told you, namely, that there exists an affinity between the magnet and the

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\* The name substituted by the second recension is Bellus.

iron, by the alliance of composites existing between the magnet and the iron, while the copper is fitly ruled for one hundred days:\* what statement can be more useful to you than that there is no affinity between tin† and quicksilver?‡ *The TURBA answereth*: Thou hast ill spoken, having disparaged the true disposition. *And he*: I testify that I say nothing but what is true; why are you incensed against me? Fear the Lord, all ye Turba, that your Master may believe you! *The TURBA answereth*: Say what you will. *And he*: I direct you to take quicksilver, in which is the male potency§ or strength;

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\* The second recension adds:—"Between the copper and water of the Philosophers. This affinity and combination is given to them in the space of one hundred days."

† The definition may not be important, but it is, perhaps, as well to state that the Greek *Lexicon of Chrysopiea* explains that tin alchemically is cinnabar, and that cinnabar is sublimed vapour obtained by coction in cauldrons. Here M. Berthelot observes that the reference is to sublimed mercury or the sulphur thereof.

‡ According to the alternative version:—"The nature of the one does not agree with the nature of the other."

§ "The proper end of the whole art," says Horus, "is to obtain the semen of the male secretly, seeing that all

cook the same with its body until it becomes a fluxible water; cook the masculine together with the vapour, until each shall be coagulated and become a stone. Then take the water which you had divided into two parts, of which one is for liquefying and cooking the body, but the second is for cleansing that which is already burnt, and its companion, which [two] are made one. Imbue the stone seven times, and cleanse, until it be disintegrated, and its body be purged from all defilement, and become earth. Know also that in the time of forty-two days the whole is changed into earth; by cooking, therefore, liquefy the same until it become as true water, which is quicksilver. Then wash with water of nitre until it become as a liquefied coin. Then cook until it be congealed and become like to tin, when it is a most

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things are male and female. Hence Horus says in a certain place: Join the male and the female, and you will find that which is sought; as a fact, without this process of reunion, nothing can succeed, for Nature charms Nature," &c.—Olympiodorus *On the Sacred Art*.



great arcanum; that is to say, the stone which is out of two things. Rule the same by cooking and pounding, until it becomes a most excellent crocus. Know also that unto water desiccated with its companion we have given the name of crocus. Cook it, therefore, and imbue with the residual water reserved by you until you attain your purpose.

*The Twenty-fourth Dictum.*

BOCASCUS\* *saith*: Thou hast spoken well, O Belus, and therefore I follow thy steps! *He answereth*: As it may please you, but do not become envious, for that is not the part of the Wise. *And* BOCASCUS: Thou speakest the truth, and thus, therefore, I direct the Sons of the Doctrine. Take lead, and, as the Philosophers have ordained, imbue, liquefy, and afterwards congeal, until a stone is produced; then rule the stone with gluten of gold and syrup of pomegranates until it be broken up. But you

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\* The name in the second recension is Boratis.

have already divided the water into two parts, with one of which you have liquefied the lead, and it has become as water; cook, therefore, the same until it be dried and have become earth; then pound with the water reserved until it acquire a red colour, as you have been frequently ordered.\*

*The TURBA answereth*: Thou hast done nothing but pile up ambiguous words. Return, therefore, to the subject. *And he*: Ye who wish to coagulate quick-silver,† must mix it with its equal.‡

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\* Otherwise: "Rule frequently, as I have said."

† The Greek alchemists claim to have accomplished the fixation of Mercury by means of the Body of Magnesia, by which Zosimus understands molybdochalchos. An unassigned fragment of the Byzantine collection has the following poetical reference to the fixation of Mercury:—"Mercury is obtained in like manner with artificial cinnabar, a rare substance, that is, one met with rarely. I refer to cinnabar obtained by the dry way and a suitable roasting. It is that above all which is termed dried and easily volatilised, employed in the testing of souls. Having become an etherised spirit, it darts towards the upper hemisphere; it descends and ascends, avoiding the action of the fire, until, quitting its rôle of fugitive, it reaches a state of wisdom. Until it has attained this condition, it is difficult to retain, and is mortal."—*Fabrication of the All.*

‡ "With its body," says the second recension; it is a printer's choice between *compari* and *corpori*.

Afterwards cook it diligently until both become permanent water, and, again, cook this water until it be coagulated. But let this be desiccated with its own equal vapour, because ye have found the whole quicksilver to be coagulated by itself.\* If ye understand, and place in your vessel what is necessary, cook it until it be coagulated, and then pound† until it becomes a crocus like to the colour of gold.

*The Twenty-fifth Dictum.*

MENABDUS *saith*: May God reward thee for the regimen, since thou speakest the truth! For thou hast illuminated thy words. *And they*: It is said because thou praisest him for his sayings, do not be inferior to him. *And he*: I know that I can utter nothing but that which he hath uttered; however, I counsel posterity to make bodies not bodies,

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\* The second recension reads:—"Let the whole be coagulated into quicksilver."

† The second recension merely says:—"Place it once more in its vessel, and pound."

but these incorporeal things bodies.\* For by this regimen the composite is prepared, and the hidden part of its nature is extracted. With these bodies accordingly join quicksilver and the body of Magnesia,† the woman also with the man, and by means of this there is extracted our secret Ethelia, through which bodies are coloured; assuredly, if I understand this regimen, bodies become not bodies, and incorporeal things become bodies. If ye diligently pound the things in the fire and digest

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\* The Byzantine fragment upon *The Philosophical Egg* contains this statement: "Unless bodies lose their corporeal state, and unless bodies again assume their corporeal state, that which is desired will not be attained." But Mary is quoted by Olympiodorus in terms which correspond literally with the text of the *Turba*: "Except you convert corporeal substances into incorporeal, and incorporeal substances into corporeal, and unless you make two bodies into one body, no desired result will be achieved." The "divine" Zosimus also quotes Hermes in precisely the same fashion, and he observes elsewhere that to convert and transmute is to impart body to the incorporeal.—*The Body of Magnesia.*

† Zosimus, commenting upon Mary, concludes that the Body of Magnesia is molybdochalchos, or black lead. [See note on p. 82.] The confusion of old chemistry on the subject of the last substance is well known.

(or join to) the Ethelias, they become clean and fixed things. And know ye that quicksilver is a fire burning the bodies, mortifying and breaking up, with one regimen, and the more it is mixed and pounded with the body, the more the body is disintegrated, while the quicksilver is attenuated and becomes living. For when ye shall diligently pound fiery quicksilver and cook it as required, ye will possess Ethel, a fixed nature\* and colour, subject to every tincture, which also overcomes, breaks, and constrains the fire.† For this reason it does not colour things unless it be coloured, and being coloured it colours.‡ And know that no body can tinge itself unless its spirit be extracted from the secret belly thereof, when it becomes a body and soul with-

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\* That is, according to the second recension, "one which does not flee from the fire."

† Alternatively, "all bodies," which seems a preferable reading.

‡ The second recension says that "it holds and colours all spirits, because Ethelia tinges all things when once it has been itself tinged."



out the spirit,\* which is a spiritual tincture, out of which colours have manifested, seeing that a dense thing does not tinge a tenuous, but a tenuous nature colours that which enters into a body. When, however, ye have ruled the body of copper, and have extracted from it a most tenuous (subject), then the latter is changed into a tincture by which it is coloured.† Hence has the wise man said, that copper does not tinge unless first it be tinged. And know that those four bodies which you

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\* This distinction between the soul and the spirit is recognised by Zosimus, who follows Democritus. The soul is the primitively sulphureous and caustic nature. The purifying influence of fire preserves the spirit when the operation has been conducted according to the rules of Art. The spirit is the useful part, the tingeing element.—*The Four Metallic Bodies, &c.*

† In his treatise *On Virtue and Interpretation*, Zosimus cites Democritus to the effect that copper does not tinge, but that copper burnt by means of oil of natron, and having undergone this treatment repeatedly, becomes more beautiful than gold. “Copper does not tinge so long as it preserves an unique essence, but it tinges by its combination with other bodies. How then, if this combination be wanting, and before the copper has been tinged, can one succeed in tingeing objects made subject to the action of fire?”

are directed to rule are this copper, and that the tinctures which I have signified unto you are the condensed and the humid,\* but the condensed is a conjoined vapour, and the humid is the water of sulphur, for sulphurs are contained by sulphurs, and rightly by these things Nature rejoices in Nature, and overcomes, and constrains.

*The Twenty-Sixth Dictum.*

ZENON saith: I perceive that you, O crowd of the Wise, have conjoined two bodies, which your Master by no means ordered you to do! *The TURBA answereth*: Inform us according to your own opinion, O Zenon, in this matter, and beware of envy! *Then he*: Know that the colours which shall appear to you out of it are these. Know, O Sons of the Doctrine, that it behoves you to allow the composition to putrefy for forty days, and then to

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\* The second recension reads: "The condensed and the humid are these two tinctures, the condensed being joined with the humid."

sublimate five times in a vessel. Next join to a fire of dung, and cook, when these colours shall appear to you : On the first day black citrine, on the second black red, on the third like unto a dry crocus,\* finally, the purple colour will appear to you ; the ferment and the coin of the vulgar shall be imposed ; then is the Ixir composed out of the humid and the dry, and then it tinges with an invariable tincture. Know also that it is called a body wherein there is gold. But when ye are composing the Ixir, beware lest you extract the same hastily, for it lingers.† Extract, therefore, the same as an Ixir. For this venom is, as it were, birth and life, because it is a soul extracted out of many things, and imposed upon coins :‡ its tincture,

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\* The preferable reading is : “Crocus like unto sericus.”

† The second recension substitutes : “Beware lest you extract the spirit in haste, for perchance it will perish.”

‡ The second recension reads :—“And the soul shall remain, a tincture extracted out of many things, and imposed upon coins.”



therefore, is life to those things with which it is joined, from which it removes evil, but it is death to the bodies from which it is extracted. Accordingly, the Masters have said that between them there exists the same desire as between male and female, and if any one, being introduced to this Art, should know these natures, he would sustain the tediousness of cooking until he gained his purpose according to the will of God.

*The Twenty-Seventh Dictum.*

GREGORIUS\* saith : O all ye Turba, it is to be observed that the envious have called the venerable stone Efflucidinus,† and they have ordered it to be ruled until it coruscates like marble in its splendour.‡ *And*

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\* The name in the second recension is Chambar.

† Antimony, in the second recension. The most bizarre terms of the *Turba* did not find favour with Western Alchemists ; Efflucidinus is a special instance in point. It is difficult to speak with complete authority, but it may be said almost certainly that no later author made use of it. Moreover, no vocabulary mentions it.

‡ The comparison of the Stone in its splendour to gleaming marble is found, among other of the Greek

*they*: Show, therefore, what it is to posterity. *Then he*: Willingly; you must know that the copper is commingled with vinegar, and ruled until it becomes water. Finally, let it be congealed, and it remains a coruscating stone with a brilliancy like marble, which, when ye see thus, I direct you to rule until it becomes red, because when it is cooked till it is disintegrated and becomes earth, it is turned into a red colour. When ye see it thus, repeatedly cook and imbue it until it assume the aforesaid colour, and it shall become hidden gold. Then repeat the process, when it will become gold of a Tyrian colour. It behoves you, therefore, O all ye investigators of

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alchemists, in Zosimus, and especially in his *Detailed Exposition of the Work*, where, however, he is quoting Democritus. "Mark the Philosopher, seized with a divine transport, on the subject of this white sulphur: If the preparation become like unto marble, then is there a great mystery." And again, having cited Stephanus, he proceeds: "Now, that which tinges tinctures and tinged substances, the same is divine water, the great mystery, which is like unto marble."

this Art, when ye have observed that this Stone is coruscating, to pound and turn it into earth, until it acquires some degree of redness; then take the remainder\* of the water which the envious† ordered you to divide into two parts, and ye shall imbibe them‡ several times until the colours which are hidden by no body appear unto you.§ Know also that if ye rule it ignorantly, ye shall see nothing of those colours. I knew a certain person who commenced this work, and operated the natures of truth, who, when the redness was somewhat slow in appearing, imagined that he had made a mistake, and so relinquished the work.|| Observe, therefore, how ye make the conjunc-

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\* Otherwise: "a small quantity."

† The opprobrious term is omitted by the second recension, and the reference seems to be to the division of the water indicated in an earlier part of the colloquy.

‡ The second recension substitutes "sand."

§ Otherwise: "until the hidden colours shall appear."

|| A common anecdote of the alchemists, reproduced with many variations, and even in Hermetic poems, such as Norton's *Ordinal of Alchemy*.

tion, for the punic dye,\* having embraced his spouse, passes swiftly into her body, liquefies, congeals, breaks up, and disintegrates the same. Finally, the redness does not delay in coming, and if ye effect it without the weight, death will take place, whereupon it will be thought to be bad. Hence, I order that the fire should be gentle in liquefaction, but when it is turned to earth make the same intense,† and imbue it until God shall extract the colours for us and they appear.

*The Twenty-eighth Dictum.*

CUSTOS *saith* : I am surprised, O all ye Turba! at the very great force and nature of this water, for when it has entered into the said body, it turns it first into earth, and next into powder, to test the perfection of which take in the hand, and if ye find it impalpable as water, it is then most excellent;

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\* The second recension reads : " the male."

† That is, "intenser in congelation," according to the second recension.

otherwise, repeat the cooking until it is brought to the required condition. And know that if ye use any substance other than our copper, and rule with our water, it will profit you nothing. If, on the other hand, ye rule our copper with our water, ye shall find all that has been promised by us. *But the TURBA answereth*: Father, the envious\* created no little obscurity when they commanded us to take lead and white quicksilver, and to rule the same with dew and the sun till it becomes a coin-like stone. *Then he*: They meant our copper and our permanent water, when they thus directed you to cook in a gentle fire, and affirmed that there should be produced the said coin-like stone, concerning which the Wise have also observed, that Nature rejoices in Nature, by reason of the affinity which they know to exist between the

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\* The distinction between the Wise and the Envious is a little difficult to follow, nor is it at all certain that the envious had less wisdom than the wise, or the wise less envy than the envious. In either case, they were all Greeks indifferently.



two bodies, that is to say, copper and permanent water. Therefore, the nature of these two is one, for between them there is a mixed affinity, without which they would not so swiftly unite, and be held together so that they may become one. *Saith the TURBA:* Why do the envious direct us to take the copper which we have now made, and roasted until it has become gold?

*The Twenty-Ninth Dictum.*

DIAMEDES *saith:* Thou hast spoken already, O Moses\*, in an ungrudging manner, as became thee; I will also confirm thy words, passing over the hardness of the elements which the wise desire to remove, this disposition being most precious in their eyes. Know, O ye seekers after this doctrine, that man does not proceed except from a man; that only which is like unto themselves is begotten from brute animals; and so also with flying creatures.

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\* This reference is omitted from the second recension. Moses may be a misprint for Custos, or *vice versa*.

I have treated these matters in compendious fashion, exalting you towards the truth, who yourselves omit prolixity, for Nature is truly not improved by Nature, save with her own nature, seeing that thou thyself art not improved except in thy son, that is to say, man in man.\* See, therefore, that ye do not neglect the precepts concerning her, but make use of venerable Nature, for out of her Art cometh, and

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\* "When thou hast attained, my child, to the understanding of these things by way of a preliminary, consider creation and generation as a whole, and know that man is able to bring forth man, the lion begets the lion, and the dog procreates the dog. Should it happen that a creature is produced contrary to nature, it is a monster which is engendered, and the same hath no consistence. Nature charms nature, and nature triumphs through nature. The adepts having participated in the divine power, and having succeeded by the divine assistance, illuminated by the fruit of the prayers of Isis, made preparations with certain metallic minera, without having recourse to other (unsuitable) substances. Thus they succeeded by means of the substantial nature in triumphing over the matter employed in the preparations. In fact, even as I have previously said that wheat begets wheat, and man sows man, so also gold serves for the increase of gold, and like things generally for the reproduction of their like. Now hath the mystery been revealed."—*Isis to Horus.*

out of no other. Know also that unless you seize hold of this Nature and rule it, ye will obtain nothing. Join, therefore, that male, who is son to the red slave,\* in marriage with his fragrant wife, which having been done, Art is produced between them; add no foreign matter unto these things, neither powder nor anything else; that conception is sufficient for us, for it is near, yet the son is nearer still.† How exceeding precious is the nature of

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\* The allegory of the *Servus Fugitivus* abounds in later alchemy, and is found also in old Arabian treatises, such as the *Twelve Chapters of Ostanas*: "They have defined this Stone by saying that it is running water and permanent water; burning fire and frozen fire; dead earth; hard stone and soft stone. It is the flying slave, the swift and the stable; the thing which makes and is made," &c. In the *Speculum Majus* of Vincent de Beauvais it appears as a synonym of Mercury, which of course is an obvious symbolism. Rulandus attributes it to some treatise ascribed to Hermes. According to other lexicons, the Red Servant is the matter from which the Philosophers extract their Mercury, which must therefore be the marriageable son mentioned in the text above. The fugitive rôle of Mercury is referred to in the Greek fragment on *The Fabrication of the All*, as already cited.

† The second recension reads: "A true son is begotten."



that red slave, without which the regimen cannot endure ! *BACSEN saith :* O Diomedes, thou hast publicly revealed this disposition ! *He answereth :* I will even shed more light upon it. Woe unto you who fear not God, for He may deprive you of this art ! Why, therefore, are you envious towards your brethren ? *They answer :* We do not flee except from fools ; tell us, therefore, what is thy will ? *And he :* Place Citrine with his wife after the conjunction into the bath ; do not kindle the bath excessively, lest they be deprived of sense and motion ; cause them to remain in the bath until their body, and the colour thereof, shall become a certain unity, whereupon restore unto it the sweat thereof ; again suffer it to die ; then give it rest, and beware lest ye evaporate them by burning them in too strong a fire. Venerate the king and his wife,\* and

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\* According to Rulandus, the King is the spiritual water which gives moisture to the female, but there are many meanings. This passage is the fountain-head of the whole symbolism of the alchemical marriage, which is

do not burn them, since you know not when you may have need of these things, which improve the king and his wife. Cook them, therefore, until they become black, then white, afterwards red, and finally until a tingeing venom is produced. O seekers after this Science, happy are ye, if ye understand, but if not, I have still performed my duty, and that briefly, so that if ye remain ignorant, it is God who hath concealed the truth from you! Blame not, therefore, the Wise, but yourselves, for if God knew that ye possessed a faithful mind, most certainly he would reveal unto you the truth. Behold, I have established you therein, and have extricated you from error!

*The Thirtieth Dictum.*

BACSEN *saith*: Thou hast spoken well, O Diomedes, but I do not see that

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concerned, always with royal personages. Compare the *Sponsus* and *Sponsa* of the *Chemical Nuptials of Christian Rosy Cross*, and the innumerable pictorial emblems which illustrate Latin Alchemy. It does not appear to be traceable to a Greek source.

thou hast demonstrated the disposition of Corsufle\* to posterity! Of this same Corsufle the envious have spoken in many ways, and have confused it with all manner of names. *Then he:* Tell me, therefore, O Bacsen, according to thy opinion in these matters, and I swear by thy father that this is the head of the work,† for the true beginning hereof cometh after the completion. *BACSEN saith:* I give notice, therefore, to future seekers after this Art, that Corsufle is a composite, and that it must be roasted

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\* The lexicographers of alchemy who followed Rulandus after a long interval, explain that Corsufle, or as they sometimes wrote it, Carsufle, is the Sulphur of the Philosophers fixed at the Red Stage. Under neither form is the term to be found in Rulandus himself, though he was well acquainted with the *Turba*. His dictionary, however, includes Cor Fuffla, which might be a mutilated version produced in a German printing office. It signifies the impurity of bodies, a definition which does not correspond either with the text of the *Turba*, or with the subsequent vocabularies. The origin of the word is obscure, and it is not found in the collections of Arabian or Syrian alchemy published by M. Berthelot.

† According to the second recension, Corsufle is the head, *i.e.*, the crown, and not the beginning of the work. The speaker also is different, namely, Nephitus.

seven times, because when it arrives at perfection it tinges the whole body. *The TURBA answereth*:—Thou hast spoken the truth, O Bacsen!

*The Thirty-First Dictum.*

PYTHAGORAS *saith*:—How does the discourse of Bacsen appear to you, since he has omitted to name the substance by its artificial names? *And they*: Name it, therefore, oh Pythagoras! *And he*: Corsufle being its composition, they have applied to it all the names of bodies in the world, as, for example, those of coin, copper, tin, gold, iron, and also the name of lead, until it be deprived of that colour and become Ixir. *The TURBA answereth*: Thou hast spoken well, O Pythagoras! *And he*: Ye have also spoken well, and some among the others may discourse concerning the residual matters.

*The Thirty-Second Dictum.*

BONELLUS *saith*: According to thee, O Pythagoras, all things die and live

by the will of God, because that nature from which the humidity is removed, that nature which is left by nights, does indeed seem like unto something that is dead; it is then turned and (again) left for certain nights, as a man is left in his tomb, when it becomes a powder.\* These things being done, God will restore unto it both the soul and the spirit thereof, and the weakness being taken away, that matter will be made strong, and after corruption will be improved, even as a man becomes stronger after resurrection and younger than he was in this world. Therefore it behoves you, O ye Sons of the Doctrine, to consume that matter with fire boldly until it shall become a cinder, when know that ye have mixed it excellently well, for that cinder receives the spirit, and is imbued

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\* The text is corrupt and unintelligible. The second recension reads: "Therefore that nature from which the humidity has been removed, when it has been left for nights, is like to one dead; and then that nature is wanting in fire until the spirit of that body returns; and then it becomes dust like unto one dead in his tomb."



with the humour until it assumes a fairer colour than it previously possessed. Consider, therefore, O ye Sons of the Doctrine, that artists are unable to paint with their own tinctures until they convert them into a powder; similarly, the philosophers cannot combine medicines for the sick slaves until they also turn them into powder, cooking some of them to a cinder, while others they grind with their hands. The case is the same with those who compose the images of the ancients. But if ye understand what has already been said, ye will know that I speak the truth, and hence I have ordered you to burn up the body and turn it into a cinder, for if ye rule it subtly many things will proceed from it, even as much proceeds from the smallest things in the world. It is thus because copper like man, has a body and a soul, for the inspiration of men cometh from the air, which after God is their life, and similarly the copper is inspired by the humour from which that same

copper receiving strength is multiplied and augmented like other things. Hence, the philosophers add, that when copper is consumed with fire and iterated several times, it becomes better than it was. *The Turba answereth*: Show, therefore, O Bonellus, to future generations after what manner it becometh better than it was! *And he*: I will do so willingly; it is because it is augmented and multiplied, and because God extracts many things out of one thing, since He hath created nothing which wants its own regimen, and those qualities by which its healing must be effected. Similarly, our copper, when it is first cooked, becomes water; then the more it is cooked, the more is it thickened until it becomes a stone, as the envious have termed it, but it is really an egg tending to become a metal. It is afterwards broken and imbued, when ye must roast it in a fire more intense than the former, until it shall be coloured and shall become like blood

in combustion, when it is placed on coins and changes them into gold, according to the Divine pleasure. Do you not see that sperm is not produced from the blood unless it be diligently cooked in the liver till it has acquired an intense red colour, after which no change takes place in that sperm?\*

It is the same with our work, for unless it be cooked diligently until it shall become a powder, and afterwards be putrefied until it shall become a spiritual sperm, there will in no wise proceed from it that colour which ye desire. But if ye arrive at the conclusion of this regimen, and so obtain your purpose, ye shall be princes among the people of your time.

*The Thirty-Third Dictum.*

NICARUS *saith*:—Now ye have made this arcanum public. *The TURBA*

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\* The comparison of the progress of the work to the development of the embryo, which is suggested by the above reference, and is, in fact, common to all Latin adepts, is found also in the Greek writers, and among



*answereth* : Thus did the Master order. *And he* : Not the whole, nevertheless. *But they* : He ordered us to clear away the darkness therefrom ; do thou, therefore, tell us. *And he* : I counsel posterity to take the gold which they wish to multiply and renovate, then to divide the water into two parts. *And they* : Distinguish, therefore, when they divide the water. *But he* : It behoves them to burn up our copper with one part. For the said copper, dissolved in that water, is called the ferment of Gold,\* if

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these, in Comarius, who says that the test of fire nourishes the material as the embryo is nourished in the mother's womb.

\* M. Berthelot traces the original notion of the fermentation of metals to the sophistication called *diplosis*. "Recipes designed for the accomplishment of a more profound imitation are also met with, for example, the alliance of gold or silver with a more or less considerable quantity of some less precious metal; this was the operation of *diplosis*." It is found in the Leyden papyrus, but there are traces that the Egyptian goldsmith believed, or at any rate sought to make others believe, "that the true metal was readily multiplied by an operation comparable to fermentation." The fermentation of metals is mentioned in many places by the Greek writers: "It is necessary that this water, after the manner of leaven, should determine the fermentations destined to produce the like, by

ye rule well. For the same in like manner are cooked and liquefy as water; finally, by cooking they are congealed, crumble, and the red appears. But then it behoves you to imbue seven times with the residual water, until they absorb all the water, and, all the moisture being dried up, they are turned into dry earth; then kindle a fire and place therein for forty days until the whole shall putrefy, and its colours appear.

*The Thirty-Fourth Dictum.*

BACSEN saith: On account of thy dicta the Philosophers said beware.\* Take the regal Corsufle, which is like to the redness of copper, and pound in the urine of a calf until the nature

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means of the like, in the metallic body to be tinged. As a fact, after the same manner that the leaven of dough, used in a small quantity, ferments a great mass of paste, so also will this little morsel of gold ferment all the dry matter." This notion is repeated in terms essential and literal by innumerable Latin alchemists.

\* For this somewhat bizarre reading the second recension substitutes: "It seems needful to lay stress upon some matters which have been already mentioned."

of the Corsufle is converted, for the true nature has been hidden in the belly of the Corsufle. *The TURBA saith*: Explain to posterity what the nature is. *And he*: A tingeing spirit which it hath from permanent water, which is coinlike, and coruscates. *And they*: Shew, therefore, how it is extracted. *And he*: It is pounded, and water is poured upon it seven times until it absorbs the whole humour, and receives a force which is equal to the hostility of the fire; then it is called rust. Putrefy the same diligently until it becomes a spiritual powder, of a colour like burnt blood, which the fire overcoming hath introduced into the receptive belly of Nature, and hath coloured with an indelible colour. This, therefore, have kings sought, but not found, save only to whom God has granted it.\* *But*

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\* It was different in the days of Zosimus, who tells us that in Egypt the divine art of operating on minera belonged to the Kings, and the alchemists of the Nile no more worked in their own interest than the minters of coin. The increase of the King's riches was the only end in view,

*the TURBA saith*: Finish your speech, O Bacsen. *And he*: I direct them to whiten copper with white water, by which also they make red. Be careful not to introduce any foreign matter. *And the TURBA*: Well hast thou spoken, O Bacsen, and Nictimerus also has spoken well! *Then he*: If I have spoken well, do one of you continue.

*The Thirty-Fifth Dictum.*

*But ZIMON*\* *saith*: Hast thou left anything to be said by another? *And the TURBA*: Since the words of Nicarus and Bacsen are of little good to those who seek after this Art, tell us, therefore, what thou knowest, according as we have said. *And he*: Ye speak the truth, O all ye seekers after this Art! Nothing else has led you into error but the sayings of the envious,† because what

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and for this reason the priests who were acquainted with the mineral secrets did not dare to disclose them publicly.

\* In the second recension the name is rendered Zeunon.

† The second recension has an important variation: "The words of the Egyptians have led us into error."

ye seek is sold at the smallest possible price.\* If men knew this, and how great was the thing they held in their hands, they would in no wise sell it. Therefore, the Philosophers have glorified that venom,† have treated of it variously, and in many ways, have taken and applied to it all manner of names, wherefore, certain envious persons have said: It is a stone and not a stone, but a gum of Ascotia, consequently, the Philosophers have concealed the power thereof. For this spirit which ye seek, that ye may tinge therewith, is concealed in the body, and hidden away from sight, even as the soul in the human body.‡ But ye

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\* This passage recalls many statements to the same effect in the Greek alchemists, as, for example, that the end is not to be obtained by money, "for the Lord God has delivered the same gratuitously, by reason of the beggars and the despairing." But this passage from the *Byzantine Assembly of the Philosophers* is in part at least an interpolation.

† The second recension reads: "that useful and abject thing."

‡ Otherwise: "Therein is the spirit which you seek, which tinges, vivifies, gives health and life to bodies."



seekers after the Art, unless ye disintegrate this body, imbue and pound both cautiously and diligently, until ye extract it from its grossness (or grease), and turn it into a tenuous and impalpable spirit, have your labour in vain. Wherefore the Philosophers have said: Except ye turn bodies into not-bodies, and incorporeal things into bodies, ye have not yet discovered the rule of operation. *But the TURBA saith*: Tell, therefore, posterity how bodies are turned into not-bodies. *And he*: They are pounded with fire and Ethelia till they become a powder.\* And know that this does not take place except by an exceedingly strong decoction, and continuous contrition, performed with a moderate fire,† not with hands,‡

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\* The second recension reads: "When Ethelia is pounded until it becomes dust," but it is evidently corrupt.

† The counsel of Olympiodorus is similar: "The fire must burn with moderation and gentleness, lest the vapour should escape in smoke and be lost," And, again: "Know that this Art is not practised by means of a fierce fire."

‡ Some Latin alchemists say that the *Magnum Opus* is a work of the hands, which others deny, and a very pretty

with imbibition and putrefaction, with exposure to the sun and to Ethelia. The envious caused the vulgar to err in this Art when they stated that the thing is common in its nature and is sold at a small price. They further said that the nature was more precious than all natures, wherefore they deceived those who had recourse to their books. At the same time they spoke the truth, and therefore doubt not these things. *But the TURBA answereth*: Seeing that thou believest the sayings of the envious, explain, therefore, to posterity the disposition of the two natures. *And he*: I testify to you that Art requires two natures, for the precious is not produced without the common,

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diversity of opinion has risen up among interpreters in consequence. The partisans of the first view, denying the metallic object of the Art, affirm that the mystery of the manual operation was the mystery of animal magnetism. The *Turba* in the passage above, and in other places, is against the use of the hands, whatever that may have signified, here following Olympiodorus: "Think not thou, as do some, that manual action is of itself and alone sufficient; there is also required that of Nature, an action superior to man's."—*On the Sacred Art.*

nor the common without the precious. It behoves you, therefore, O all ye investigators of this Art, to follow the sayings of Victimerus,\* when he said to his disciples: Nothing else helps you save to sublimate water and vapour. *And the TURBA*: The whole work is in the vapour and the sublimation of water. Demonstrate, therefore, to them the disposition of the vapour. *And he*: When ye shall perceive that the natures have become water by reason of the heat of the fire, and that they have been purified, and that the whole body of Magnesia is liquefied as water; then all things have been made vapour, and rightly, for then the vapour contains its own equal, wherefore the envious† call either vapour, because both are joined in decoctions, and one contains the other. Thus our stag finds no path to escape, although flight be essential to

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\* "Of the elders," says the second recension.

† The second recension substitutes "The Philosophers," a variation which, in its way, is significant.



it. The one keeps back the other, so that it has no opportunity to fly, and it finds no place to escape; hence all are made permanent, for when the one falls, being hidden in the body, it is congealed with it, and its colour varies, and it extracts its nature from the properties which God has infused into His elect, and it alienates it, lest it flee. But the blackness and redness appear, and it falls into sickness, and dies by rust and putrefaction; properly speaking, then, it has not a flight, although it is desirous to escape servitude; then when it is free it follows its spouse, that a favourable colour may befall itself and its spouse; its beauty is not as it was, but when it is placed with coins, it makes them gold. For this reason, therefore, the Philosophers have called the spirit and the soul vapour. They have also called it the black humid wanting perlution; and forasmuch as in man there are both humidity and dryness, thus our work, which the envious have concealed, is nothing else

but vapour and water. *The TURBA answereth*: Demonstrate vapour and water! *And he*: I say that the work is out of two; the envious have called it composed out of two, because these two become four, wherein are dryness and humidity, spirit and vapour. *The TURBA answereth*: Thou hast spoken excellently, and without envy. Let Zimon next follow.

*The Thirty-Sixth Dictum.*

AFFLONTUS,\* the Philosopher, *saith*: I notify to you all, O ye investigators of this Art, that unless ye sublime the substances at the commencement by cooking, without contrition of hands, until the whole become water, ye have not yet found the work. And know ye, that the copper was formerly called sand, but by others stone, and, indeed, the names vary in every regimen. Know further, that the nature and humidity become water, then a stone, if ye cause them to be

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\* The name in the second recension is Assotes.

well complexionated, and if ye are acquainted with the natures, because the part which is light and spiritual rises to the top, but that which is thick and heavy remains below in the vessel. Now this is the contrition of the Philosophers, namely, that which is not sublimated sinks down, but that which becomes a spiritual powder rises to the top of the vessel, and this is the contrition of decoction, not of hands. Know also, that unless ye have turned all into powder, ye have not yet pounded them completely. Cook them, therefore, successively until they become converted, and a powder. Wherefore Agadaimon\*

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\* Agathodaimon is included among the makers of gold in one of the earlier sections of the Byzantine collection. He is quoted by Olympiodorus (*On the Sacred Art*), and a short account of him is given by the same writer. "It is stated by some that he was a man ancient among the most ancient who philosophised in Egypt, by others that he is a mysterious angel, or that he is the good genius of Egypt," &c. M. Berthelot points out that there was an Egyptian divinity who bore a name equivalent to this. Zosimus beheld Agathodaimon in a vision when his soul ascended to the third degree. An *Explanation and Com-*

saith: Cook the copper until it become a gentle and impalpable body, and impose in its own vessel; then sublimate the same six or seven times until the water shall descend. And know that when the water has become powder then has it been ground diligently. But if ye ask, how is the water made a powder? note that the intention of the Philosophers is that the body before which before it falls into the water is not water may become water; the said water is mixed with the other water, and they become one water. It is to be stated, therefore, that unless ye turn the thing mentioned into water,\* ye shall not attain to the work. It is, therefore, necessary for the body to be so possessed by the flame of the fire that it is disintegrated and becomes weak with the water, when the water has been

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*mentary of Agathodaimon upon the Oracle of Orpheus is extant in the Greek collection.*

\* The second recension reads: "unless ye turn both into water."

added to the water, until the whole becomes water. But fools, hearing of water, think that this is water of the clouds. Had they read our books they would know that it is permanent water, which cannot become permanent without its companion, wherewith it is made one. But this is the water which the Philosophers have called Water of Gold, the Igneous, Good Venom, and that Sand of Many Names which Hermes ordered to be washed frequently, so that the blackness of the Sun might be removed, which he introduced in the solution of the body. And know, all ye seekers after this Art, that unless ye take this pure body, that is, our copper without the spirit, ye will by no means see what ye desire, because no foreign thing enters therein, nor does anything enter unless it be pure. Therefore, all ye seekers after this Art, dismiss the multitude of obscure names, for the nature is one water; if anyone err, he draws nigh to de-



struction, and loses his life. Therefore, keep this one nature, but dismiss what is foreign.

*The Thirty-Seventh Dictum.*

BONELLUS saith: I will speak a little concerning Magnesia. *The TURBA answereth*: Speak. *And he*: O all ye Sons of the Doctrine, when mixing Magnesia, place it in its vessel, the mouth of which close carefully, and cook with a gentle fire until it liquefy, and all become water therein! For the heat of the water acting thereupon, it becomes water by the will of God. When ye see that the said water is about to become black, ye know that the body is already liquefied. Place again in its vessel, and cook for forty days, until it drink up the moisture of the vinegar and honey.\* But certain

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\* There is an exceedingly curious reference to honey in the Discourse of Synesius. The question being what is the difference between the mercury which is obtained from cinnabar, and that which is obtained from arsenic, the Philosopher explains that while all mercury is one, there are still a variety of sorts, and he quotes Hermes:—“The ray of honey is white,” and “the ray of honey is

persons uncover it, say, once in each week, or once in every ten nights; in either case, the ultimate perfection of pure water appears at the end of forty days, for then it completely absorbs the humour of the decoction. Therefore, wash the same, and deprive of its blackness, until, the blackness being removed, the stone becomes dry to the touch. Hence the envious have said: Wash the Magnesia with soft water, and cook diligently, until it become earth, and the humour perish. Then it is called copper. Subsequently, pour very sharp vinegar upon it, and leave it to be soaked therein. But this is our copper, which the Philosophers have ordained should be washed with permanent water, wherefore they have said: Let the venom \*

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yellow." M. Berthelot explains that honey signifies mercury, which in the special connection is of course obvious, but it does not follow that this is the significance which was invariably attached to it by the philosophers. As a fact, in later days the term was used to signify the philosophical dissolvent.

\* The following explanation is given by M. Berthelot. The Greek *Ios*, and *Virus*, the Latin equivalent, are words

be divided into two parts, with one of which burn up the body, and with the other putrefy. And know, all ye seekers after this Science, that the whole work and regimen does not take place except by water, wherefore, they say that the thing which ye seek is one, and, unless that which improves it be present in the said thing, what ye look for shall in no wise take place. Therefore, it behoves you to add those things which are needful, that ye may thereby obtain that which you purpose. *The TURBA answereth:* Thou has spoken excellently, O Bonellus! If it please thee, therefore, finish that which thou art saying; otherwise repeat it a second time. *But he:* Shall I indeed repeat these and like things? O all ye in-

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which had exceedingly diverse meaning among the ancients. The Virus, according to Pliny, meant certain properties or specific virtues of bodies, such as the odour of copper, ivory, and sandarac; the medical action of calx of gold; the magnetic virtue communicated to iron by the magnet." Hence the term signified the power and not the operation, or if the operation, then this in all its phases, whether of healing or hurting. Ios also signified in a special way the oxyde of metals.



vestigators of this Art, take our copper; place with the first part of the water in the vessel; cook for forty days; purify from all uncleanness; cook further until its days be accomplished, and it become a stone having no moisture. Then cook until nothing remains except fæces.\* This done, cleanse seven times, wash with water, and when the water is used up leave it to putrefy in its vessel, so long as may seem desirable to your purpose. But the envious called this composition when it is turned into blackness *that which is sufficiently black*, and have said: Rule the same with vinegar and nitre. But that which remained when it had been whitened they called *sufficiently white*, and ordained that it should be ruled with permanent water. Again, when

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\* The whole mystery is in the scoriæ," says Zosimus, in *The Diversity of Burnt Copper*, and though the remark has a particular application, it was also with alchemists of the nature of a general axiom. So Olympiodorus: "In fact, the negative body *par excellence*, that which is called black lead, that which the Egyptian prophets desired to know, that which the oracles of the demons have revealed, all these are the scoriæ and cinders of Mary."

they called the same *sufficiently red*, they ordained that it should be ruled with water and fire until it became red. *The TURBA answereth*: Show forth unto posterity what they intended by these things. *And he*: They called it *Ixir satis*, by reason of the variation of its colours. In the work, however, there is neither variety, multiplicity, nor opposition of substances; it is necessary only to make the black copper white and then red. However, the truth-speaking Philosophers had no other intention than that of liquefying, pounding, and cooking Ixir until the stone should become like unto marble in its splendour. Accordingly, the envious again said: Cook the same with vapour until the stone becomes coruscating by reason of its brilliancy. But when ye see it thus, it is, indeed, the most great Arcanum. Notwithstanding, ye must then pound and wash it seven times with permanent water; finally, again pound and congeal in its own water, until ye extract its own con-

cealed nature. Wherefore, saith Maria, sulphurs are contained in sulphurs, but humour in like humour, and out of sulphur mixed with sulphur, there comes forth a great work. But I ordain that you rule the same with dew \* and the sun, until your purpose appear to you. For I signify unto you that there are two kinds of whitening and of making red, of which one consists in rust† and the other in contrition and decoction. But ye do

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\*The Greek alchemists assumed a special virtue in dew, but it was not apparently so much inherent in the moisture itself, as in the rays of the morning sun with which it is chiefly connected. Neither alchemically or otherwise was the night dew ever considered beneficial. Democritus, in the *Rational and Mystical Questions*, says: "Whiten this earth with sea water or sweetened saumur, or with the water of heaven: I mean by exposing it to dew and the sun," &c. There seems no special reason why this should not be understood literally. In the *Turba Philosophorum*, dew appears under another aspect, as possessing an inherent virtue apart from the vital presence and activity of the solar rays. In Latin alchemy, however, the references to dew are not very frequent, and it does not seem to have played so important a part in the symbolism of the adepts as Mosheim and others have supposed.

† Or, according to the second recension, "in making red."

not need any contrition of hands. Beware, however, of making a separation from the waters lest the poisons get at you, and the body perish with the other things which are in the vessel.†

*The Thirty-Eighth Dictum.*

EFFISTUS *saith*: Thou hast spoken most excellently, O Bonellus, and I bear witness to all thy words! *The TURBA saith*: Tell us if there be any service in the speech of Bonellus, so that those initiated in this disposition may be more bold and certain. EFFISTUS *saith*: Consider, all ye investigators of this Art, how Hermes, chief of the Philosophers, spoke and demonstrated when he wished to mix the natures. Take, he tells us, the stone of gold, combine with humour which is permanent water, set in its vessel, over a gentle fire until liquefaction

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† Otherwise, "the body and soul which are in the vessel shall quickly perish."

takes place. Then leave it until the water dries, and the sand and water are combined, one with another; then let the fire be more intense than before, until it again becomes dry, and is made earth. When this is done, understand that here is the beginning of the arcanum; but do this many times, until two-thirds of the water perish, and colours manifest unto you. *The TURBA answereth*: Thou hast spoken excellently, O Effistus! Yet, briefly inform us further. *And he*: I testify to posterity that the dealbation doth not take place save by decoction.\* Consequently, Agadimon has very properly treated of cooking, of pounding, and of imbuing,†

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\* The Greek equivalent of Decoction identifies the process with that cooking which is so often ordained in all alchemical experiments. In the *New Light* of Arnoldus de Villa Nova three grades of the operation are described, together with the special furnaces and appliances required. In the first grade, the matter becomes black; in the second, white; and in the third, red. The description is accompanied in each case by a citation from the *Turba*.

† The second recension substitutes: "for which cause there must be frequent pounding and imbuing."



ethelia. Yet I direct you not to pour on the whole of the water at one time, lest the Ixir be submerged, but pour it in gradually, pound and dessicate, and do this several times until the water be exhausted. Now concerning this the envious have said: Leave the water when it has all been poured in, and it will sink to the bottom. But their intention is this, that while the humour is drying, and when it has been turned into powder, leave it in its glass vessel for forty days, until it passes through various colours, which the Philosophers have described. By this method of cooking the bodies put on their spirits and spiritual tinctures, and become warm.\* *The TURBA answereth*: Thou hast given light to us, O Effistus, and hast done excellently! Truly art thou cleared from envy; wherefore, let one of you others speak as he pleases.

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\* The second recension reads: "bodies become spirits, and the spirits are made hot, and they tinge."

*The Thirty-Ninth Dictum.*

BACSEN *saith* :\* O all ye seekers after this Art, ye can reach no useful result without a patient, laborious,† and solicitous soul, persevering courage, and continuous regimen. He, therefore, who is willing to persevere in this disposition, and would enjoy the result, may enter upon it, but he who desires to learn over speedily, must not have recourse to our books, for they impose great labour before they are read in their higher sense, once, twice, or thrice. Therefore, the Master *saith*: Whosoever bends his back over the study of our books, devoting his leisure thereto,

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\* The speaker in the second recension is called Admion.

† The like exhortation is met with everywhere in the literature of the adepts. "Patience and delay are indispensable in our magistry. Haste, indeed, is of the devil's part in this magistry."—*Rosary of the Philosophers*. And again, "It is impossible for this to be known by the seeker unless he learns it from God, or from the instruction of a master. Know also that the way is very long; therefore are patience and delay needful in this our magistry."—*Ibid.*

is not occupied with vain thoughts, but fears God, and shall reign in the Kingdom without fail until he die.\* For what ye seek is not of small price. Woe unto you who seek the very great and compensating treasure of God! Know ye not that for the smallest purpose in the world, earthly men will give themselves to death, and what, therefore, ought they to do for this most excellent and almost impossible offering? Now, the regimen is greater than is perceived by reason, except through divine inspiration. I once met with a person who was as well

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\* The fear of God has always been regarded as essential to the success of the true alchemist. The explanation is to be sought in the fact that the operations of nature were a region of awe and wonder to early experiment. The Greek alchemists regarded no operation as possible without the divine concurrence, and Zosimus says: "Abide at thine own fireside acknowledging but one God and one Art; do not deviate in search of another God; for God will come to thee, He who is present everywhere. . . . Rest thy body, and hush thy passions; so, governing thyself, thou shalt call unto thee the Divine Being, and the Divine Being will come to thee. . . . When thou shalt know thyself, then shalt thou know also the only God existing in thee; and acting thus thou shalt attain truth and nature, rejecting matter with contempt."



acquainted with the elements as I myself, but when he proceeded to rule this disposition, he attained not to the joy thereof by reason of his sadness and ignorance in ruling, and excessive eagerness, desire, and haste concerning the purpose. Woe unto you, sons of the Doctrine! For one who plants trees does not look for fruit, save in due season; he also who sows seeds does not expect to reap, except at harvest time. How, then, should ye desire to attain this offering when ye have read but a single book, or have adventured only the first regimen? But the Philosophers have plainly stated that the truth is not to be discerned except after error, and nothing creates greater pain at heart than error in this Art, while each imagines that he has almost the whole world, and yet finds nothing in his hands. Woe unto you! Understand the dictum of the Philosopher, and how he divided the work when he said—pound, cook, reiterate, and be

thou not weary. But when thus he divided the work, he signified commingling, cooking, assimilating, roasting, heating, whitening, pounding, cooking Ethelia, making rust or redness, and tingeing. Here, therefore, are there many names, and yet there is one regimen. And if men knew that one decoction and one contrition would suffice them, they would not so often repeat their words, as they have done, and in order that the mixed body may be pounded and cooked diligently, have admonished you not to be weary thereof. Having darkened the matter to you with their words, it suffices me to speak in this manner. It is needful to complexionate the venom rightly, then cook many times, and do not grow tired of the decoction. Imbue and cook it until it shall become as I have ordained that it should be ruled by you—namely, impalpable spirits, and until ye perceive that the Ixir is clad in the garment of the Kingdom. For when ye behold the Ixir turned into

Tyrian colour,\* then have ye found that which the Philosophers discovered before you.† If ye understand my words (and although my words be dead, yet is there life therein for those who understand themselves), they will forthwith explain any ambiguity occurring herein. Read, therefore, repeatedly, for reading is a dead speech, but that which is uttered with the lips the same is living speech. Hence we have ordered you to read frequently, and, moreover, ponder diligently over the things which we have narrated.

*The Fortieth Dictum.*

JARGUS saith: Thou hast left obscure a part of thy discourse, O Bacsen! And he: Do thou, therefore, Jargus, in thy clemency shew forth the same!

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\* Latin alchemists made use of the symbolism of Tyrian dye when describing the Red state of the Magistry. The Kenckel, previously referred to, is apparently an Eastern term designating the crustacea from the shells of which the dye was anciently obtained.

† The second recension reads: "then shall ye comprehend the sayings of the Philosophers."

*And he answereth* : The copper of which thou hast before spoken is not copper, nor is it the tin of the vulgar ; it is our true work (or body) which must be combined with the body of Magnesia, that it may be cooked and pounded without wearying until the stone is made. Afterwards, that stone must be pounded in its vessel with the water of nitre, and, subsequently, placed in liquefaction until it is destroyed. But, all ye investigators of this art, it is necessary to have a water by which the more you cook, so much the more you sprinkle,\* until the said copper shall put on rust, which is the foundation of our work. Cook, therefore, and pound with Egyptian vinegar.

*The Forty-First Dictum.*

ZIMON† *saith* : Whatsoever thou hast uttered, O Jargos, is true, yet I do

\* The second recension reads : " It is necessary to use a water which becomes inspissated in proportion as it is cooked."

† In the second recension the name is Cadmon.

not see that the whole Turba hath spoken concerning the rotundum.\*

*Then he:* Speak, therefore, thine opinion concerning it, O Zimon!

*ZIMON saith:* I notify to posterity that the rotundum turns into four elements, and is derived out of one thing.†

*The TURBA answereth:* Inasmuch as thou art speaking, explain for future generations the method of ruling.

*And he:* Willingly: it is necessary to take one part of our copper, but of Permanent Water three parts; then let them be mixed and cooked until they be thickened and become one stone, concerning which the envious have said: Take one part of the pure body, but three parts of copper of Magnesia; then commingle with

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\* The term rotundum used in this curious manner is to be understood of the Stone. The *Scala Philosophorum* speaks of "our perfect tyriac and rotund stone," the four elements being concordantly exalted in the quality of the temperate stone.

† There is a variation in the second recension: "I signify to future generations that the rotundum which converts copper into four is from one thing."



rectified vinegar, mixed with male of earth; close the vessel, observe what is in it, and cook continuously until it becomes earth.

*The Forty-Second Dictum.*

ASCANIUS saith: Too much talking, O all ye Sons of the Doctrine, leads this subject further into error! But when ye read in the books of the Philosophers that Nature is one only, and that she overcomes all things: Know that they are one thing and one composite. Do ye not see that the complexion of a man is formed out of a soul and body; thus, also, must ye conjoin these, because the Philosophers, when they prepared the matters and conjoined spouses mutually in love with each other, behold there ascended from them a golden water! *The TURBA answereth*: When thou wast treating of the first work, lo! thou didst turn unto the second! How ambiguous hast thou made thy book, and how obscure are thy words!

*Then he* : I will perform the disposition of the first work. *The TURBA answereth* : Do this. *And he* : Stir up war between copper and quicksilver, until they go to destruction and are corrupted, because when the copper conceives the quicksilver it coagulates it, but when the quicksilver conceives the copper, the copper is congealed into earth; stir up, therefore, a fight between them; destroy the body of the copper until it becomes a powder. But conjoin the male to the female, which are vapour\* and quicksilver, until the male and the female become Ethel, for he who changes them into spirit by means

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\* The Latin alchemists regarded vapour as the first matter of all things, and in a special way it was the First Matter of the Philosophers. The *Rosary of the Philosophers* observes: "The first matter of bodies is not the mercury of the vulgar, but is an unctuous and humid vapour. The mineral stone is made from the humid, and the metallic body from the unctuous. It is needful that bodies should be converted into such an unctuous vapour, and they are destroyed, brought to nothing, and mortified in the conversion, and this is accomplished by means of our white and red water." But this unctuous vapour was the mercury of the philosophers and wise men.

of Ethel, and next makes them red, tinges every body, because, when by diligent cooking ye pound the body, ye extract a pure, spiritual, and sublime soul therefrom, which tinges every body. *The TURBA answereth*: Inform, therefore, posterity what is that body. *And he*: It is a natural sulphureous thing\* which is called by the names of all bodies.

*The Forty-Third Dictum.*

*DARDARIS saith*: Ye have frequently treated of the regimen, and have introduced the conjunction,† yet I proclaim to posterity that they cannot extract the now hidden soul except by Ethelia, by which bodies become not bodies through continual cooking, and by sublimation of Ethelia. Know also that quicksilver is fiery, burning every body more than does fire, also mortifying

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\* The second recension reads: "sulphur of nature," concerning which much is found in later alchemical writers.

† According to the second recension: "much has been said of the regimen but of the conjunction little."



bodies, and that every body which is mingled with it is ground and delivered over to be destroyed. When, therefore, ye have diligently pounded the bodies, and have exalted them as required, therefrom is produced that Ethel nature, and a colour which is tingeing\* and not volatile, and it tinges the copper which the Turba said did not tinge until it is tinged, because that which is tinged tinges. Know also that the body of the copper is ruled by Magnesia, and that quicksilver is four bodies, also that the matter has no being except by humidity, because it is the water of sulphur, for sulphurs are contained in sulphurs. *The TURBA saith*: O Dardaris, inform posterity what sulphurs are! *And he*: Sulphurs are souls which are hidden in four bodies, and, extracted by themselves, do contain one another, and are naturally conjoined. For if ye rule that which is hidden in the belly of sulphur with water, and cleanse well that which

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\*Otherwise: "not fleeing from the fire."

is hidden, then nature rejoices, meeting with nature, and water similarly with its equal. Know ye also that the four bodies are not tinged but tinge.\* *And the TURBA*: Why dost thou not say like the ancients that when they are tinged, they tinge? *And he*: I state that the four coins of the vulgar populace are not tinged, but they tinge copper, and when that copper is tinged, it tinges the coins of the populace.†

*The Forty-Fourth Dictum.*

MOYSES *saith*: This one thing of which thou hast told us, O Dardaris, the Philosophers have called by many names, sometimes by two and sometimes by three names! DARDARIS *answereth*: Name it, therefore, for posterity, setting aside envy. *And he*: The one is that which is fiery, the two is the

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\* According to the second recension, "they tinge a fifth."

† According to the second recension, they are not tinged, "except copper, which then tinges the coins of the vulgar."

body composed in it, the three is the water of sulphur, with which also it is washed and ruled until it be perfected. Do ye not see what the Philosopher affirms, that the quicksilver which tinges gold is quicksilver out of Cambar? *DARDARIS answereth*: What dost thou mean by this? For the Philosopher says: sometimes from Cambar and sometimes from Orpiment. *And he*: Quicksilver of orpiment is Cambar of Magnesia, but quicksilver is sulphur ascending from the mixed\* composite. Ye must, therefore, mix that thick thing with fiery venom, putrefy, and diligently pound until a spirit be produced, which is hidden in that other spirit; then is made the tincture which is desired of you all.

*The Forty-Fifth Dictum.*

*But PLATO saith*: It behoves you all, O Masters, when those bodies are

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\* Some abbreviations in the printed editions obscure the passage. According to the second recension: "Sometimes it is Cambar and sometimes it is Orpiment, but here

being dissolved, to take care lest they be burnt up, as also to wash them with sea water, until all their salt be turned into sweetness, clarifies, tinges, becomes tincture of copper, and then goes off in flight ! Because it was necessary that one should become tingeing, and that the other should be tinged, for the spirit being separated from the body and hidden in the other spirit, both become volatile. Therefore the Wise have said that the gate of flight must not be opened for that which would flee, (or that which does not flee),\* by whose flight death is occasioned, for by the conversion of the sulphureous thing into a spirit like unto itself, either becomes volatile, since they are made aeriform spirits prone to ascend in the air. But the Philosophers seeing that which was

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it is needful to understand that Quicksilver Cambar is Magnesia," &c.

\* The reading of the second recension is clearer, namely, "Close the door on the volatile, lest it take flight."

not volatile made volatile with the volatiles, iterated these to a body like to the non-volatiles, and put them into that from which they could not escape.\* They iterated them to a body like unto the bodies from which they were extracted, and the same were then digested. But as for the statement of the Philosopher that the tingeing agent and that which is to be tinged are made one tincture, it refers to a spirit concealed in another humid spirit. Know also that one of the humid spirits is cold, but the other is hot, and although the cold humid is not adapted to the warm humid, nevertheless they are made one. Therefore, we prefer these two bodies, because by them we rule the whole work, namely, bodies by not-bodies, until incorporeals become bodies, steadfast in the fire, because they are

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\* In the second recension the passage reads thus :  
“ Concerning these the Philosophers also said : They fled not with flying things, and yet were they made flying.”



conjoined with volatiles, which is not possible in any body, these excepted. For spirits in every wise avoid bodies, but fugitives are restrained by incorporeals. Incorporeals, therefore, similarly flee from bodies; those, consequently, which do not flee are better and more precious than all bodies. These things, therefore, being done, take those which are not volatile and join them; wash the body with the incorporeal until the incorporeal receives a non-volatile body; convert the earth into water, water into fire, fire into air, and conceal the fire in the depths of the water, but the earth in the belly of the air, mingling the hot with the humid, and the cold with the dry. Know, also, that Nature overcomes Nature, Nature rejoices in Nature, Nature contains Nature.

*The Forty-Sixth Dictum.*

ATTAMUS saith: It is to be noted that the whole assembly of the Philosophers have frequently treated concerning

Rubigo.\* Rubigo, however, is a fictitious and not a true name. *The TURBA answereth*: Name, therefore, Rubigo by its true name, for by this it is not calumniated. *And he*: Rubigo is according to the work, because it is from gold alone. *The TURBA answereth*: Why, then, have the Philosophers referred it to the leech? *He answereth*: Because water is hidden in sulphureous gold as the leech is in water; rubigo, therefore, is rubefaction in the second work, but to make rubigo is to whiten in the former work, in which the Philosophers ordained that the flower of gold should be taken and a proportion of gold equally.

*The Forty-Seventh Dictum.*

MUNDUS saith: Thou hast already treated sufficiently of Rubigo, O

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\* While this term properly signifies the rust or oxide of metals, it was used in many senses by the alchemists, for the redness of rust associated it in their idea with other forms of red matter, and rust philosophical became a part of the Great Mystery. The oxydes of iron, the oxydes of lead, sulphate of mercury, sulphate of arsenic, sulphate of

Attamus! I will speak, therefore, of venom, and will instruct future generations that venom is not a body, because subtle spirits have made it into a tenuous spirit, have tinged the body and burned it with venom, which venom the Philosopher asserts will tinge every body. But the Ancient Philosophers thought that he who turned gold into venom had arrived at the purpose, but he who can do not this profiteth nothing. Now I say unto you, all ye Sons of the Doctrine, that unless ye reduce the thing by fire until those things ascend like a spirit, ye effect nought. This, therefore, is a spirit avoiding the fire and a ponderous smoke,\* which when it enters the body

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antimony, were all more or less confounded under the names of rubigo, minium, &c.

\* It is not, perhaps, surprising that what was above all things the mystery of the fire and the furnace, should concern itself considerably with the smoke in which it so often ended, and thus in various stages of its history we have alchemy discoursing of that specially philosophical smoke which is identical with scoriæ, and hence on the authority of the Greeks involves the whole art; we have also white smoke, identical with mercury; citrine smoke, identical



penetrates it entirely, and makes the body rejoice.\* The Philosophers have all said: Take a black and conjoining spirit; therewith break up the bodies and torture them till they be altered.

*The Forty-Eighth Dictum.*

PYTHAGORAS saith: We must affirm unto all you seekers after this Art that the Philosophers have treated of conjunction (or continuation) in various ways. But I enjoin upon you to make quicksilver constrain the body of Magnesia, or the body Kuhul, or the Spume of Luna, or incombustible sulphur, or roasted calx, or alum which is out of apples, as ye know. But if there was any singular regimen for any of these, a Philosopher would not say so, as ye know. Understand,

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with yellow sulphur; red smoke, which is orpiment; smoke of extreme subtlety, of which the Latin Geber discourses; and lastly the ponderous smoke of the *Turba*. Many others might be named, but these varieties are sufficient to show that smoke was as important to the alchemists as to the votaries of "my Lady Nicotine."

\* Otherwise: "the nature rejoices therein."

therefore, that sulphur, calx, and alum which is from apples, and Kuhul, are all nothing else but water of sulphur. Know ye also that Magnesia, being mixed with quicksilver and sulphur, they pursue one another. Hence you must not dismiss that Magnesia without the quicksilver, for when it is composed it is called an exceeding strong composition, which is one of the ten regimens established by the Philosophers. Know, also, that when Magnesia is whitened with quicksilver, you must congeal white water therein, but when it is reddened you must congeal red water, for, as the Philosophers have observed in their books, the regimen is not one.\* Accordingly, the first congelation is of tin, copper, and lead. But the second is com-

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\* "There are other denominations," says Synesius in his letter to Dioscorus. "Thus whitening is a calcination, and yellowing an igneous regeneration; for some of these (substances) calcine themselves, and (other some) regenerate themselves. But the Philosopher has designated them under several names, and sometimes in the singular, sometimes in the plural person, in order to test us and see whether we are intelligent."

posed with water of sulphur.\* Some, however, reading this book, think that the composition can be bought. It must be known for certain that nothing of the work can be bought, and that the science of this Art is nothing else than vapour and the sublimation of water, with the conjunction, also, of quicksilver in the body of Magnesia; † but, heretofore, the Philosophers have demonstrated in their books that the impure water of sulphur is from sulphur only, and no sulphur is produced without the water of its calx, and of quicksilver, and of sulphur.

*The Forty-Ninth Dictum.*

BELUS saith : O all ye Philosophers, ye have not dealt sparingly concerning composition and contact, but composition, contact, and congelation are one thing! Take, therefore, a part

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\* Or, "with sulphur and the water thereof."

† The second recension reads: "It is nothing but vapour and water, while the regimen is nothing but the sublimation of quicksilver and its union with the body of magnesia."

from the one composition and a part out of ferment of gold,\* and on these impose pure water of sulphur. This, then, is the potent (or revealed) arcanum which tinges every body. PYTHAGORAS *answereth*: O Belus, why hast thou called it a potent arcanum, yet hast not shown its work? *And he*: In our books, O Master, we have found the same which thou hast received from the ancients! *And PYTHAGORAS*: Therefore have I assembled you together, that you might remove any obscurities which are in any books. *And he*: Willingly, O Master! It is to be noted that pure water which is from sulphur is not composed of sulphur alone, but is composed of several things, for the one sulphur is made out of several sulphurs.† How,

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\* The ancient Latin treatise which passes as the work of Morien, says sententiously: "The ferment of gold is gold, even as the ferment of bread is bread." The statement is reproduced literally by the *Rosary of the Philosophers*.

† According to the second recension: "the clean water which is from sulphur is not derived from sulphur

therefore, O Master, shall I compose these things that they may become one? *And he*: Mix, O Belus, that which strives with the fire with that which does not strive, for things which are conjoined in a fire suitable to the same contend, because the warm venoms of the physician are cooked in a gentle, incomburent fire!\* Surely ye perceive what the Philosophers have stated concerning decoction, that a little sulphur burns many strong things, and the humour which remains is called humid pitch, balsam of gum, and other like things. Therefore our Philosophers are made like to the physicians, notwithstanding that the tests of the physicians are more intense than those of the Philosophers. *The TURBA answereth*: I wish, O Belus, that you would also shew the disposition of this potent arcanum!

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alone, but is composed of several things which make up one sulphur."

\* For this last sentence the second recension substitutes: "and friendship is made constant."



*And he:* I proclaim to future generations that this arcanum proceeds from two compositions, that is to say, sulphur and magnesia. But after it is reduced and conjoined into one, the Philosophers have called it water, spume of Boletus (*i.e.*, a species of fungus), and the thickness of gold. When, however, it has been reduced into quicksilver, they call it sulphur of water; sulphur also, when it contains sulphur, they term a fiery venom, because it is a potent (or open) arcanum which ascends from those things ye know.

*The Fiftieth Dictum.*

PANDOLPHUS *saieth*: If, O Belus, thou dost describe the sublimation\* of

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\* The Greek term which the alchemists of the Byzantine collection made use of as the equivalent of sublimation, signified originally filings, as M. Berthelot informs us, thus expressing the idea of the extreme attenuation of matter. The same idea was attached later on by the Latin adepts to their term *alcoholisation*, "which signifies reduction to the condition of an impalpable powder. (*Collection des Anciens Alchimistes Grecs*, Int., 210). Another species of sublimation was called *stalagma*, which meant distillation by vapourisation or filtration. (*Ib.*, 211.)

sulphur for future generations, thou wilt accomplish an excellent thing! *And the TURBA*: Do thou show it forth, therefore, O Pandolphus! *And he*: The philosophers have ordered that quicksilver should be taken out of Cambar, and albeit they spoke truly, yet in these words there is a little ambiguity, the obscurity of which I will remove. Seethen that the quicksilver is sublimed in tabernacles, and extract the same from Cambar, but there is another Cambar in sulphur\* which Belus hath demonstrated to you, for out of sulphur mixed with sulphur, many works proceed. When the same has been sublimed, there proceeds from the Cambar that quicksilver which is called Ethelia, Orpiment, Zendrio, or Sanderich,†

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\* According to the second recension: "there is another sulphur."

† The reading in the second recension is unintelligible. Sandarac is realgar; in the Greek MSS. it is confounded under the same sign as arsenic. M. Berthelot also tells us that it was confused anciently with minium and cinnabar, as indeed is quite plain from the *Lexicon of Rulandus*. The same authority reminds us that the name is applied at the present day to an entirely different composition, derived

Ebsemich, Magnesia, Kuhul, or Chuhul, and many other names. Concerning this, philosophers have said that, being ruled by its regimen (for ten is the perfection of all things), its white nature appears, nor is there any shadow therein. Then the envious\* have called it lead from Ebmich, Magnesia, Marteck, White Copper. For, when truly whitened, it is devoid of shadow and blackness, it has left its thickened ponderous bodies, and therewith a clean humid spirit has ascended, which spirit is tincture. Accordingly, the wise have said that copper has a soul and a body. Now, its soul is spirit, and its body is thick. Therefore, it behoves you to destroy the thick body until ye extract a tingeing spirit from the same. Mix, also, the spirit extracted therefrom with light sulphur until you, investigators, find your design accomplished.

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from colophon, and not known to the ancients under this designation.

\* Throughout the second recension, "Philosophers" or "the Wise," are substituted for this term.



*The Fifty-First Dictum.*

HORFOLCOS\* *saith* : Thou hast narrated nothing, O Pandolphus, save the last regimen of this body ! Thou hast, therefore, composed an ambiguous description for readers. But if its regimen were commenced from the beginning, you would destroy this obscurity. *Saith the TURBA* : Speak, therefore, concerning this to posterity, so far as it may please you. *And he* : It behoves you, investigators of this Art, first to burn coppert† in a gentle fire, like that required in the hatching of eggs. For it behoves you to burn it with its humidity lest its spirit be burnt, and let the vessel be closed on all sides, so that its colour [? heat] may be increased, the body of copper be destroyed, and its tingeing spirit be extracted,‡ concerning which the

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\* In the second recension the name is Morfoleus.

† Otherwise, "the humidity."

‡ According to the second recension : "when the fire is increased and the vessel sealed effectually, lest the body of the copper and its flying spirit be extracted."

envious have said: Take quicksilver out of the Flower of Copper, which also they have called the water of our copper, a fiery venom, and a substance extracted from all things, which further they have termed Ethelia, extracted out of many things.\* Again, some have said that when all things become one, bodies are made not-bodies, but not-bodies bodies. And know, all ye investigators of this Art, that every body is dissolved with the spirit with which it is mixed, with which without doubt it becomes a similar spiritual thing, and that every spirit which has a tingeing colour of spirits, and is constant against fire, is altered and coloured by bodies. Blessed then be the name of Him who hath inspired the Wise with the idea of turning a body into a spirit having strength and colour, unalterable and incorruptible, so that what formerly was volatile sulphur is now made sulphur not-volatile,

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\* Otherwise: "which flower of copper they have called our water, and fiery venom extracted from iron."

and incombustible! Know, also, all ye sons of learning, that he who is able to make your fugitive spirit red by the body mixed with it, and then from that body and that spirit can extract the tenuous nature hidden in the belly thereof, by a most subtle regimen, tinges every body, if only he is patient in spite of the tedium of extracting. Wherefore the envious have said: Know that out of copper, after it is humectated by the moisture thereof, is pounded in its water, and is cooked in sulphur, if ye extract a body having Ethelia, ye will find that which is suitable as a tincture for anything. Wherefore the envious have said: Things that are diligently pounded in the fire, with sublimation of the Ethelia, become fixed tinctures. For whatsoever words ye find in any man's book signify quicksilver, which we call water of sulphur,\* which also

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\* Water of sulphur occurs among the ingredients of a recipe cited from Mary in one of the treatises of Zosimus, and in the *Detailed Exposition of the Work*, the following

we sometimes say is lead and copper and copulated coin.

*The Fifty-Second Dictum.*

IXUMDRUS *saieth* : You will have treated most excellently, O Horfolcus, concerning the regimen of copper and the humid spirit, provided you proceed therewith. *And he* : Perfect, therefore, what I have omitted, O Ixumdrus ! IXUMDRUS *saieth* : You must know that this Ethelia\* which you have previously mentioned and notified, which also the envious have called by many names, doth whiten, and tinge when it is whitened ; then truly the Philosophers have called it the Flower of Gold, because it is a certain natural thing.

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process occurs : " Water of sulphur obtained by means of calx is manufactured in this manner : Having mixed all the waters in the catalogue (which it is impossible to extricate from its context and place in the compass of a footnote), taking equal parts, add white earths until the compound becomes very white. Place in a mortar, kindle a fire underneath, and receive what distils." There is also a " pure " water of sulphur which is obtained somewhat differently.

\* The second recension reads : " Water of Ethelia."

Do you not remember what the Philosophers have said, that before it arrives at this terminus, copper does not tinge?\* But when it is tinged it tinges, because quicksilver tinges when it is combined with its tincture. But when it is mixed with those ten things which the Philosophers have denominated fermented urines, then have they called all these things Multiplication. But some have termed their mixed bodies Corsufle and Gum of Gold.† Therefore, those names which are found in the books of the Philo-

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\* According to the second recension: "Before it reaches this point, it is called copper."

† That is to say, the Chrysocorallos of the Greek alchemists. The following is from a recipe of Pseudo-Democritus: "Minera of Silver, 1 part; Finest Earth of Chios, or Ochre, 2 parts; Minium of Pontus, 1 part; preparation given previously (it is too complicated for reproduction here), 2 parts: combine with the humour of the Sulphur (another abstruse recipe); cook over a fire carefully regulated. You will find a potent substance, having the colour of cinnabar, coral, or minium. This great wonder, this indescribable marvel, is called Chrysocorallos (Coral of Gold)." And Synesius, quoting Democritus, says: "Here is how he expresses himself: The body (metal) of magnesia, alone (produces) Chrysocoral."



sophers, and are thought superfluous and vain, are true and yet are fictitious, because they are one thing, one opinion, and one way. This is the quicksilver which is indeed extracted from all things,\* out of which all things are produced, which also is pure water that destroys the shade of copper. And know ye that this quicksilver, when it is whitened, becomes a sulphur which contains sulphur, and is a venom that has a brilliance like marble; this the envious call Ethelia, orpiment and sandarac, out of which a tincture and pure spirit ascends with a mild fire, and the whole pure flower is sublimated, which flower becomes wholly quicksilver. It is, therefore, a most great arcanum which the Philosophers have thus described, because sulphur alone whitens copper. Ye, O investigators of this Art, must know that the said sulphur cannot whiten

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\* The reading *ab hominibus* for *ab omnibus* is substituted by the second recension several times in this Dictum, but there can be no doubt that it is a printer's error.

copper until it is whitened in the work ! And know ye also that it is the habit of this sulphur to escape. When, therefore, it flees from its own thick bodies, and is sublimated as a vapour, then it behoves you to retain it otherwise with quicksilver of its own kind, lest it vanish altogether. Wherefore the Philosophers have said, that sulphurs are contained by sulphurs. Know, further, that sulphurs tinge, and then are they certain to escape unless they are united to quicksilver of its own kind. Do not, therefore, think that because it tinges\* and afterwards escapes, it is the coin of the Vulgar, for what the Philosophers are seeking is the coin of the Philosophers, which, unless it be mixed with white or red, which is quicksilver of its own kind, would doubtless escape. I direct you, therefore, to mix quicksilver with quicksilver (of its kind) until together they become one clean water composed out

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\* The second recension substitutes "fixes bodies," but both readings are obscure and seemingly corrupt.

of two. This is, therefore, the great arcanum, the confection of which is with its own gum; it is cooked with flowers in a gentle fire and with earth; it is made red with mucra and with vinegar, salt, and nitre,\* and with mutal is turned into rubigo, or by any of the select tingeing agents existing in our coin.

*The Fifty-Third Dictum.*

EXUMENUS† *saith*: The envious have laid waste the whole Art with the multiplicity of names, but the entire work must be the Art of the Coin. For the Philosophers have ordered the doctors of this art to make coin-like gold, which also the same Philosophers have called by all manner of names. *The TURBA answereth*: Inform, therefore, posterity, O Exumenus, concern-

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\* M. Berthelot explains that the substance referred to under the terms Nitrum and Natron was really Carbonate of Soda, and that Nitre or Saltpetre was scarcely known in antiquity, nor, indeed, till the 6th century.

† For this name the second recension substitutes Obsemeganus.



ing a few of these names, that they may take warning! *And he:* They have named it salting, sublimating, washing, and pounding Ethelias, whitening in the fire, frequently cooking vapour and coagulating, turning into rubigo, the confection of Ethel, the art of the water of sulphur and coagula. By all these names is that operation called which has pounded and whitened copper. And know ye, that quicksilver is white to the sight, but when it is possessed by the smoke of sulphur, it reddens and becomes Cambar. Therefore, when quicksilver is cooked with its confections it is turned into red, and hence the Philosopher saith that the nature of lead is swiftly converted. Do you not see that the Philosophers have spoken without envy? Hence we deal in many ways with pounding and reiteration, that ye may extract the spirits existing in the vessel, which the fire did not cease to burn continuously. But the

water placed with those things prevents the fire from burning, and it befalls those things that the more they are possessed by the flame of fire, the more they are hidden in the depths of the water, lest they should be injured by the heat of the fire; but the water receives them in its belly and repels the flame of fire from them. *The TURBA answereth*: Unless ye make bodies not-bodies ye achieve nothing. But concerning the sublimation of water the Philosophers have treated not a little. And know that unless ye diligently pound the thing in the fire, the Ethelia does not ascend, but when that does not ascend ye achieve nothing. When, however, it ascends it is an instrument for the intended tincture with which ye tinge, and concerning this Ethelia HERMES saith: Sift the things which ye know; but another: Liquefy the things. Therefore, Arras saith: Unless ye pound the thing diligently in the fire, Ethelia

does not ascend. The Master hath put forth a view which I shall now explain to the reasoners. Know ye that a very great wind of the south, when it is stirred up, sublimates clouds and elevates the vapours of the sea. *The TURBA answereth:* Thou hast dealt obscurely. *And he:* I will explain the testa,\* and the vessel wherein is incombustible sulphur. But I order you to congeal fluxible quicksilver out of many things, that two may be made three, and four one, and two one.

*The Fifty-Fourth Dictum.*

ANAXAGORAS saith: Take the volatile burnt thing which lacks a body, and incorporate it. Then take the ponderous thing, having smoke, and thirsting

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\* Two meanings are given to this term in the *Lexicon of Rulandus*. The first is Bloom, Flower, &c., understood metallurgically; the second is a vessel of baked clay. Paracelsus uses it in an arbitrary fashion of his own to signify the skin of man's body. Compare the red Adamic earth or clay; it is probably a variation of the same idea.

to imbibe. *The TURBA answereth*: Explain, O Anaxagoras, what is this obscurity which you expound, and beware of being envious! *And he*: I testify to you that this volatile burnt thing, and this other which thirsts, are Ethelia, which has been conjoined with sulphur. Therefore, place these in a glass vessel over the fire, and cook until the whole becomes Cambar. Then God will accomplish the arcanum ye seek. But I direct you to cook continuously, and not to grow tired of repeating the process. And know ye that the perfection of this work is the confection of water of sulphur with tabula;\* finally, it is cooked until it becomes Rubigo, for all the Philosophers have said: He who is able to turn Rubigo into golden venom has already achieved the desired work, but otherwise his labour is vain.

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\* According to the second recension: "The whole perfection of sulphur consists in the decoction of tabula."

*The Fifty-Fifth Dictum.*

ZENON\* saith : Pythagoras hath treated concerning the water, which the envious have called by all names. Finally, at the end of his book he has treated of the ferment of gold, ordaining that thereon should be imposed clean water of sulphur, and a small quantity of its gum. I am astonished, O all ye Turba, how the envious have in this work discoursed of the perfection rather than the commencement of the same ! *The TURBA answereth* : Why, therefore, have you left it to putrefy ? *And he* : Thou hast spoken truly ; putrefaction does not take place without the dry and the humid. But the vulgar putrefy with the humid. Thus the humid is merely coagulated with the dry. But out of both is the beginning of the work. Notwithstanding, the envious have divided this work into three parts, asserting that one quickly flees, but the other is fixed and immovable.

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\* The name in the second recension is Pitheon.



*The Fifty-Sixth Dictum.*

CONSTANS saith: What have you to do with the treatises of the envious, for it is necessary that this work should deal with four things? *They answer:* Demonstrate, therefore, what are those four? *And he:* Earth, water, air, and fire. Ye have then those four elements without which nothing is ever generated, nor is anything absolved in the Art. Mix, therefore, the dry with the humid, which are earth and water, and cook in the fire and in the air, whence the spirit and the soul are dessicated.\* And know ye that the tenuous tingeing agent takes its power out of the tenuous part of the earth, out of the tenuous part of the fire and of the air, while out of the tenuous part of the water, a tenuous spirit has been dessicated.† This, therefore, is the process of our work,

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\* According to the second recension: "The spirit is dessicated in the soul."

† The second recension merely says that the power in question is derived from the tenuous part of the earth, air, and water.

namely, that everything may be turned into earth when the tenuous parts of these things are extracted, because a body is then composed which is a kind of atmospheric thing, and thereafter tinges the imposed body of coins.\* Beware, however, O all ye investigators of this art, lest ye multiply things, for the envious have multiplied and destroyed for you! They have also described various regimens that they might deceive; they have further called it (or have likened it to) the humid with all the humid, and the dry with all the dry, by the name of every stone and metal, gall of animals of the sea, the winged things of heaven and reptiles of the earth. But do ye who would tinge observe that bodies are tinged with bodies. For I say to you what the Philosopher said briefly and truly at the beginning of his book. In the art of gold is the quicksilver from Cambar, and in coins

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\* The reading of the second recension has been partly substituted in this unintelligible passage.

is the quicksilver from the Male. In nothing, however, look beyond this, since the two quicksilvers are also one.

*The Fifty-Seventh Dictum.*

ACRATUS\* saith: I signify to posterity that I make philosophy near to the Sun and Moon. He, therefore, that will attain to the truth let him take the moisture of the Sun and the Spumet† of the Moon.‡ *The TURBA answereth*: Why are you made an adversary to your brethren? *And he*: I have spoken nothing but the truth. *But they*: Take what the Turba hath taken. *And he*: I was so intending, yet, if you are willing, I direct posterity to take a part of the coins which the Philosophers have ordered, which also Hermes has adapted to

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\* In the second recension the name is Astratus.

† Otherwise the spirit; it is probably a misreading.

‡ This one of the two passages which seem to indicate any planetary attribution of the metals, but even here it may be an analogy borrowed from the astronomy of the period without any real attribution. The distinction between mercury and quicksilver in the 67th Dictum should be noted.



the true tingeing,\* and a part of the copper of the Philosophers, to mix the same with the coins, and place all the four bodies in the vessel, the mouth of which must be carefully closed, lest the water escape. Cooking must proceed for seven days, when the copper, already pounded with the coins, is found turned into water. Let both be again slowly cooked, and fear nothing. Then let the vessel be opened, and a blackness will appear above. Repeat the process, cook continually until the blackness of Kuhul, which is from the blackness of coins, be consumed. For when that is consumed a precious whiteness will appear on them; finally, being returned to their place, they are cooked until the whole is dried and is turned into stone. Also repeatedly and continuously cook that stone born of copper and coins with a fire

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\* According to the second recension: "take a part of the coins of the Philosophers, which are the coins of Hermes."

sharper than the former, until the stone is destroyed, broken up, and turned into cinder, which is a precious cinder. Alas, O ye sons of the Doctrine, how precious is that which is produced from it! Mixing, therefore, the cinder with water, cook again, until that cinder liquefy therewith, and then cook and imbue with permanent water, until the composition becomes sweet and mild and red. Imbue until it becomes humid. Cook in a still hotter fire, and carefully close the mouth of the vessel, for by this regimen fugitive bodies become not-fugitive, spirits are turned into bodies, bodies into spirits, and both are connected together. Then are spirits made bodies having a tingeing and germinating soul. *The TURBA answereth*: Now hast thou notified to posterity that Rubigo attaches itself to copper after the blackness is washed off with permanent water. Then it is congealed and becomes a body of magnesia. Finally, it is cooked until

the whole body is broken up. Afterwards the volatile is turned into a cinder and becomes copper without its shadow. Attrition also truly takes place. Concerning, therefore, the work of the Philosophers, what hast thou delivered to posterity, seeing that thou hast by no means called things by their proper names? *And he*: Following your own footsteps, I have discoursed even as have you. *BONELLUS answereth*: You speak truly, for if you did otherwise we should not order your sayings to be written in our books.

*The Fifty-Eighth Dictum.*

*BALGUS\** saith: The whole Turba, O Acratus, has already spoken, as you have seen, but a benefactor sometimes deceives, though his intention is to do good. *And they*: Thou speakest truly. Proceed, therefore, according to thy opinion, and beware of envy! *Then he*:

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\* In the second recension this speech is put into the mouth of Anastratus.

You must know that the envious have described this arcanum in the shade ; in physical reasoning and astronomy, and the art of images ; they have also likened it to trees ; they have ambiguously concealed it by the names of metals, vapours, and reptiles ; as is generally perceived in all their work. I, nevertheless, direct you, investigators of this science, to take iron and draw it into plates ; finally, mix (or sprinkle) it with venom, and place it in its vessel, the mouth of which must be closed most carefully, and beware lest ye too much increase the humour, or, on the other hand, lest it be too dry, but stir it vigorously as a mass, because, if the water be in excess, it will not be contained in the chimney, while, if it be too dry, it will neither be conjoined nor cooked in the chimney ; hence I direct you to confect it diligently ; finally, place it in its vessel, the mouth of which must be closed internally and externally with clay, and, having kindled coals above it,

after some days ye shall open it, and there shall ye find the iron plates already liquefied; while on the lid of the vessel ye shall find globules. For when the fire is kindled the vinegar\* ascends, because its spiritual nature passes into the air, wherefore, I direct you to keep that part separately. Ye must also know that by multiplied† decoctions and attritions it is congealed and coloured by the fire, and its nature is changed. By a similar decoction and liquefaction Cambar is not disjoined.‡ I notify to you that

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\* Among the Greek technical treatises there is one entitled *The Work of the Four Elements*, and this contains a brief section on the *Nomenclature of the Divine Vinegar and the Divine Water*, which is worth citing in connection with the question of the unity of subjects amidst the multiplicity of names. Here is what the Philosophers say on this subject: "Divine water, divine vinegar, white magnesia, water of calx, virgin's urine, mercury, sea water, virginal milk, milk of the she ass, the bitch, the black cow, alum water, ash of cabbage, of natron, occidental matter, vapour. There is the substance which whitens the body of magnesia, that is, burnt copper, &c."

† The number three is indicated by the second recension.

‡ The second recension says that it is disjoined.



by the said frequent decoction the weight of a third part of the water is consumed, but the residue becomes a wind in the Cambar of the second spirit.\* And know ye that nothing is more precious or more excellent than the red sand of the sea, for the Sputum of Luna is united with the light of the Sun's rays.† Luna is perfected by the coming on of night, and by the heat of the Sun the dew is congealed. Then, that being wounded, the dew of the death-dealer is joined,‡ and the more the days pass on the more intensely is it congealed, and is not burned. For he who cooks with the Sun is himself congealed,§ and that signal whiteness causes it to overcome the terrene fire.

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\* "Which Cambar and its spirit bears in the belly thereof," is the alternative reading.

† According to the second recension, the sand is "the spume of the Moon, which is joined to the light of the Sun, and is congealed."

‡ Omitted in the second recension.

§ For this nonsensical passage the second recension substitutes: "That which is cooked by the heat of the Sun is congealed."

*Then saith BONITES:* Do you not know, O Balgus, that the Spume of Luna tinges nothing except our copper? *And BALGUS:* Thou speakest truly. *And he:* Why, therefore, hast thou omitted to describe that tree, of the fruit whereof whosoever eateth shall hunger nevermore? *And BALGUS:* A certain person,\* who has followed science, has notified to me after what manner he discovered this same tree, and appropriately operating, did extract the fruit and eat of it. But when I inquired of him concerning the growth and the increment, he described that pure whiteness, thinking that the same is found without any laborious disposition. Then its perfection is the fruit thereof. But when I further asked how it is nourished with food until it fructifies, he said: Take that tree, and build a house about it, which shall wholly surround the same, which shall also be circular, dark, encircled by

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\* In the second recension this person is referred to as Tulleas.

dew, and shall have placed on it a man of a hundred years; shut and secure the door lest dust or wind should reach them. Then in the time of 180 days send them away to their homes. I say that man shall not cease to eat of the fruit of that tree to the perfection of the number [of the days] until the old man shall become young. O what marvellous natures, which have transformed the soul of that old man into a juvenile body, and the father is made into the son! Blessed be thou, O most excellent God!

*The Fifty-Ninth Dictum.*

THEOPHILUS *saith*: I propose to speak further concerning those things which Bonites hath narrated. *And the TURBA*: Speak, Brother, for thy brother hath discoursed elegantly. *And he*: Following in the steps of Bonites I will make perfect his sayings. It should be known that all the Philosophers, while they have concealed this disposition, yet spoke the



truth in their treatises when they named water of life, for this reason, that whatsoever\* is mixed with the said water first dies, then lives and becomes young. And know, all ye disciples, that iron does not become rusty except by reason of this water, because it tinges the plates; it is then placed in the sun till it liquefies and is imbued, after which it is congealed. In these days it becomes rusty, but silence is better than this illumination.

*The TURBA answereth*: O Theophilus, beware of becoming envious, and complete thy speech! *And he*: Would that I might repeat the like thing! *And they*: What is thy will? *Then he*: Certain fruits, which proceed first from that perfect tree, do flourish in the beginning of the summer, and the more they are multiplied the more are they adorned,† until they are

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\* The reference in the second recension is to the old man of the previous dictum.

† According to the second recension: "The more the tree is adorned."

perfected, and being mature become sweet. In the same way that woman,\* fleeing from her own children, with whom she lives, although partly angry, yet does not brook being overcome, nor that her husband should possess her beauty, who furiously loves her, and keeps awake contending with her, till he shall have carnal intercourse with her, and God make perfect the fœtus, when he multiplies children to himself according to his pleasure. His beauty, therefore, is consumed by fire who does not approach his wife except by reason of lust. For when the term is finished he turns to her. I also make known to you that the dragon never dies, but the Philosophers have put to death the woman who slays her spouses. For the belly of that

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\* The compiler of the *Turba* seems to have introduced this allegory from another source, or it has possibly been interpolated at a later period; its style, indeed, is that of the epoch of Trevisan; it is, in any case, quite out of character with the text as a whole, and 'refers, it will be seen, to something which has not been previously described.

woman is full of weapons and venom. Let, therefore, a sepulchre be dug for the dragon, and let that woman be buried with him, who being strongly joined with that woman, the more he clasps her and is entwined with her, the more his body, by the creation of female weapons in the body of the woman, is cut up into parts. For perceiving him mixed with the limbs of a woman he becomes secure from death, and the whole is turned into blood. But the Philosophers, beholding him turned into blood, leave him in the sun for certain days, until the lenitude is consumed, the blood dries up, and they find that venom which now is manifest. Then the wind is hidden.

*The Sixtieth Dictum.*

BONELLUS\* *saieth*: Know, all ye disciples, that out of the elect things nothing becomes useful without con-

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\* In the second recension the name is Bodillus.

junction and regimen,\* because sperma is generated out of blood and desire. For the man mingling with the woman, the sperm is nourished by the humour of the womb, and by the moistening blood, and by heat, and when forty nights have elapsed the sperm is formed. But if the humidity of the blood and of the womb were not heat, the sperm would not be dissolved, nor the foetus be procreated. But God has constituted that heat and blood for the nourishment of the sperm until the foetus is brought forth, after which it is not nourished, save by milk and fire, sparingly and gradually, while it is dust, and the more it burns the more, the bones being strengthened, it is led towards youth, arriving at which it is independent.† Thus it behoves you also to act in

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\* Otherwise: "Know that nothing is generated without complexion."

† This absurd confusion is not found in the second recension, which reads: "So long as it is little, it is nourished with milk, and in proportion as the vital heat is maintained, the bones are strengthened."

this Art. Know ye that without heat nothing is ever generated, and that the bath causes the matter to perish by means of intense heat. If, indeed, it be frigid, it puts to flight and disperses, but if it have been tempered, it is convenient and sweet to the body, wherefore the veins become smooth and the flesh is augmented. Behold it has been demonstrated to you, all ye disciples! Understand, therefore, and in all things which ye attempt to rule, fear God.

*The Sixty-First Dictum.*

MOSES *saieth*: It is to be observed that the envious have named lead of copper instruments of formation, simulating, deceiving prosterity,\* to whom I give notice that there are no instruments except from our own white, strong, and splendid powder, and from our

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\* This passage is so corrupt as to be almost untranslatable. According to the second recension: "The envious have in many ways described the process of making lead, and have represented that there are a number of instruments," etc.



concave stone\* and marble, to the whole work whereof there is no more suitable powder, nor one more conjoined to our composition, than the powder of *Alociæ*,† out of which are produced instruments of formation. Further, the Philosophers have already said: Take instruments out of the egg. Yet they have not said what the egg is, nor of what bird.‡ And know ye

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\* The concave stone does not seem to be a term which entered into the nomenclature of later philosophers. We hear much concerning the form of the stone, but that is not to be understood as its configuration, being used in the same sense as Latin theology was accustomed to speak of the form of the soul. So Bernard Trevisan, in his *Epistle to Thomas of Bononia*: "Our stone does not possess a formal form (*forma formabilis*) such as vegetative or sensitive, yet, nevertheless, it has a formed form (*forma formata*), which form is the elements themselves, and this is because it is homogeneous, whereas the human body, or that of other sensitive things, is heterogeneous." For the term concave stone the second recension substitutes gleaming, *i.e.*, *candidus*.

† A severe critic, having failed to trace this term, might suggest a slight emendation, and read *Alogiæ*, *i.e.*, "many words and no sense."

‡ This entire passage is considerably shortened in the second recension, which simply observes that out of the powder mentioned at the beginning, instruments adapted to the egg are composed, but that at the same time the envious have omitted to name the egg, etc.

that the regimen of these things is more difficult than the entire work, because, if the composition be ruled more than it should be, its light is taken and extinguished by the sea. Wherefore the Philosophers have ordered that it should be ruled with profound judgment. The moon, therefore, being at the full, take this and place in sand till it be dissolved. And know ye that while ye are placing the same in sand and repeating the process, unless ye have patience, ye err in ruling, and corrupt the work. Cook, therefore, the same in a gentle fire until ye see that it is dissolved. Then extinguish with vinegar, and ye shall find one thing separated from three companions. And know ye that the first, Ixir, commingles, the second burns, while the third liquefies.\* In

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\* Alchemy does not seem to have generally recognised the existence of three elixirs. Fundamentally, indeed, it holds there is but one elixir, having various degrees of perfection. Zosimus, however, recognises in the true powder of perfection the existence of three powers and three activities proceeding from those powers, namely,

the first place, therefore, impose nine ounces of vinegar twice—first while the vessel is being made hot, and second when it is heated.

*The Sixty-Second Dictum.*

MUNDUS saith: It behoves you, O all ye seekers after this Art, to know that whatsoever the Philosophers have narrated or ordained, Kenckel, herbs, geldum, and carmen, are one thing!\* Do not, therefore, trouble about a plurality of things, for there is one Tyrian tincture of the Philosophers to which they have given names at will, and having abolished the proper name, they have called it black, because it has been extracted from our sea. And

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tincture, penetration, and fixation, just as a body has mathematically three dimensions. The distinction is a mere subtlety. Later alchemists speak much of the Elixir at the White and the Elixir at the Red, yet the second is the first in exaltation, and so also the Elixir of metals is at the same time held to be the medicine of men.

\* According to the second recension: "Certain Philosophers have named Gold Chelidony, Karnech, Geldum, etc."



know that the ancient priests did not condescend to wear artificial garments, whence, for purifying altars, and lest they should introduce into them anything sordid or impure, they tinged Kenckel with a Tyrian colour; but our Tyrian colour, which they placed in their altars and treasuries, was more clean and fragrant than can be described by me, which also has been extracted from our red and most pure sea, which is sweet and of a pleasant odour, and is neither sordid nor impure in putrefaction. And know ye that we have given many names to it, which are all true—an example of which, for those that possess understanding, is to be traced in corn that is being ground. For after grinding it is called by another name, and after it has been passed through the sieve, and the various substances have been separated one from another, each of these has its own name, and yet fundamentally there is but one name, to

wit, corn, from which many names are distinguished. Thus we call the purple in each grade of its regimen by the name of its own colour.

*The Sixty-Third Dictum.*

PHILOSOPHUS\* saith: I notify to posterity that the nature is male and female, wherefore the envious have called it the body of Magnesia, because therein is the most great arcanum! Accordingly, O all ye seekers after this Art, place Magnesia in its vessel, and cook diligently! Then, opening it after some days, ye shall find the whole changed into water. Cook further until it be coagulated, and contain itself. But, when ye hear of the sea in the books of the envious, know that they signify humour, while by the basket they signify the vessel, and by the medicines they mean Nature, because it germinates

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\* In the second recension, this speech is put into the mouth of Rarson.

and flowers.\* But when the envious say: Wash until the blackness of the copper passes away, certain people name this blackness coins. But Agadimon has clearly demonstrated when he boldly put forth these words: It is to be noted, O all ye demonstrators of this art, that the things [or the copper] being first mixed and cooked once, ye shall find the prescribed blackness! That is to say, they all become black. This, therefore, is the lead of the Wise, concerning which they have treated very frequently in their books. Some also call it [the lead] of our black coins.

*The Sixty-Fourth Dictum.†*

PYTHAGORAS *saieth*: How marvellous is the diversity of the Philosophers in those things which they formerly asserted, and in their coming together [or agreement], in respect

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\* According to the second recension: "That which buds and flowers is one nevertheless."

† This dictum is omitted altogether by the second recension.

of this small and most common thing, wherein the precious thing is concealed! And if the vulgar knew, O all ye investigators of this art, the same small and vile thing, they would deem it a lie! Yet, if they knew its efficacy, they would not vilify it, but God hath concealed this from the crowd\* lest the world should be devastated.

*The Sixty-Fifth Dictum.*

HORFOLCUS saith :† You must know, O all ye who love wisdom, that whereas Mundus hath been teaching this Art, and placing before you most lucid syllogisms, he that does not understand what he has said is a brute animal! But I will explain the regimen of this small thing, in order that any one, being introduced into this Art, may become bolder,‡

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\* Literally "from the sea."

† In the second recension the speaker is called Orfulus.

‡ On the principle of Zosimus: "Be not dissuaded by thine inexperience, and when you perceive that everything has become ash, understand then that all goes well."—*On the Diversity of Burnt Copper.*

may more assuredly consider it, and although it be small, may compose the common with that which is dear, and the dear with that which is common. Know ye that in the beginning of the mixing, it behoves you to commingle elements which are crude, gentle, sincere, and not cooked or governed, over a gentle fire. Beware of intensifying the fire until the elements are conjoined, for these should follow one another, and be embraced in a complexion, whereby they are gradually burnt, until they be dessicated in the said gentle fire. And know that one spirit burns one thing and destroys one thing, and one body strengthens one spirit, and teaches the same to contend with the fire. But, after the first combustion, it is necessary that it should be washed, cleansed, and dealbated on the fire until all things become one colour; with which, afterwards, it behoves you to mix the residuum of the whole humour, and then its colour will be



exalted. For the elements, being diligently cooked in the fire, rejoice, and are changed into different natures, because the liquefied, which is the lead, becomes not-liquefied,\* the humid becomes dry, the thick body becomes a spirit, and the fleeing spirit becomes strong and fit to do battle against the fire. Whence the Philosopher saith: Convert the elements and thou shalt find what thou seekest. But to convert the elements is to make the moist dry and the fugitive fixed. These things being accomplished by the disposition, let the operator leave it in the fire until the gross be made subtle, and the subtle remain as a tingeing spirit. Know ye, also, that the death and life of the elements proceed from fire, and that the composite germinates itself, and produces that which ye desire, God favouring. But when the colours begin ye shall behold the miracles of the wisdom

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\* According to the second recension: "The non-liquid becomes liquid which is the head of this art."

of God, until the Tyrian colour be accomplished. O wonder-working Nature, tingeing other natures! O heavenly Nature, separating and converting the elements by regimen! Nothing, therefore, is more precious than these Natures in that Nature which multiplies the composite, and makes fixed and scarlet.

*The Sixty-Sixth Dictum.\**

EXEMIGANUS *saith*: Thou hast already treated, O Lucas, concerning living and concealed silver, which is Magnesia, as it behoves thee, and thou hast commanded posterity to prove [or to experiment] and to read the books, knowing what the Philosophers have said: Search the latent spirit and disesteem it not, seeing that when it remains it is a great arcanum and effects many good things.

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\* This dictum is omitted in the second recension, and that which follows is put into the mouth of Emiganus.

*The Sixty-Seventh Dictum.*

LUCAS saith: I testify to posterity, and what I set forth is more lucid than are your words, that the Philosopher saith:\* Burn the copper, burn the silver, burn the gold. HERMIGANUS replies: Behold something more dark than ever! *The TURBA answereth*: Illumine, therefore, that which is dark. *And he*: As to that which he said—Burn, burn, burn, the diversity is only in the names, for they are one and the same thing. *And they*: Woe unto you! how shortly hast thou dealt with it! why art thou poisoned with jealousy! *And he*: Is it desirable that I should speak more clearly? *And they*: Do so. *And he*: I signify that to whiten is to burn, but to make red is life.† For the envious have

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\* The following variation occurs in the opening of the second recension: "The books of the Philosophers should be read, for they have not in vain advised that the sucking child should be heeded, for therein is an arcanum, out of which the Wise have operated good things."

† According to the second recension: "To make red is to vivify."



multiplied many names that they might lead posterity astray, to whom I testify that the definition of this Art is the liquefaction of the body and the separation of the soul from the body, seeing that copper, like a man, has a soul and a body. Therefore, it behoves you, O all ye Sons of the Doctrine, to destroy the body and extract the soul therefrom! Wherefore the Philosophers said that the body does not penetrate the body, but that there is a subtle nature, which is the soul, and it is this which tinges and penetrates the body. In nature, therefore, there is a body and there is a soul. *The TURBA answereth:* Despite your desire to explain, you have put forth dark words. *And he:* I signify that the envious have narrated and said that the splendour of Saturn does not appear unless it perchance be dark when it ascends in the air, that Mercury is hidden by the rays of the Sun, that quicksilver vivifies the body

by its fiery strength, and thus the work is accomplished. But Venus, when she becomes oriental, precedes the Sun.\*

*The Sixty-Eighth Dictum.*

ATTAMUS saith: Know, O all ye investigators of this Art, that our work, of which ye have been inquiring, is produced by the generation of the sea, by which and with which, after God, the work is completed! Take, therefore, Halsut and old sea stones, and boil with coals until they become white. Then extinguish in white vinegar. If 24 ounces thereof have been boiled, let the heat be extinguished with a third part of the vinegar, that is, 8 ounces; pound with white vinegar, and cook in the sun and black earth for 42 days. But the second work is performed from the tenth day of the month of September to the tenth day

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\* This is the second of the two passages mentioned in the note on page 168 of this volume as containing traces of a planetary attribution of metals, but, as in the 57th Dictum, the reference may be astronomical and not chemical.

[or grade] of Libra. Do not impose the vinegar a second time in this work, but leave the same to be cooked until all its vinegar be dried up and it becomes a fixed earth, like Egyptian earth. And the fact that one work is congealed more quickly and another more slowly, arises from the diversity of cooking. But if the place where it is cooked be humid and dewy it is congealed more quickly, while if it be dry it is congealed more slowly.

*The Sixty-Ninth Dictum.*

FLORUS *saieth*: I am thinking of perfecting thy treatise, O Mundus, for thou has not accomplished the disposition of the cooking! *And he*: Proceed, O Philosopher! *And* FLORUS: I teach you, O Sons of the Doctrine, that the sign of the goodness of the first decoction is the extraction of its redness! *And he*: Describe what is redness. *And* FLORUS: When ye see that the matter is entirely black, know that

whiteness has been hidden in the belly of that blackness. Then it behoves you to extract that whiteness most subtly from that blackness, for ye know how to discern between them. But in the second decoction let that whiteness be placed in a vessel with its instruments, and let it be cooked gently until it become completely white. But when, O all ye seekers after this Art, ye shall perceive that whiteness appear and flowing over all, be certain that redness is hid in that whiteness! However, it does not behove you to extract it,\* but rather to cook it until the whole become a most deep red, with which nothing can compare. Know also that the first blackness is produced out of the nature of Marteck, and that redness is extracted from that blackness, which red has improved the black, and has made peace between the fugitive and the non-fugitive, reducing

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\* The second recension affirms that it does behove you to extract it.

the two into one. *The TURBA answereth*: And why was this? *And he*: Because the cruciated matter when it is submerged in the body, changes it into an unalterable and indelible nature. It behoves you, therefore, to know this sulphur which blackens the body. And know ye that the same sulphur cannot be handled, but it cruciates and tinges. And the sulphur which blackens is that which does not open the door to the fugitive and turns into the fugitive with the fugitive.\* Do you not see that the cruciating does not cruciate with harm or corruption, but by coadunation and utility of things?† For if its victim were noxious and inconvenient, it would not be embraced thereby until its colours were extracted from it unalterable and

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\* According to the second recension: "It converts that which is non-fugitive into a fugitive nature." Both readings are corrupt and ungrammatical.

† The second recension somewhat reverses this, reading: "That which cruciates with harm or corruption does not cruciate with utility and coadunation."



indelible. This we have called water of sulphur, which water we have prepared for the red tinctures; for the rest it does not blacken; but that which does blacken, and this does not come to pass without blackness, I have testified to be the key of the work.

*The Seventieth Dictum.*

MUNDUS\* saith: Know, all ye investigators of this Art, that the head is all things, which if it hath not, all that it imposes profits nothing. Accordingly, the Masters have said that what is perfected is one, and a diversity of natures does not improve that thing, but one and a suitable nature, which it behoves you to rule carefully, for by ignorance of ruling some have erred. Do not heed, therefore, the plurality of these compositions, nor those things which the philosophers have enumerated in their books. For the nature of truth is one, and the followers

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\* In the second recension the name is Mandinus.

of Nature have termed it that one thing in the belly whereof is concealed the natural arcanum. This arcanum is neither seen nor known except by the Wise. He, therefore, who knows how to extract its complexion and rules equably, for him shall a nature rise forth therefrom which shall conquer all natures, and then shall that word be fulfilled which was written by the Masters, namely, that Nature rejoices in Nature, Nature overcomes Nature, and Nature contains Nature; at the same time there are not many or diverse Natures, but one having in itself its own natures and properties, by which it prevails over other things. Do you not see that the Master has begun with one and finished one? Hence has he called those unities Sulphureous Water, conquering all Nature.

*The Seventy-First Dictum.*

BRACUS\* saith: How elegantly Mundus

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\* In the second recension this dictum is ascribed to Archelaus.

hath described this sulphureous water ! For unless solid bodies are destroyed by a nature wanting a body, until the bodies become not-bodies, and even as a most tenuous spirit, ye cannot [attain] that most tenuous and tingeing soul, which is hidden in the natural belly. And know that unless the body be withered up and so destroyed that it dies, and unless ye extract from it its soul, which is a tingeing spirit, ye are unable to tinge a body therewith.

*The Seventy-Second Dictum.*

PHILOSOPHUS\* *saieth*: The first composition, that is, the body of Magnesia, is made out of several things, although they become one, and are called by one name, which the ancients have termed Albar of copper. But when it is ruled it is called by ten names, taken from the colours which appear in the regimen of the body of this Magnesia. It is necessary, therefore, that the lead be turned into blackness ; then the ten

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\* The second recension refers this dictum to Philotis.



aforesaid shall appear in the ferment of gold, with sericon,\* which is a composition called by ten names. When all these things have been said, we mean nothing more by these names than Albar of copper, because it tinges every body which has entered into the composition. But composition is twofold—one is humid, the other is dry. When they are cooked prudently they become one, and are called the good thing of several names. But when it becomes red it is called Flower of Gold, Ferment of Gold, Gold of Coral,† Gold of the Beak.‡ It is also called redundant red sulphur and red orpiment. But while it remains crude lead of copper, it is called bars and plates of metal. Behold I have re-

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\* Sericon is one of the names of Minium, according to Rulandus, but M. Berthelot explains that it was a combination of Sandyx and Sinopis.

† Later alchemical writers define Gold of Coral as the matter of the Philosophers when it has become fixed at the red stage.

‡ The significance of this phrase is, of course, perfectly inscrutable, but is there any reference to the *rostrum* or *rostellum* of the alembic?

vealed its names when it is raw, which also we should distinguish from the names when it has been cooked. Let it therefore be pondered over. It behoves me now to exhibit to you the quantity of the fire, and the numbers of its days,\* and the diversity of intensity thereof in every grade, so that he who shall possess this book may belong unto himself,† and be freed from poverty, so that he shall remain secure in that middle way which is closed to those who are deficient in this most precious art. I have seen, therefore, many kinds of fire. One is made out of straw and cinder, coals and flame, but one without flame. Experiment shows that there are intermediate grades between these kinds. But lead is lead of copper, in which is the whole arcanum. Now, concerning

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\* Greek, in common with all other alchemists, have recognised the necessity for "a certain lapse of time and a favourable moment." See Olympiodorus *On the Sacred Art*.

† Compare the motto of Paracelsus: *Alterius non sit qui suus esse potest.*

the days of the night in which will be the perfection of the most great arcanum, I will treat in its proper place in what follows. And know most assuredly that if a little gold be placed in the composition, there will result a patent and white tincture. Wherefore also a sublime gold and a patent gold is found in the treasuries of the former philosophers. Wherefore those things are unequal which they introduce into their composition. Inasmuch as the elements are commingled and are turned into lead of copper, coming out of their own former natures, they are turned into a new nature. Then they are called one nature and one genus. These things being accomplished, it is placed in a glass vessel, unless in a certain way the composition drinks the water and is altered in its colours. In every grade it is beheld, when it is coloured by a venerable redness. Although concerning this elixir we read in the sayings of the philosophers: Take gold, occurring frequently, it is

only needful to do so once. Wishing, therefore, to know the certitude of the adversary, consider what Democritus\* saith, how he begins speaking from bottom to top, then reversing matters he proceeds from top to bottom. For, he said: Take iron, lead, and albart† for copper, which reversing, he again says: And our copper for coins, lead for gold, gold for gold of coral, and gold of coral for gold of crocus. Again, in the second place, when he begins from the top to the bottom, he saith: Take gold, coin, copper, lead, and iron; he shews, therefore, by his sayings that only semi-gold is taken. And without doubt gold is not changed into rust without lead and copper,

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\* Democritus at the beginning of the assembly is effectually silenced, and now seems to be quoted as an enemy at the conclusion of a symposium in which he was forbidden to participate.

† It will be well in this place to enumerate the terms, mostly of oriental origin, occurring in the *Turba* for which no explanation can at present be found. They are: Absumech, Ebmich, Corsufle, Mucra, Murtal, Geldum, Halsut, Albar, and the curious use of the Latin word Carmen.

and unless it be imbued with vinegar known by the wise, until, being cooked, it is turned into redness. This, therefore, is the redness which all the Philosophers signified, because, however they said: Take gold and it becomes gold of coral; Take gold of coral and it becomes purple gold—all these things are only names of those colours, for it behoves them that vinegar be placed in it, because these colours come from it. But by these things which the Philosophers have mentioned under various names, they have signified stronger bodies and forces. It is taken, therefore, once, that it may become rubigo and then vinegar is imposed on it. For when the said colours appear, it is necessary that each be decocted in forty days, so that it may be desiccated, the water being consumed; finally being imbued and placed in the vessel, it is cooked until its utility appear. Its first grade becomes as a citrine mucra, the second as red, the



third as the dry pounded crocus of the vulgar. So is it imposed upon coin.

*Conclusion.\**

AGMON saith: I will add the following by way of a corollary. Whosoever does not liquefy and coagulate errs greatly. Therefore, make the earth black; separate the soul and the water thereof, afterwards whiten; so shall ye find what ye seek. I say unto you that whoso makes earth black and then dissolves with fire, till it becomes even like unto a naked sword, who also fixes the whole with consuming fire, deserves to be called happy, and shall be exalted above the circle of the world. This much concerning the revelation of our stone, is, we doubt not, enough for the Sons of the Doctrine. The strength thereof, shall never become corrupted, but the same, when it is placed in the fire, shall be increased. If you seek to dissolve, it shall be dissolved; but if

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\* This constitutes the last Dictum in the second recension, and is omitted from the longer version.

you would coagulate, it shall be coagulated. Behold, no one is without it, and yet all do need it! There are many names given to it, and yet it is called by one only, while, if need be, it is concealed. It is also a stone and not a stone, spirit, soul, and body; it is white, volatile, concave, hairless, cold, and yet no one can apply the tongue with impunity to its surface. If you wish that it should fly, it flies; if you say that it is water, you speak the truth; if you say that it is not water, you speak falsely. Do not then be deceived by the multiplicity of names, but rest assured that it is one thing, unto which nothing alien is added. Investigate the place thereof, and add nothing that is foreign. Unless the names were multiplied, so that the vulgar might be deceived, many would deride our wisdom.

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**THE TWELVE KEYS**  
OF  
**BASILIVS VALENTINUS, THE BENEDICTINE,**  
WITH WHICH WE MAY OPEN  
**THE DOORS OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE**  
**MOST ANCIENT STONE,**  
AND UNSEAL  
**THE MOST SECRET FOUNTAIN OF HEALTH.**

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## FIRST KEY.



Let my friend know that no impure or spotted things are useful for our purpose. For there is nothing in their leprous nature capable of advancing the interests of our Art. There is much more likelihood of that which is in itself good being spoiled by that which is impure. Everything that is obtained from the mines has its value, unless, indeed, it is adulterated. Adulteration, however, spoils its goodness and its efficacy.

As the physician purges and cleanses the inward parts of the body, and removes all unhealthy matter by means of his medicines, so our metallic substances must be purified and refined of all foreign matter, in order to ensure the success of our task. Therefore, our Masters require a pure, immaculate body, that is untainted with any foreign admixture, which admixture is the leprosy of our metals.

Let the diadem of the King be of pure gold, and let the Queen that is united to him in wedlock be chaste and immaculate.

If you would operate by means of our bodies, take a fierce grey wolf, which, though on account of its name it be subject to the sway of warlike Mars, is by birth the offspring of ancient Saturn, and is found in the valleys and mountains of the world, where he roams about savage with hunger. Cast to him the body of the King, and when he has devoured it, burn him entirely to ashes in a great fire. By this process the King will be liberated; and when it has been performed thrice the Lion has overcome the wolf, and will find nothing more to devour in him. Thus our Body has been rendered fit for the first stage of our work.

Know that this is the only right and legitimate way of purifying our substance: for the Lion purifies himself with the blood of the wolf, and the tincture of its blood agrees most wonderfully with the tincture of the Lion, seeing that the two liquids are closely akin to each other. When the Lion's hunger is appeased, his spirit becomes more powerful than before, and his eyes glitter like the Sun. His internal essence is now of inestimable value for the removing of all defects, and the healing of all diseases. He is pursued by the ten lepers, who desire to drink his blood; and all that are tormented with any kind of sickness are refreshed with this blood.

For whoever drinks of this golden fountain, experiences a renovation of his whole nature, a vanishing of all unhealthy matter, a fresh supply of blood, a strengthening of the heart and of all the vitals, and a permanent bracing of every limb. For it opens all the pores, and through them bears away all that prevents the perfect health of the body, but allows all that is beneficial to remain therein unmolested.

But let my friend be scrupulously careful to preserve the fountain of life limpid and clear. If any strange water be mixed with it, it is spoiled, and becomes positively injurious. If it still retain any of the solvent which has been used for its dissolution, you must carefully purge it off. For no corrosive can be of the least use for the prevention of internal diseases.

When a tree is found to bear sour and unwholesome fruit, its branches must be cut off, and scions of better trees grafted upon it. The new branches thereupon become organically united to the trunk; but though nourished with its sap, they thenceforward produce good and pleasant fruit.

The King travels through six regions in the heavenly firmament, and in the seventh he fixes his abode. There the royal palace is adorned with golden tapestry. If you understand my meaning, this Key will open the first lock, and push back the first bolt; but if you do not, no spectacles or natural eyesight will enable you to understand what follows. But Lucius Papirius has instructed me not to say any more about this Key.

## SECOND KEY.



In the houses of the great are found various kinds of drink, of which scarcely two are exactly like each other in odour, colour, or taste. For they are prepared in a great variety of different ways. Nevertheless they are all drunk, and each is designed for its own special use.

When the Sun gives out his rays, and sheds them abroad upon the clouds, it is commonly said that he is attracting water, and if he do it frequently, and thereby cause rain, it is called a fruitful year.

If it be intended to build a palace, the services of many different craftsmen must be employed, and a great variety of materials is required. Otherwise the palace would not be worthy the name. It is useless to use wood where stone is necessary.

The daily ebb and flow of the sea, which are caused by the sympathetic influence of heavenly bodies, impart great wealth and blessing to the earth. For whenever the water comes rolling back, it brings a blessing with it.

A bride, when she is to be brought forth to be married, is gloriously adorned in a great variety of precious garments, which, by enhancing her beauty, render her pleasant in the eyes of the bridegroom. But the rites of the bridal night she performs without any clothing but that which she was arrayed withal at the moment of her birth.

In the same way our bridal pair, Apollo and Diana, are arrayed in splendid attire, and their heads and bodies are washed with various kinds of water, some strong, some weak, but not one of them exactly like another, and each designed for its own special

purpose. Know that when the moisture of the earth ascends in the form of a vapour, it is condensed in the upper regions, and precipitated to the earth by its own weight. Thus the earth regains the moisture of which it had been deprived, and receives strength to put forth buds and herbs. In the same way you must repeatedly distil the water which you have extracted from the earth, and then again restore it to your earth, as the water in the Strait of Euripus frequently leaves the shore, and then covers it again until it arrives at a certain limit.

When thus the palace has been constructed by the hands of many craftsmen, and the sea of glass has absolved its course, and filled the palace with good things, it is ready for the King to enter, and take his seat upon the throne.

But you should notice that the King and his spouse must be quite naked when they are joined together. They must be stripped of all their glorious apparel, and must lie down together in the same state of nakedness in which they were born, that their seed may not be spoiled by being mixed with any foreign matter.

Let me tell you, in conclusion, that the bath in which the bridegroom is placed, must consist of two hostile kinds of matter, that purge and rectify each other by means of a continued struggle. For it is not good for the Eagle to build her nest on the summit of the Alps, because her young ones are thus in great danger of being frozen to death by the intense cold that prevails there.

But if you add to the Eagle the icy Dragon that has long had its habitation upon the rocks, and has crawled forth from the caverns of the earth, and place both over the fire, it will elicit from the icy Dragon a fiery spirit, which, by means of its great heat, will consume the wings of the Eagle, and prepare a perspiring bath of so extraordinary a degree of heat that the snow will melt upon the summit of the mountains, and become a water, with which the invigorating mineral bath may be prepared, and fortune, health, life, and strength restored to the King.

### THIRD KEY.



By means of water fire may be extinguished, and utterly quenched. If much water be poured upon a little fire, the fire is overcome, and compelled to yield up the victory to the water. In the same way our fiery sulphur must be overcome by means of our prepared water. But, after the water has vanished, the fiery life of our sulphurous vapour must triumph, and again obtain the victory. But no such triumph can take place unless the King imparts great strength and potency to his water, and tinges it with his own colour, that thereby he may be consumed and become invisible, and then again recover his visible form, with a diminution of his simple essence, and a development of his perfection.

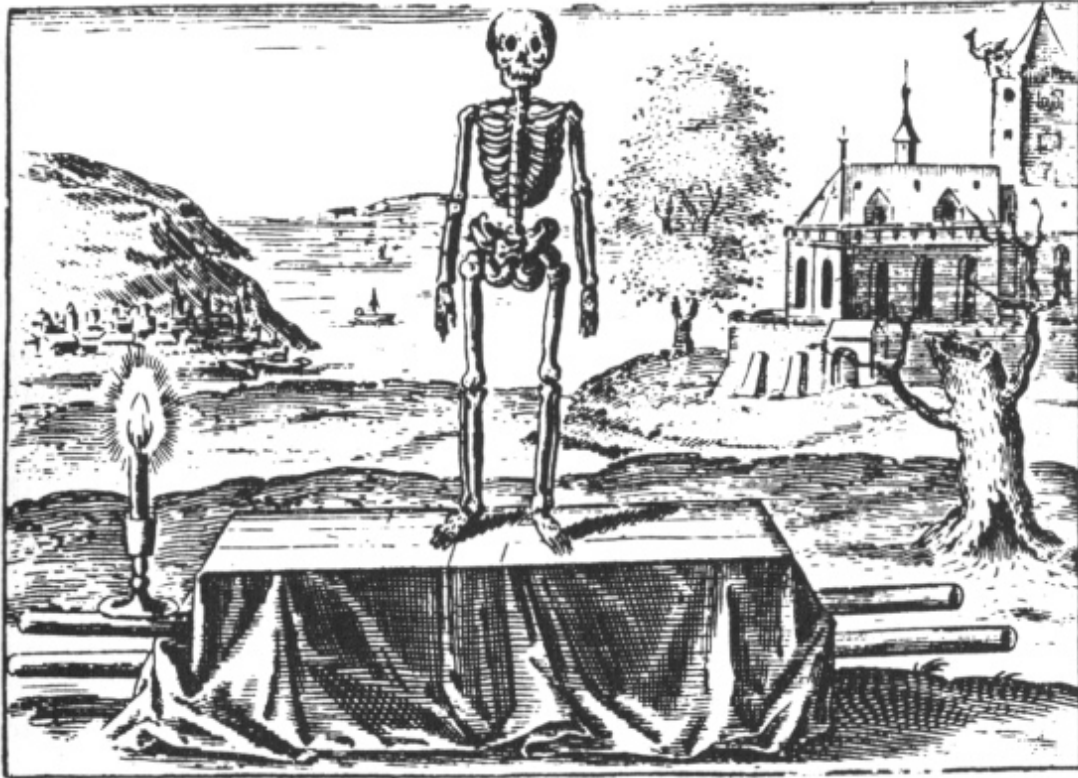
A painter can set yellow upon white, and red or crimson upon yellow; for, though all these colours are present, yet the latter prevails on account of its greater intensity. When you have accomplished the same thing in our Art, you have before your eyes the light of wisdom, which shines in the darkness, although it does not burn. For our sulphur does not burn, but nevertheless its brilliancy is seen far and near. Nor does it colour anything until it has been prepared, and dyed with its own colour, which it then imparts to all weak and imperfect metals. This sulphur, however, cannot impart this colour until it has first by persevering labour been prevailed upon to abjure its original colour. For the weaker does not overcome the stronger, but has to yield the victory to it. The gist of the whole matter lies in the fact that the small and weak cannot aid that which is itself small and weak, and a combustible substance cannot shield another substance from combustion. That which is to protect another substance against combustion must itself be safe from danger. The latter must be stronger than the former, that is to say, it must itself be essentially incombustible. He, then, who would prepare the incombustible sulphur of the Sages, must look for our sulphur in a



substance in which it is incombustible—which can only be after its body has been absorbed by the salt sea, and again rejected by it. Then it must be so exalted as to shine more brightly than all the stars of heaven, and in its essence it must have an abundance of blood, like the Pelican, which wounds its own breast, and, without any diminution of its strength, nourishes and rears up many young ones with its blood. This Tincture is the Rose of our Masters, of purple hue, called also the red blood of the Dragon, or the purple cloak many times folded with which the Queen of Salvation is covered, and by which all metals are regenerated in colour.

Carefully preserve this splendid mantle, together with the astral salt which is joined to this sulphur, and screens it from harm. Add to it a sufficient quantity of the volatility of the bird; then the Cock will swallow the Fox, and, having been drowned in the water, and quickened by the fire, will in its turn be swallowed by the Fox.

## FOURTH KEY.



All flesh that is derived from the earth, must be decomposed and again reduced to earth; then the earthy salt produces a new generation by celestial resuscitation. For where there was not first earth, there can be no resurrection in our Magistry. For in earth is the balm of Nature, and the salt of the Sages.

At the end of the world, the world shall be judged by fire, and all those things that God has made of nothing shall by fire be reduced to ashes, from which ashes the Phœnix is to produce her young. For in the ashes slumbers a true and genuine tartaric substance, which, being dissolved, will enable us to open the strongest bolt of the royal chamber.

After the conflagration, there shall be formed a new heaven and a new earth, and the new man will be more noble in his glorified state than he was before.

When the sand and ashes have been well matured and ripened with fire, the glass-blower makes out of it glass, which remains hard and firm in the fire, and in colour resembles a crystal stone. To the uninitiated this is a great mystery, but not to the master whom long experience has familiarized with the process.

Out of stones the master also prepares lime by burning, which is very useful for our work. But before they are prepared with fire, they are mere stones. The stone must be matured and rendered fervent with fire, and then it becomes so potent that few things are to be compared to the fiery spirit of lime.

By burning anything to ashes you may gain its salt. If in this dissolution the sulphur and mercury be kept apart, and restored to its salt, you may once more obtain that form which was destroyed by the process of combustion. This assertion the wise of this world denounce as the greatest folly, and count as a rebellion, saying that such a transformation would amount to a new creation, and that God has denied such creative power to sinful man. But the folly is all on their side. For they do not understand that our Artist does not claim to create anything, but only to evolve new things from the seed made ready to his hand by the Creator.

If you do not possess the ashes, you will be unable to obtain our salt; and without our salt you will not be able to impart to our substance a bodily form; for the coagulation of all things is produced by salt alone.

As salt is the great preserving principle that protects all things from decay, so the Salt of our Magistry preserves metal from decomposition and utter annihilation. If their Balm were to perish, and the Spirit to leave the body, the body would be quite dead, and no longer available for any good purpose. The metallic spirit would have departed, and would have left its habitation empty, bare, and lifeless.

Observe also, thou who art a lover of this Art, that the salt that is gained from ashes has great potency, and possesses many concealed virtues. Nevertheless, the salt is unprofitable, until its inward substance has been extracted. For the spirit alone gives strength and life. The body by itself profits nothing. If you know how to find this spirit, you have the Salt of the Sages, and the incombustible oil, concerning which many things have been written before my time.

Although many philosophers  
Have sought for me with eagerness,  
Yet very few succeed at length  
In finding out my secret virtue.

## FIFTH KEY.



The quickening power of the earth produces all things that grow forth from it, and he who says that the earth has no life makes a statement which is flatly contradicted by the most ordinary facts. For what is dead cannot produce life and growth, seeing that it is devoid of the quickening spirit. This spirit is the life and soul that dwell in the earth, and are nourished by heavenly and sidereal influences. For all herbs, trees, and roots, and all metals and minerals, receive their growth and nutriment from the spirit of the earth, which is the spirit of life. This spirit is itself fed by the stars, and is thereby rendered capable of imparting nutriment to all things that grow, and of nursing them as a mother does her child while it is yet in the womb. The minerals are hidden in the womb of the earth, and nourished by her with the spirit which she receives from above.

Thus the power of growth that I speak of is imparted not by the earth, but by the life-giving spirit that is in it. If the earth were deserted by this spirit, it would be dead, and no longer able to afford nourishment to anything. For its sulphur or richness would lack the quickening spirit without which there can be neither life nor growth.

Two contrary spirits can scarcely dwell together, nor do they easily combine. For when a thunderbolt blazes amidst a tempest of rain, the two spirits, out of which it is formed, fly from one another with a great shock and noise, and circle in the air, so that no one can know or say whither they go, unless the same has been ascertained by experience as to the mode in which these spirits manifest

Know then, gentle Reader, that life is the only true spirit, and that that which the ignorant herd look upon as dead may be brought back to permanent, visible, and

spiritual life, if but the spirit be restored to the body—the spirit which is supported by heavenly nutriment, and derived from heavenly, elementary, and earthly substances, which are also called formless matter.

Moreover, as iron has its magnet which draws it with the invisible bonds of love, so our gold has its magnet, viz., the first Matter of the great Stone. If you understand these my words, you are richer and more blessed than the whole world.

Let me conclude this chapter with one more remark. When a man looks into a mirror, he sees therein reflected an image of himself. If, however, he try to touch it, he will find that it is not palpable, and that he has laid his hand upon the mirror only. In the same way, the spirit which must be evolved from this Matter is visible, but not palpable. This spirit is the root of the life of our bodies, and the Mercury of the Philosophers, from which is prepared the liquid water of our Art—the water which must once more receive a material form, and be rectified by means of certain purifying agents into the most perfect Medicine. For we begin with a firm and palpable body, which subsequently becomes a volatile spirit, and a golden water, without any conversion, from which our Sages derive their principle of life. Ultimately we obtain the indestructible medicine of human and metallic bodies, which is fitter to be known to angels than to men, except such as seek it at God's hands in heartfelt prayer, and give genuine proofs of their gratitude by service rendered to Him, and to their needy neighbour.

Hereunto I may add, in conclusion, that one work is developed from another. First, our Matter should be carefully purified, then dissolved, destroyed, decomposed, and reduced to dust and ashes. Thereupon prepare from it a volatile spirit, which is white as snow, and another volatile spirit, which is red as blood. These two spirits contain a third, and are yet but one spirit. Now these are the three spirits which preserve and multiply life. Therefore unite them, give them the meat and drink that Nature requires, and keep them in a warm chamber until the perfect birth takes place. Then you will see and experience the virtue of the gift bestowed upon you by God and Nature. Know, also, that hitherto my lips have not revealed this secret to any one, and that God has endowed natural substances with greater powers than most men are ready to believe. Upon my mouth God has set a seal, that there might be scope for others after me to write about the wonderful things of Nature, which by the foolish are looked upon as unnatural. For they do not understand that all things are ultimately traceable to supernatural causes, but nevertheless are, in this present state of the world, subject to natural conditions.

## SIXTH KEY.



The male without the female is looked upon as only half a body, nor can the female without the male be regarded as more complete. For neither can bring forth fruit so long as it remains alone. But if the two be conjugally united, there is a perfect body, and their seed is placed in a condition in which it can yield increase.

If too much seed be cast into the field, the plants impede each other's growth, and there can be no ripe fruit. But if, on the other hand, too little be sown, weeds spring up and choke it.

If a merchant would keep a clear conscience, let him give just measure to his neighbour. If his measure and weight be not short, he will receive praise from the poor.

In too much water you may easily be drowned; too little water, on the other hand, soon evaporates in the heat of the sun.

If, then, you would attain the longed-for goal, observe just measure in mixing the liquid substance of the Sages, lest that which is too much overpower that which is too little, and the generation be hindered. For too much rain spoils the fruit, and too much drought stunts its growth. Therefore, when Neptune has prepared his bath, measure out-carefully the exact quantity of permanent water needed, and let there be neither too little nor too much.

The twofold fiery male must be fed with a snowy swan, and then they must mutually slay each other and restore each other to life; and the air of the imprisoned fiery male

will occupy three of the four quarters of the world, and make up three parts of the imprisoned fiery male, that the death-song of the swans may be distinctly heard; then the swan roasted will become food for the King, and the fiery King will be seized with great love towards the Queen, and will take his fill of delight in embracing her, until they both vanish and coalesce into one body.

It is commonly said that two can overpower one, especially if they have sufficient room for putting forth their strength. Know also that there must come a twofold wind, and a single wind, and that they must furiously blow from the east and from the south. If, when they cease to rage, the air has become water, you may be confident that the spiritual will also be transmuted into a bodily form, and that our number shall prevail through the four seasons in the fourth part of the sky (after the seven planets have exercised power), and that its course will be perfected by the test of fire in the lowest chamber of our palace, when the two shall overpower and consume the third.

For this part of our Magistry skill is needed, in order to divide and compound the substances aright, so that the art may result in riches, and the balance may not be falsified by unequal weights. The sky we speak of is the sky of our Art, and there must be justly proportioned parts of our air and earth, our true water and our palpable fire.

## SEVENTH KEY.



Natural heat preserves the life of man. If his body lose its natural heat his life has come to an end.

A moderate degree of natural heat protects against the cold; an excess of it destroys life. It is not necessary that the substance of the Sun should touch the earth. The Sun can heat the earth by shedding thereon its rays, which are intensified by reflection. This intermediate agency is quite sufficient to do the work of the Sun, and to mature everything by coction. The rays of the Sun are tempered with the air by passing through it so as to operate by the medium of the air, as the air operates through the medium of the fire.

Earth without water can produce nothing, nor can water quicken anything into growth without earth; and as earth and water are mutually indispensable in the production of fruit, so fire cannot operate without air, or air without fire. For fire has no life without air; and without fire air possesses neither heat nor dryness.

When its fruit is about to be matured, the vine stands in greater need of the Sun's warmth than in the spring; and if the Sun shine brightly in the autumn, the grapes will be better than if they had not felt his autumnal warmth.

In the winter the multitude suppose everything to be dead, because the earth is bound in the chains of frost, so that nothing is allowed to sprout forth. But as soon as the spring comes, and the cold is vanquished by the power of the Sun, everything is restored to life, the trees and herbs put forth buds, leaves, and blossoms, the hibernating animals creep forth from their hiding places, the plants give out a sweet



fragrance, and are adorned with a great variety of many coloured flowers; and the summer carries on the work of the spring, by changing its flowers into fruit.

Thus, year by year, the operations of the universe are performed, until at length it shall be destroyed by its Creator, and all the dwellers upon earth shall be restored by resurrection to a glorified life. Then the operations of earthly nature shall cease, and the heavenly and eternal dispensation shall take its place.

When the Sun in the winter pursues his course far away from us, he cannot melt the deep snow. But in the summer he approaches nearer to us, the quality of the air becomes more fiery, and the snow melts and is transmuted by warmth into water. For that which is weak is always compelled to yield to that which is strong.

The same moderate course must be adopted in the fiery regimen of our Magistry. For it is all important that the liquid should not be dried up too quickly, and that the earth of the Sages should not be melted and dissolved too soon, otherwise your fishes would be changed into scorpions. If you would perform our task rightly, take the spiritual water, in which the spirit was from the beginning, and preserve it in a closely shut chamber. For the heavenly city is about to be besieged by earthly foes. You must, therefore, strongly fortify it with three impassable and well-guarded walls, and let the one entrance be well protected. Then light the lamp of wisdom and seek with it the gross thing that was lost, shewing only such light as is needed. For you must know that the worms and reptiles dwell in the cold and humid earth, while man has his proper habitation upon the face of the earth; the bodies of angels, on the other hand, not being alloyed with sin or impurity, are injured by no extreme either of heat or cold. When man shall have been glorified, his body will become like the angelic body in this respect. If we carefully cultivate the life of our souls, we shall be sons and heirs of God, and shall be able to do that which now seems impossible. But this can be effected only by the drying up of all water, and the purging of heaven and earth and all men with fire.

## EIGHTH KEY.



Neither human nor animal bodies can be multiplied or propagated without decomposition; the grain and all vegetable seed, when cast into the ground, must decay before it can spring up again; moreover, putrefaction imparts life to many worms and other animalculæ. The process of augmentation and quickening is mostly performed in [the] earth, while it is caused by spiritual seed through the other elements.

The farmer's wife knows that she cannot hope to obtain chickens except through the decomposition of the egg.

If bread is placed in honey, and suffered to decay, ants are generated; worms are bred in the putrefying bodies of men, horses, and other animals; maggots are also developed by the decay of nuts, apples, and pears.

The same thing may be observed in regard to vegetable life. Nettles and other weeds spring up where no such seed has ever been sown. This occurs only by putrefaction. The reason is that the soil in such places is so disposed, and, as it were, impregnated, that it produces these fruits, which is a result of the properties of sidereal influence; consequently the seed is spiritually produced in the earth, and putrefies in the earth, and by the operation of the elements generates corporeal matter according to the species of Nature. Thus the stars and the elements may generate new spiritual, and, ultimately, new vegetable seed, by means of putrefaction. But man cannot create new seed; for it is not in his power to order the operation of the elements and the essential influences of the stars. By natural conditions, however, new plants are generated simply through putrefaction. This fact is not noticed by the farmer, simply because it

is a thing that he has always been used to, and for which he is unable to find an explanation. But you who should know more than the vulgar herd, must search into the causes of things, and endeavour to understand how the process of generation and resuscitation is accomplished by means of decomposition, and how all life is produced out of decay.

Each element is in its turn decomposed and regenerated by that which is contained in it. For you should know that every element contains the three others. In air, for instance, there is fire, water, and earth. This assertion may appear incredible, but it is nevertheless true. In like manner, fire includes air, water, and earth, since otherwise it could generate nothing. Water contains fire, air, and earth; for if it did not, there could be no growth. At the same time, each element is distinct, though each contains the others. All this is found by distillation in the separation of the elements.

In order to rationally prove this to you, who are investigating the separation of Nature, and purpose to understand the division of the elements, lest you should think my words inventions, and not true, I tell you that if you distil earth, you will find that, first of all, there is an escape of air, which, in its turn, always contains fire, as they are both of a spiritual essence, and exercise an irresistible mutual attraction. In the next place, there issues water from the earth, and the earth, in which is the precious salt, remains by itself at the bottom of the vessel.

When water is distilled, air and fire issue from it, and the water and material earth remain at the bottom. Again, when the invisible part of elementary fire is extracted, you get water and earth by themselves. Nor can any of the three other elements exist without air. It is air that gives to earth its power of production, to fire its power of burning, to water its power of generating fruit. Again, air can consume nothing, nor dry up any moisture, without that natural heat which must be imparted to it by fire. For everything that is hot and dry contains fire. From these considerations we conclude that no element can exist without the others, and that in the generation of all things there is a mingling of the four elements. He who states the contrary in no wise understands the secrets of Nature, nor has he investigated the properties of the elements. For if anything is to be generated by putrefaction, the process must be as follows: The earth is first decomposed by the moisture which it contains; for without moisture, or water, there can be no true decay; thereupon the decomposed substance is kindled and quickened by the natural heat of fire: for without natural heat no generation can take place. Again, if that which has received the spark of life, is to be stirred up to motion and growth, it must be acted upon by air. For without air, the quickened substance would be choked and stifled in the germ. Hence it manifestly appears that no one element can work effectually without the aid of the others, and that all must contribute towards the generation of anything. Thus their quickening cooperation takes the form of putrefaction, without which there can be neither generation, life, nor growth. That there can be no perfect generation or resuscitation without the co-operation of the four elements, you may see from the fact that when Adam' had been formed by the Creator out of earth, there was no life in him, until God breathed into him a living spirit. Then the earth was quickened into motion. In the earth was the salt, that is, the Body; the air that was breathed into it was mercury, or the Spirit, and this air imparted to him a genuine and temperate heat, which was sulphur, or fire. Then Adam moved, and by his power of motion, sheaved that there had been infused into him a life-giving spirit. For as there is no fire without air, so

neither is there any air without fire. Water was incorporated with the earth. Thus living man is an harmonious mixture of the four elements; and Adam was generated out of earth, water, air, and fire, out of soul, spirit, and body, out of mercury, sulphur, and salt.

In the same way, Eve, our common mother, was created; for her body was built up and formed out of Adam's body—a fact which I wish you particularly to notice.

To return again to putrefaction, O seeker of the Magistry and devotee of philosophy, know that, in like manner, no metallic seed can develop, or multiply, unless the said seed, by itself alone, and without the introduction of any foreign substance, be reduced to a perfect putrefaction.

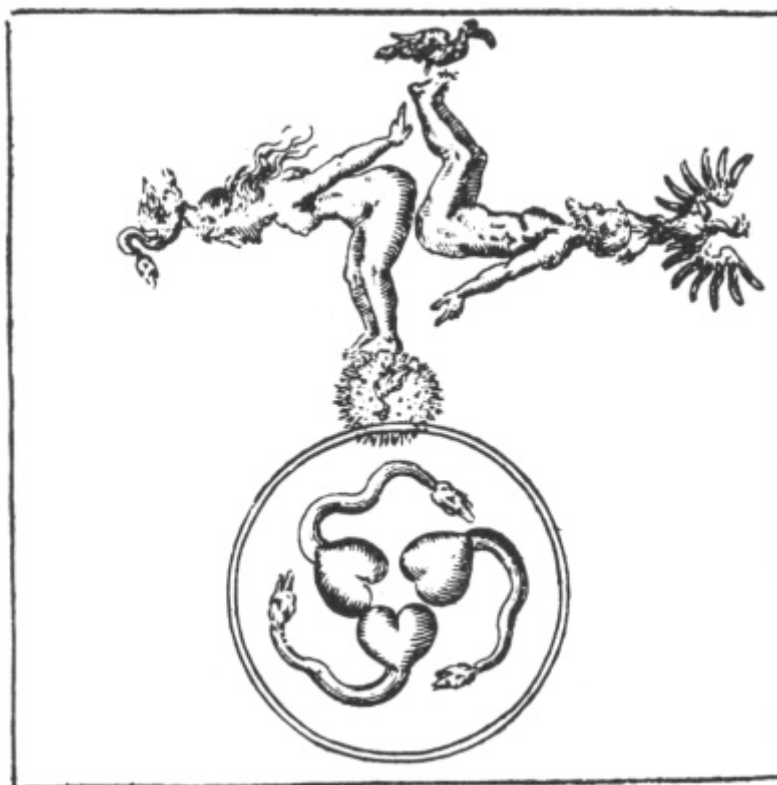
The putrefaction of metallic seed must, like that of animal and vegetable seed, take place through the co-operation of the four elements. I have already explained that the elements themselves are not the seed. But it ought by this time to be clear to you that the metallic seed which was produced by the combined operation of heavenly, sidereal, and elementary essences, and reduced into bodily form, must, in due course, be corrupted and putrefied by means of the elements.

Observe that this seed contains a living volatile spirit. For when it is distilled, there issues from it first a spirit, and then that which is less volatile. But when by continued gentle heat, it is reduced to an acid, the spirit is not so volatile as it was before. For in the distillation of the acid the water issues first, and then the spirit. And though the substance remains the same, its properties have become very different. It is no longer wine, but has been transmuted by the putrefaction of gentle heat into an acid. That which is extracted with wine or its spirit, has widely different properties and powers from that which is extracted with an acid. For if the crystal of antimony be extracted with wine or the spirit of wine, it causes vomiting and diarrhoea, because it is a poison, and its poisonous quality is not destroyed by the wine. But if it be extracted with a good distilled acid, it furnishes a beautiful extract of a rich colour. If the acid be removed by means of the St. Mary's Bath, and the residuum of yellow powder washed away, you obtain a sweet powder which causes no diarrhoea, but is justly regarded as a marvellously beneficial medicine.

This excellent powder is dissolved in a moist place into a liquid which is profitably employed as a painless agent in surgery.

Let me sum up in few words what I have to say. The substance is of heavenly birth, its life is preserved by the stars, and nourished by the four elements; then it must perish, and be putrefied; again, by the influence of the stars, which works through the elements, it is restored to life, and becomes once more a heavenly thing that has its habitation in the highest region of the firmament. Then you will find that the heavenly has assumed an earthly body, and that the earthly body has been reduced to a heavenly substance.

## NINTH KEY.



Saturn, who is called the greatest of the planets, is the least useful in our Magistry. Nevertheless, it is the chief Key of the whole Art, howbeit set in the lowest and meanest place. Although by its swift flight it has risen to the loftiest height, far above all other luminaries, its feathers must be clipped, and itself brought down to the lowest place, from whence it may once more be raised by putrefaction, and the quickening caused by putrefaction, by which the black is changed to white, and the white to red, until the glorious colour of the triumphant King has been attained. Therefore, I say that though Saturn may seem the vilest thing in the world, yet it has such power and efficacy. that if its precious essence, which is excessively cold, be reduced to a metallic body by being deprived of its volatility, it becomes as corporeal as, but far more fixed than, Saturn itself. This transmutation is begun, continued, and completed with Mercury, sulphur, and salt. This will seem unintelligible to many, and it certainly does make an extraordinary demand upon the mental faculties; but that must be so because the substance is within the reach of everyone, and there is no other way of keeping up the divinely ordained difference between rich and poor.

In the preparation of Saturn there appears a great variety of different colours; and you must expect to observe successively black, grey, white, yellow, red, and all the different intermediate shades. In the same way, the Matter of all the Sages passes through the several varieties of colour, and may be said to change its appearance as often as a new gate of entrance is opened to the fire.

The King shares his royal dignity with noble Venus, and appears in splendid state, surrounded by all the dignitaries of his court. Before him is borne a beautiful crimson banner, in which there is an embroidered representation of Charity in green garments.

Saturn is the prefect of the royal household, and in front of him Astronomy bears a black standard, with a representation of Faith in yellow and red garments.

Jupiter is the Grand Marshal, and is preceded by a banner of grey colour, borne by Rhetoric, and adorned with a variegated representation of Hope.

Mars is at the head of military affairs, and executes his office with a certain fiery ardour. Geometry carries before him a crimson banner, on which you may behold Courage in a crimson cloak. Mercury holds the office of Chancellor; Arithmetic is his standard bearer, and his standard is of many colours; on it may be observed the figure of Temperance in a many coloured robe.

The Sun is Vice-Regent, and is preceded by Grammar, bearing a yellow banner, on which Justice is represented in a golden robe. Though Venus seems to cast him into the shade by the gorgeous magnificence of her appearance, he really possesses more power in the kingdom than she.

Before the Moon, Dialectic bears a shining silver banner, with the figure of Prudence wrought into it in sky-blue, and because the husband of the Moon is dead, he has transferred to her his task of resisting the domination of Queen Venus. For among all these there is enmity, and they are all striving to supplant each other. Indeed, the tendency of events is to give the highest place to the most excellent and the most deserving. For the present state of things is passing away, and a new world is about to be created, and one Planet is devouring another spiritually, until only the strongest survive.

Let me tell you allegorically that you must put into the heavenly Balance the Ram, Bull, Cancer, Scorpion, and Goat. In the other scale of the Balance you must place the Twins, the Archer, the Water-bearer, and the Virgin. Then let the Lion jump into the Virgin's lap, which will cause the other scale to kick the beam. Thereupon, let the signs of the Zodiac enter into opposition to the Pleiads, and when all the colours of the world have shewn themselves, let there be a conjunction and union between the greatest and the smallest, and the smallest and the greatest.

If the whole world's nature  
Were seen in one figure,  
And nothing could be evolved by Art,  
Nothing wonderful would be found in the Universe,  
And Nature would have nothing to tell us.  
For which let us laud and praise God.

## TENTH KEY.



In our Stone, as composed by me and by those who have long preceded me, are contained all elements, all mineral and metallic forms, and all the qualities and properties of the whole world. In it we find most powerful natural heat, by which the icy body of Saturn is gently transmuted into the best gold. It contains also a high degree of cold, which tempers the fervent heat of Venus, and coagulates the mercury, which is thereby also changed into the finest gold. All these properties slumber in the substance of our Stone, and are developed, perfected, and matured by the gentle coction of natural fire, until they have attained their highest perfection.

If the fruit of a tree be plucked before it is ripe, it is unfit for use; and if the potter fail to harden his vessels in the fire, they cannot be employed for any good purpose.

In the same way you must exercise considerable patience in preparing our Elixir, if it is to become all that you wish it to become. No fruit can grow from a flower that has been plucked before the time. He who is in too great a hurry, can bring nothing to perfection, but is almost sure to spoil that which he has in hand. Remember, then, that if our Stone be not sufficiently matured, it will not be able to bring anything to maturity.

The substance is dissolved in a bath, and its parts reunited by putrefaction. In ashes it blossoms. In the form of sand all its excessive moisture is dried up. Maturity and fixity are obtained by living fire. The work does not actually take place in the Bath of St. Mary, in horse-dung, in ashes, or in sand, but the grades and regimen of the fire proceed after the degrees which are represented by these. The Stone is prepared in an empty furnace, with a threefold line of circumvallation, in a tightly closed chamber. It is subjected to continued coction, till all moisture and clouds are driven off, and the King attains to indestructible fixedness, and is no longer liable to any danger or injury, because he has become unconquerable. Let me express my meaning in a somewhat different manner. When you have dissolved your earth with your water, dry

up the water with its own inward fire. Then the air will breathe new life into the body, and you will have that which can only be regarded as that Great Stone which in a spiritual manner pervades human and metallic bodies, and is the universal and immaculate Medicine, since it drives out that which is bad, and preserves that which is good, and is the unfailing corrective of all imperfect or diseased substances. This Tincture is of a colour intermediate between red and purple, with something of a granite hue, and its specific weight is very, considerable.

Whoever gains possession of this Stone, should let his whole life be an expression of his gratitude towards God in practical kindness towards his suffering brethren, that after obtaining God's greatest earthly gift, he may hereafter inherit eternal life.

Praise be unto God everlastingly for this His inestimable gift.



## ELEVENTH KEY.



The eleventh Key to the Knowledge of the augmentation of our Stone, I will put before you in the form of a parable.

There lived in the East a gilded knight, named Orpheus, who was possessed of immense wealth, and had everything that heart can wish. He had taken to wife his own sister, Euridice, who did not, however, bear him any children. This he regarded as the punishment of his sin in having wedded his own sister, and was instant in prayer to God both by day and by night, that the curse might be taken from him.

One night, when he was buried in a deep sleep, there came to him a certain winged messenger, named Phœbus, who touched his feet, which were very hot, and said: "Thou noble knight, since thou hast wandered through many cities and kingdoms, and suffered many things at sea, in battle, and in the lists, the heavenly Father has bidden me make known to thee the following means of obtaining thy prayer: Take blood from thy right side, and from the left side of thy spouse. For this blood is the heart's blood of your parents, and though it may seem to be of two kinds, yet, in reality, it is only one. Mix the two kinds of blood, and keep the mixture tightly enclosed in the globe of the seven wise Masters There that which is generated will be nourished with its own flesh and blood, and will complete its course of development when the Moon has changed for the eighth time. If thou repeat this process again and again, thou shalt see children's children, and the offspring of thy body shall fill the world."

When Phœbus had thus spoken, he winged his flight heavenward. In the morning the knight arose and did the bidding of the celestial messenger, and God gave to him and

to his wife many children, who inherited their father's glory, wealth, and knightly honours from generation to generation.

If you are wise, my son, you will find the interpretation of my parable. If you do not understand it, ascribe the blame not to me, but to your own ignorance. I may not express myself more explicitly; indeed, I have revealed the matter in a more plain and straightforward manner than any of my predecessors. I have concealed nothing; and if you will but remove the veil of ignorance from your eyes, you will behold that which many have sought and few found.

## TWELFTH KEY.



If an athlete know not the use of his sword, he might as well be without it; and if another warrior that is skilled in the use of that weapon come against him, the first is like to fare badly. For he that has knowledge and experience on his side, must carry off the victory.

In the same way, he that possesses this tincture, by the grace of Almighty God, and is unacquainted with its uses, might as well not have it at all. Therefore this twelfth and last Key must serve to open up to you the uses of this Stone. In dealing with this part of the subject I will drop my parabolic and figurative style, and plainly set forth all that is to be known.

When the Medicine and Stone of all the Sages has been perfectly prepared out of the true virgin's milk, take one part of it to three parts of the best gold purged and refined with antimony, the gold being previously beaten into plates of the greatest possible thinness. Put the whole into a smelting pot, and subject it to the action of a gentle fire for twelve hours; then let it be melted for three days and three nights more.

For without the ferment of gold no one can compose the Stone or develop the tinging virtue. For the same is very subtle and penetrating if it be fermented and joined with a ferment like unto itself; then the prepared tincture has the power of entering into other bodies, and operating therein. Take then one part of the prepared ferment for the tinging of a thousand parts of molten metal, and then you will learn in all faith and truth that it shall be changed into the only good and fixed gold. For one body takes possession of the other; even if it be unlike to it, nevertheless, through the strength

and potency added to it, it is compelled to be assimilated to the same, since like derives origin from like.

Whoever uses this as a medium shall find whither the vestibules of the palace lead, and there is nothing comparable to the subtlety thereof. He shall possess all in all, performing all things whatsoever which are possible under the sun.

O principle of the prime principle, consider the end! O end of the final end, consider the beginning! And be this medium commended unto your faithful care, wherein also God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, shall give unto you whatsoever you need both in soul and body.

*Concerning the First Matter of the Philosophical Stone.*

Seek for that Stone which has no fleshly nature, but out of which a volatile fire is extracted, whence also this stone is made, being composed of white and red. It is a stone, and no stone; therein Nature alone operates. A fountain flows from it. The fixed part submerges its father, absorbing it, body and life, until the soul is returned to it. And the volatile mother like to him, is produced in her own kingdom; and he by his virtue and power receives greater strength. The volatile mother when prepared surpasses the sun in summer. Thus the father by means of Vulcan was produced from the spirit. Body, soul, and spirit exist in both, whence the whole matter proceeds. It proceeds from one, and is one matter. Bind together the fixed and the volatile; they are two, and three, and yet one only. If you do not understand you will attain nothing. Adam was in a bath—wherein Venus found her like, which bath the aged Dragon had prepared when his strength was deserting him. There is nothing, says the Philosopher, save a double mercury; I say that no other matter has been named; blessed is he who understands it. Seek therein, and be not weary; the result justifies the labour.



*A short Appendix and clear Resumption of the foregoing  
Tract concerning the Great Stone of the  
Ancient Sages.*

I, Basil Valentine, brother of the Benedictine Order, do testify that I have written this little book, wherein, after the manner of the Ancients, I have philosophically indicated how this most rare treasure may be acquired, whereby the true Sages did prolong life unto its furthest limit.

But, notwithstanding that my conscience doth bear me witness in the sight of the Most High, before whom all concealed matters are laid bare, that I have written no falsehood, but have so exposed the truth that understanding men can require no further light (that which is laid down in the theoretical part being borne out and confirmed by the practice of the Twelve Keys), yet have I been impelled by various considerations to demonstrate by a shorter way what I have written in the said treatise, and thus cast further light thereon, whereby also the lover of the desired wisdom may obtain an increased illumination for the fulfilment of his desire. There are many who will consider that I am speaking too openly, and will hold me answerable for the wickedness that they think will follow, but let them rest assured that it will be sufficiently difficult, notwithstanding, for any thick-headed persons to find what they seek herein. At the same time the matter shall be made clear to the elect. Hearken then, thou follower of truth, to these my words, and so shalt thou find the true way!

Behold, I write nothing more than I am willing to hold by after my death and resurrection! Do thou faithfully and simply lay to heart this shorter way, as hereinafter

exhibited, for my words are grounded in simplicity, and my teaching is not confused by a labyrinth of language.

I have already indicated that all things are constituted of three essences—namely, mercury, sulphur, and salt—and herein I have taught what is true. But know that the Stone is composed out of one, two, three, four, and five. Out of five—that is, the quintessence of its own substance. Out of four, by which we must understand the four elements. Out of three, and these are the three principles of all things. Out of two, for the mercurial substance is twofold. Out of one, and this is the first essence of everything which emanated from the primal fiat of creation.

But many may by all these discourses be rendered doubtful in mind as to what they must start with, and as to the consequent theory. So I will, in the first place, speak very briefly concerning Mercury, secondly concerning Sulphur, thirdly concerning Salt; for these are the essence of the Matter of our Stone.

In the first place, you must know that no ordinary quicksilver is useful, but our quicksilver is produced from the best metal by the spagyric art, pure, subtle, clear, and glistening, like a spring, pellucid even as crystal, free from all dross. Hence make water or combustible oil. For Mercury was in the beginning water, and herein all the Sages agree with my dictum and teaching. In this oil of Mercury dissolve its own Mercury, from which the water in question was made, and precipitate the Mercury with its own oil. Then we have a twofold mercurial substance; but you must know that gold must first be dissolved in a certain water, as explained in my second Key, after the purification described in the first Key, and must be reduced into a subtle calx, as is mentioned in the fourth Key. Next, this calx must be sublimated by the spirit of salt, again precipitated, and by reverberation reduced into a subtle powder. Then its own sulphur can more easily enter into its substance, and have great friendship with the same, for they have a wondrous love towards each other. Thus you have two substances in one, and it is called Mercury of the Sages, but is yet a single substance, which is the first ferment.

*Now follows concerning Sulphur.*

Seek your Mercury in a similar metal. Then when you know how to extract the metal from its body by purification, the destruction of the first Mars, and reverberation, without the use of any corrosive (the method of doing which I have indicated in my third Key)—you must dissolve that Mercury in its own blood, out of which it was made before it became fixed (as indicated in the sixth Key); and you have then nourished and dissolved the true lion with the blood of the green lion. For the fixed blood of the Red Lion has been made out of the volatile blood of the Green Lion; hence, they are of one nature, and the unfixed blood again renders that which is volatile fixed, and the fixed blood in its turn fixes that which is volatile, as it was before its solution. Then foster it in gentle heat, until the whole of the mercury is dissolved, and you obtain the *second ferment* (by nourishing the fixed sulphur with that which is not fixed), as all Sages unite with me in testifying. Afterwards this becomes, by sublimation with spirit of wine, of a blood-red colour, and is called *potable gold*.

*Now I will also give my Opinion respecting the  
Salt of the Sages.*

The effect of "salt" is to fix or volatilize, according as it is prepared and used. For the spirit of the salt of tartar, if extracted by itself without any addition, has power to render all metals volatile by dissolution and putrefaction, and to dissolve quick or liquid silver into the true mercury, as my practical directions shew.

Salt of tartar by itself is a powerful fixative, particularly if the heat of quicklime be incorporated with it. For these two substances are singularly efficacious in producing fixation.

In the same way, the vegetable salt of wine fixes and volatilizes according to the manner of its preparation. Its use is one of the arcana of Nature, and a miracle of the philosopher's art.

When a man drinks wine, there may be gained from his urine a clear salt, which is volatile, and renders other fixed substances volatile, causing them to rise with it in the alembic. But the same does not fix. If a man drank nothing but wine, yet for all that the salt obtained from his urine would have a different property from that gained out of the lees of wine. For it has undergone a chemical change in the human body, having become transmuted from a vegetable into an animal salt—just as horses that feed on oats, straw, etc., change those vegetable substances into flesh and fat, while the bee prepares honey out of the precious juices of flowers and herbs.

The great change which takes place in these and other substances is due to *putrefaction*, which separates and transmutes the constituent elements.

The common spirit of salt, which is extracted according to the direction given in my last declaration, if there be added to it a small quantity of the "spirit of the dragon," dissolves, volatilizes, and raises together with itself in the alembic, gold and silver; just as the "eagle," together with the spirit of the dragon (which is found in stony places), before the spirit is separated from its body, is much more powerful in producing fixation than volatility.

This I also say, that if the spirit of common salt be joined to the spirit of wine, and distilled together with it, it becomes sweet, and loses its acidity. This prepared spirit does not dissolve gold bodily, but if it be poured on prepared calx of gold, it extracts the essence of its colour and redness. If this be rightly done, it reduces the white and pure moon to the colour of that body from which it was itself extracted. The old body may also receive back its former colour through the love of alluring Venus, from whose blood it, in the first instance, derived its origin.

But observe, likewise, that the spirit of salt also destroys the moon, and reduces it to a spiritual essence, according to my teaching, out of which the "potable moon" may be prepared. This spirit of the moon belongs to the spirit of the sun, as the female answers to the male, by the copulation or conjunction of the spirit of mercury or its oil.

The spirit lies hid in mercury, the colour you must seek in sulphur, and their coagulation in salt; then you have three things which together are capable of once more generating a perfect thing. The spirit is fermented in the gold with its own proper oil; the sulphur is found in abundance in the property of precious Venus. This kindles the fixed blood which is sprung from it, the spirit of the salt of the Sages imparts strength and firmness, though the spirit of tartar and the spirit of urine, together with true vinegar, have great virtue. For the spirit of vinegar is cold, and the spirit of lime is intensely hot, and thus the two spirits are found to be of opposite natures. I do not here speak according to the customary manner of the Sages. But I must not say too openly how the inner gates are to be unlocked.

In bidding farewell, let me impart to you a faithful word. Seek your material in a metallic substance. Thence prepare mercury. This ferment with the mercury of its own proper sulphur, and coagulate them with salt. Distil them together; mix all according to weight. Then you will obtain *one thing*, consisting of elements sprung from *one thing*. Coagulate and fix it by means of continuous warmth. Thereupon augment and ferment it a third time, according to the teaching of my two last Keys, and you will find the object and goal of your desire. The uses of the Tincture are set forth plainly in my twelfth Key.

### **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

As a parting kindness to you, I am constrained to add that the spirit may also be extracted from black Saturn and benevolent Jupiter. When it has been reduced to a sweet oil, we have a means of robbing the common liquid quicksilver of its vivacity, or rendering it firm and solid, as is also set forth in my book.

#### *Postscript.*

When you have thus obtained the material, the regimen of the fire is the only thing on which you need bestow much attention. This is the sum and the goal of our search. For our fire is a common fire, and our furnace a common furnace. And though some of my predecessors have left it in writing that our fire is not common fire, I may tell you that it was only one of their devices for hiding the mysteries of our Art. For the material is common, and its treatment consists chiefly in the proper adjustment of the heat to which it is exposed.

The fire of a spirit lamp is useless for our purpose. Nor is there any profit in "horse-dung," nor in the other kinds of heat in the providing of which so much expense is incurred.

Neither do we want many kinds of furnaces. Only our threefold furnace affords facilities for properly regulating the heat of the fire. Therefore do not let any babbling sophist induce you to set up a great variety of expensive furnaces. Our furnace is cheap, our fire is cheap, and our material is cheap—and he who has the material will also find a furnace in which to prepare it, just as he who has flour will not be at a loss for an oven in which it may be baked. It is unnecessary to write a special book concerning this part of the subject. You cannot go wrong, so long as you observe the proper degree of heat, which holds a middle place between hot and cold. If you



discover this, you are in possession of the secret, and can practise the Art, for which the CREATOR of all nature be praised world without end. AMEN.

## THREE ALCHEMICAL POEMS BY CHANG PO-TUAN

BY TENNEY L. DAVIS AND CHAO YÜN-TS'UNG

The present translation of three alchemical poems by *Chang Po-tuan* 張伯端 *P'ing-shu* 平叔 *Tzū-yang* 紫陽 completes the translation of all of his writings believed to be genuine which are known to us.

In the *Ming* 明 encyclopedia of alchemy, *Chin tan chêng li ta ch'üan* 金丹正理大全 (Comprehensive Account of the Genuine Preparation of the Gold Medicine), the *Wu chên p'ien* 悟真篇 with its prefaces and commentaries occupies two volumes, and is followed by a third volume which bears the same title but which, however, is not the *Wu chên p'ien* and consists rather of an appendix of material supplementary to it. The first part of this appendix consists of three anonymous songs which are evidently the work of *Chang Po-tuan*, namely—*Tu chou i ts'an t'ung ch'i* 讀周易參同契 (On Reading the *Chou i ts'an t'ung ch'i*)<sup>1</sup> with commentaries by *Wêng Pao-kuang* 翁葆光 and *Tai Ch'i-tzung* 戴起宗, *Tsêng pai lung tung liu tao jên ko* 贈白龍洞劉道人歌 (A Song for *Liu*, a Comrade of *Tao*, of the White Tiger Cave) with commentaries by *Wêng* and *Tai*, and *Shih ch'iao ko* 石橋歌 (A Song about the Stone Bridge) with commentaries by *Tai*. The two latter songs are also printed again in the same *Ming* encyclopedia, without commentaries, in the section entitled *Ch'ün hsien chu yü chi* 羣仙珠玉集 (Pearls and Jades Collected from Various Immortals), where they are ascribed to the authorship of *Chang*, *Tzū-yang*. The two versions of the Song for *Liu* are entirely identical, but the two of the Song about the Stone Bridge differ in respect to several words but the alternative words have the same meanings and do not affect the translation.

The three poems exhibit the style of *Chang Po-tuan*, have the same high literary quality as the *Wu chên p'ien*, and make use of the same terms and imagery. The essay on Reading the *Ts'an t'ung ch'i* is written from beginning to end with only one kind of rhyme, in one tone and in

one sound, as in English fun, gun, sun, etc. In our opinion it definitely helps to explain the meaning of the *Ts'an t'ung ch'i*. Its exposition of the general cosmological theory and of the theory of alchemy which is based upon it is succinct and especially clear. From the Grand One the two prime contrary principles are formed, and from these, represented by diversities of symbols, the *chin tan* 金丹 (gold medicine) is to be produced. The Song for *Liu* seems in large part like an abstract or summary of the *Wu chên p'ien*. The Song about the Stone Bridge is a lyrical exposition of the same doctrine.

### ON READING THE *Chou i ts'an t'ung ch'i*

The effective use of the great *tan* 丹 follows the method of *ch'ien* 乾 (a *kua* 卦, namely ☰ symbolizing heaven) and *k'un* 坤 (a *kua*, namely ☷ symbolizing earth). Behold, the revolving of *ch'ien* and *k'un* gives rise to the *wu hsing* 五行 (five elements). Behold, in the rise of the *wu hsing*, the eternal *Tao* 道 brings about creation and extermination. Behold, when the *wu hsing* are going backward, the body of *tan* is ever existing and ever efficacious. The Grand One which comes from *hsü wu* 虛無 (empty-nothing) shows the signs of the formation of the material. The *liang i* 兩儀 (the two prime contrary powers, two forms, two rules, two principles) then begin to multiply themselves from this One. The *ssü hsien* 四象 (four signs) come hand in hand with the two bodies, and the eight *kua* are therefore their offspring. Thousands of things in creation are produced from change. Then, after that, fortune (germination), evil (extermination), regret and sorrow become apparent.

The common people have used this rule in everyday practice, but they do not know it. The sages, however, who can see the source and the origin, have been able to consult the principle of *ch'ien* and *k'un* which includes all the wonders of the *Tao* of change. Then they have entrusted the signs to scholars. With the union of *p'i* 否 (a *kua*) and *t'ai* 泰 (a *kua*), yin 陰 and yang 陽 follow in their decrease or increase. When *t'un* 屯 (a *kua*) and *mêng* 蒙 (a *kua*) are effective, then the time must be morning or evening (respectively). *K'an* 坎 (a *kua*) and *li* 離 (a *kua*) represent male and female; fire and water. *Chên* 震 (a *kua*) and *tui* 兌 (a *kua*) are the souls of the dragon and the tiger. Watch patiently the central chamber in which, with good luck, the yellow dress will be seen. Meeting excess, the indefinite position (fire?) will occur, and it should be respected.

<sup>1</sup> The *Ts'an t'ung ch'i* (Akinness of the Trio) based upon the Book of Change of the *Chou* dynasty, written by *Wei Po-yang* 魏伯陽, English translation by *Wu Lu-ch'iang* 吳魯強 with an Introduction by Tenney L. Davis, *Isis*, 18, 210-289 (1932).

The *kua* of *chi* 既 and the *kua* of *wei* 未<sup>2</sup> take care of the process, from the beginning to the end of creation, for all things in the universe, while the *kua* of *fu* 復 and the *kua* of *kou* 姤 throw light on the two *ch'i* 氣 (ethereal essences) which are galloping. The waning and waxing of the moon will accompany the gain and loss of one's *ching shên* 精神 (mental energy). The rising and setting of the sun are designed to fit the body's seasons of health.

The original idea of the paper (*Ts'an t'ung ch'i*) was to set down words for the purpose of manifesting the picture (phenomenon). After you have understood the picture, the words should be forgotten. This is the same as drawing a diagram for showing an idea, and, after the idea has been made clear, the diagram should then be put away. Those who are clever will see them (the words) to be very simple and very easy, whereas the stupid ones will find them (the words) more and more complicated and difficult as they continue the study. Therefore, one can imagine that scholars competent at learning the truth will read the *Ts'an t'ung ch'i* and will not necessarily be restrained by its symbols and its words.

#### A SONG FOR *Liu*, A COMRADE OF *Tao*, OF THE WHITE TIGER CAVE

The running of jade, the flying of gold; the two luminous bodies move hurriedly. As soon as the news of the blooming of the flowers is heard, then the frost of the autumn follows closely thereafter. It was in vain that *Chien* 錢 was proud of his long life of a thousand years. For this is only as long as the glare of lightning upon the clouds. The glare of lightning! A great speed! A hundred years (of living) amounts to about thirty thousand days, during which the cold seasons and the hot seasons fry and boil (beat, press) one another. Imperceptibly boyhood vanishes easily into the silence. Even though you have many sons and grandsons before your eyes, yet your affection for them becomes a matter of anxiety. At the time when your energy is exhausted and when your body is going to decay, who then can teach you how to continue your life and to let yourself stay for a longer while? A longer while for staying! One has no means of contriving it! Eventually you will let your life go back like the passing of water down the stream.

Look at the ancient people, the saints and the sages. How many of them could know how to maintain their lives in the world? Maintain lives in the world! Yet means are available. However, it is ungratifying that

<sup>2</sup> The *kua*, *chi* and *wei*, are not mentioned elsewhere in the writings of *Chang Po-tuan*. According to the commentator *Weng Pao-kuang*, they are the last of the sixty *kua*, and the *kua* of *t'un* and *mêng* are the first two of them. They thus constitute a complete cycle of change.

the people nowadays are unthoughtful, and attempt to search for grass and wood<sup>3</sup> from the mountains.

Surrendering lead, controlling mercury, and staining the *tan* (medicine, red color) of *yang*. Stain the *yang tan*! It is an entirely different thing (from grass and wood). One must obtain the red blood from *k'an*, and must bring it over to the position of *li* for controlling the essence of *yin*. The matching and the blending should have their definite time. The time must be accurately chosen, and it is necessary that a match-maker should be present. *Chin kung* 金公 (golden fellow) and *ch'a nü* 姘女 (elegant lady) will be made to marry each other. *Chin kung* likes very much to ride on the white-tiger's back, whereas *ch'a nü* often drives about upon the body of the scarlet dragon.

The tiger comes down from the autumn mountain while the dragon goes up swiftly from the green gulf. The waves roll and roar like water boiling in a *ting* 鼎. *Huang p'o* 黃婆 (yellow dame, the matchmaker) and *ting lao* 丁老 (old fellow) then assist in striking up terror and in beating up power. *Ch'ien* and *k'un* (heaven and earth) are then shaken up and the spirits and ghosts stir about.

After a while the battle ceases. The clouds and rains withdraw. The mysterious pearl is planted deeply in the soil. Its roots and sprouts grow out gradually. The *chên ching* 真精 (true essence) is then used to irrigate it from time to time. After ten months it comes out from the womb, and is ingested by the mouth. He (the worker) then feels that his material body already possesses its efficacious properties.

This subject is little known in the world. It is unlikely that ordinary people will hear of it. If your former life has not given you in your bones an affinity for *hsien* 仙 (immortal, the qualities of *hsien*, the art of immortality), how can you meet it (the medicine) easily? When you meet it, you should work on the compounding—because time passes as fast as an arrow. Whenever one desires to catch fish, he ought first to construct the net. Otherwise, he can only sigh in vain beside the pond. I have heard that you, *Liu* comrade, have studied the medicines for many years. Why don't you concentrate your mind on the compounding of mercury and lead? Do not let the candle be blown out by the wind. Otherwise, on the six-fold way of *Lun-hui* 輪廻 (transmigration, the revolving re-union) one can be called only when it is too late to murmur to heaven.

Nowadays, people are becoming unreliable. All those who dress in cotton clothes, and pretend that they are Taoists, cannot answer even a word and keep their mouths shut as if they were dumb, when you choose to inquire of them about what *chin* 金 (gold) and *mu* 木 (wood) are going to be. They may mean the practices of taking doses of *ch'i* (ethereal essence) and of ceasing to eat food. But these are other doors and

<sup>3</sup> In order to attain longevity or immortality through the magic powers of these materials.

courts which lead one far away from success. Do you not see the teachings in the Song on Clearing Up Perplexity? The song suggests that the grand One, which contains the truth, is the best method. One should not say that the song's words are nonsense. The difficulty lies rather in the fact that the common people are unable to understand (recognize) them.

I know that you, *Liu* comrade, have the same mind (heart) as I do, and so I dare to discuss the subject with you frankly.

#### A SONG ABOUT THE STONE BRIDGE.

My home was originally established north of the Stone Bridge. The mountains ended there forming a water-gap upon which a forest of ancient trees was flourishing. Underneath the bridge there flowed a stream of water coming down from *K'un-lun* 崑崙 (a mountain range lying to the north of Tibet, where the Taoist heaven is located). Along the slopes of the hills, sweet springs full of fragrance were found. Over the hillsides, perpetual flowers were cultivated. I am proud of having lived in this valley.

In the cave on the north side of the mountain the fierce tiger dwelt, which, when it came out of the cave, roared to give wind and mist. On the south side of the mountain the dragon hid itself at the bottom of the gulf (pond). Whenever clouds were soaring aloft, whenever rain poured down and the sky was darkened and covered with mist, the two creatures met one another and fought a battle. At that time an auspicious omen of the formation of the mysterious pearl might be seen.

The landscapes were beautiful. I was inwardly glad. I poured my own wine and drank my own cup until I became completely drunk. After I was drunk, I played a song on the stringless lute. The lute seemed to warn with every bit of its voice that one must be careful. However, it was pitiful that no one among the drunken crew could understand. Stupid, silent as I was, I seemed to be crazy.

I looked above with my head raised, and I admired the excellence of the creation of the universe. The sun can be turned about to rise from the west, and the moon also can be reversed to set in the east. The heaven may become the earth, and the earth may become the heaven. The back-and-forth changes of *yin* and *yang* conform to the principle of nature. Anyone who is able to recognize the topsy-turvy-ness of the five elements will return to heaven's cave and will ascend to the clouds in the bright daylight. (In the heaven) there are houses built of yellow gold, beams made of white jade, and golden boys and jade girls who

stand before you every day. There the southern stars and the northern Dipper are clearly visible, and there before your eyes appear endless scenes and thousands of views.

No day and no night. One's work should be carried on continuously. The concentrating and the scattering of the fire and the season of the heavenly cycle should be completed. If one wishes to inquire into the actual nature of *chin tan*, he should find a teacher who will disclose to him the secret of lead within water. Wood produces fire. Gold generates water. Water and fire are known to have the first and the second parts. One should be able to recognize the floating portion and the sinking portion, and to identify the host and the guest. When lead, silver, cinnabar and mercury begin to interlock, there are hard and soft constituents to which one should give attention.

Inwardly to be contented is always sufficient; and this will lead one to go back to the original position where thousands of gods are present to celebrate the peaceful years. This is the time when the country becomes rich and the people live happy lives.

This (art) is a matter for inference. Our comrades of *Tao* all know the idea. Yet, after they know it, a number of followers-of-learning-the-truth still prefer to practice the method of keep-on-thinking and of exercising the *ch'i* (ethereal essence). (But the art, the preparation of *chin tan*) is also very easy. Anyone who has taken the dose will realize its incomparable efficacy. It removes any illness at first, and then prolongs one's life. It is formed by cooking with fire, and is changed into a body of *yang* (i. e. into a mass of potency). Those who desire to learn *Tao* should think the matter over for themselves. Do not permit yourself to be ensnared by the small talismans of other doctrines.

If you know nothing else than that you are able to cheat people, you will soon witness the decay of your power of living. I suggest that the followers be ambitious. Do not desert your home to live somewhere else. The wonderful *Tao* exists not far away from your own body. It is not necessarily found in high mountains or in unknown waters. Do not delay lest you become worthless. Find a teacher as soon as possible, in order that you may acquire the principle of *hsian* 玄 (mystery). If you do not learn the truth in your present life, how will you know in what womb you are going to be born in the next life? When you have decided to take up the subject, you must stick to it through to the end. The greatest of human events are life and death. If the almighty heaven is ungrateful to those who possess the heart of *Tao*, I shall be glad to be condemned to live as a mean ghost in *San-t'u* 三塗 (three mud).

## Verbum Dismissum

The first thing requisite in this Science of Transmutation is the knowledge of the Matter, from whence is extracted the Argent vive and the Sulphur of the Philosophers; of which two the Sovereign Medicine is made and constituted.

The Matter from whence is extracted the Sovereign Medicine and Secret of the Philosophers, is only most fine Gold and most fine Silver and Argent Vive, all which thou seest daily altered nevertheless, and moved by artifice in the nature of a Matter White and dry in the manner of a Stone, from whence our Argent Vive and Sulphur are elevated and extracted by strong ignition by reiterate destruction of the same, by resolution and sublimation, and in this Argent Vive is the Air and Fire which cannot be beheld by Corporeal Eyes, being subtile and Spiritual which makes against those who think to obtain four Elements really and visibly separated in the Work, each one apart, but such know not the nature of things, and that simple Elements cannot be obtained by us, although we know them by their operations and effects which are found in these lower elements, to wit Earth and Water, as they are altered from a compact and gross nature, whereby they are moved from one nature to another. That Sol and Luna are the Matter of our Blessed Stone, the sayings of all Philosophers confirm, and in real truth saith our Father Hermes, "The Sun is the Father and the Moon is the Mother", but great doubt is made of the third Composition, to wit what is the Argent Vive of which with the Sol and Luna our Composition is made. Which to know, it is to be noted that the Philosophers divided into two parts, First and Second. That Second part is by Philosophers divided into the White Stone accomplished, and into the Red Stone.

But because this notable Secret lies in knowing the First Part, Philosophers doubting to reveal this Secret have made but little mention of the First Part, and believe that if it had not been to prevent the Science of Philosophers would have remained as wholly false in its principles, they would have been entirely silent and have mentioned nothing of it; Wherefore if they had not in any manner touched upon, the Science would have in all points rested in Ignorance and perished, as being false in its terms.

As this is the beginning, the Key, the Foundation of our Magistry, without which nothing is to be accomplished, and that being unknown, ye Science would remain deceitful and false in practice. To the end that this great Secret might not remain unknown, which is the Stone, to which nothing strange or foreign is to be added, I have designed to make some mention of it, wholly, certainly and true, which I have seen and possessed, God of Truth being my witness, which I commit to the Secret Cabinet of the pious Soul, upon peril of the same, wherefore Philosophers have called this Secret Verbum Dismissum, which is to say a word left or concealed. It is then to be known that the Philosophical work is to be divided into three degrees, to wit --- the Vegetable, Mineral and Animal Stone. The Vegetable Stone properly and principally the Philosophers have attributed to this First, which is the Stone of the First Degree, of which Peter of Villaneuve (Brother of Arnold) saith in his Rosary, "The beginning of our Stone is Argent Vive or its Sulphurity which we must obtain from its gross corporeal substance before we can pass to the Second Degree".

The beginning of our Stone is, that Mercury growing like a tree, be composed and sublimed by opening it for the volatile germ, or seed, which cannot nourish nor grow without the Fixed Tree that retains it, as the living nipple of an Infant.

It appears then that this Stone is Vegetable, as it were, the sweet Spirit that proceeds from the Bud of the Vine joined in the Work, first to a Body, fixed and whitening as is said in the Green Dream wherein after the Text of Alchemy is very notably described the practice of this Vegetable Stone to those who wisely discern the Truth, which for certain reasons and just cause I forbear to set down here.

The First Degree then of our Philosophical Stone, is to make Our Mercury Vegetable, clean and pure, which is called by Philosophers White Sulphur not burning, which is the means of conjoining Sulphur with Bodies, and Mercury, truly and really, that he may be of one nature, fixed, subtle, clean and united to the Bodies in their profundity, by the help of their heat and moisture, of which Philosophers say, Tinctures may be conjoined, but not Argent Vive Vulgar, that being cold and phlegmatic and destitute of lively operation, which consists in heat and moisture, but because it is in part volatile, therefore it is the medium to fix volatile spirits, and to adhere or adjoin to the fixed substances of Bodies, wherein is touched the cause of its necessity, which is threefold. The first as we are to join the two Seeds, to wit, Male and Female, they ought to be mingled with each other by a natural alliance and Love, and by a continual sponginess, in such manner that the moist of one be attracted by the moist of the other and by consequence the one be mixed with the other and that they be joined together, and for as much as those two Bodies, to wit Gold and Silver are made moist by heat digesting, dissolving and subtilizing, then they are the First Matter and simple, and take upon them the name of Seed, which are near to generation, through the impression they receive by their simplicity and obedience to instrumental heat, equivalent and like to the natural heat of this Mercury, forming and sealing thereto a kind of Elixir, for that the First Part of the Stone is called Elixir. The First Part then is the medium of conjoining extremities of the Vessel of Nature, in which Vessel the Spirits ought to be transmitted as they proceed from one nature to another, wherein is touched the Second Part of its necessity, for as the Stone ought to be impregnated with Spirits, it is necessary there should be therein a retentive faculty or Virtue embraced by them, to the end that they may be mixed with the Body in the smallest parts. This Virtue is truly found in our Philosophical Mercury, as it is in part of a Spiritual nature, so is truly a pure Spirit, impregnated and purified from all feculent and terrestrial resident Spirits. I say true and fixed in one part for it contains the nature of the one and of the other Fire, which manifests and declares its ponticity or compunctuous sharpness, which appears in its operation, for by this Mercury mortified is easily congealed, the Mercury of the Vulgar, as the Text declares. Nevertheless it is not fixed by itself, but ought to be conjoined with Sol and Luna and be married in friendship and to the end, that which is not in it, may be fixed by those Bodies, to wit, that this thing which is composed of several mixtures together with their co-naturals, may directly fix the Mercury of the Vulgar, for which cause no Bodies are mixed which fixed, to the end that the compounded Fire, which is called Mercury sublimed philosophically or First matter, may be informed by proper Ferments, as to obtain the force more lastingly, and persevere the contest of the Fire notwithstanding its asperity, wherefore, saith Hortulanus, "That is not strange to it, to which it ought to be conjoined", viz., fixed. And of this Mercury saith Raymond, "The Argent Vive by us made, congealeth the common, and is more common to men than the common, of less price, of greater virtue and utility, and also of greater retention, being a Gum more noble than Pearls, which converts and attracts to its fixed nature all other Gums clear and pure, and enables them to resist in the Fire, and to rejoice therein", wherefore saith Morienus, "Those who would obtain this composition without this First Part are like those who would mount to the height of a pinnacle without a ladder, who when they begin to climb find themselves cast down to the bottom in misery and pair. This Mercury exuberate then is the first beginning and Foundation of our glorious Magistry, for it contains in itself Fire which ought to be replenished and nourished with a great and strong Fire in the Second Regimen of our Stone, now as well the Fire enclosed in our said Mercury by the First Regimen, as the Fire which ought to be inclosed by the Second is by Philosophers named the proper Instrument, which is the Second thing principally required to

be understood in this high Magistry in such manner that the Matter Volatile and fixt by heat and congelation, with dissolution of the bodies as Philosophers teach, for the greatness of the Magistry have veiled under another name, to wit, Sublimation or Exaltation of the Mercurial matter, as it is exalted in its noble Virtues, and Sublimed in its degrees. "Wherefore", saith Arnold, "Let Mercury first be sublimed, that is, as Mercury is in nature low and base condition to wit, Earth and Water, let it be brought to a more noble and higher condition, to wit Airy and Fiery, which are principles near approaching to this Mercury in the intention of Art and Nature". Wherefore when this Mercurial Stone is thus Exalted and Subtilized, it is said to be sublimed in its First Sublimation, which is convenient to sublime with its Vessel, as saith Raymond in his Codicil in the beginning Chapter 2 of Vade Mecum de Mercurale Philosophorum. We hope in God that our Mercury shall be sublimed to greater things which tinge it, and its Soul shall be exalted into Glory, as being that which it behooves to enter into its Mother's Belly, also it is said to be born of the First Nativity, which hath regards to all orders of the Chemical Earth, and the heart of the workers in this Art shall not be frustrated of joy, and shall tell thee, calling God to witness, that as this mercury hath been by some one sublimed, it hath appeared cloathed with so great Whiteness as the Snow on the highest mountains, under a most subtile, crystalline splendour, from whence proceeds at the opening of the Vessel, so great, so sweet, so excellent an odour, as the like is not to be found under the World, and I who speak this know that this most marvelous Whiteness has appeared to my own eyes, and have handled this attenuated and subtilized, crystalline Matter with my own hands, and with my own sense of smelling have smelt this marvelous sweetness, and with great joy begun to shed tears upon the astonishment of marvelousness and sweetness, for which Blessed be the Eternal God, most High, and Glorious who hath hidden these marvelous Great Secrets of nature, yet hath vouchsafed to a few I know (most Reverend Father) that when you shall be acquainted with the causes of this disposition you will admire that a Matter so corrupt should contain in itself such a heavenly like nature, I am not sufficient to declare to you these Wonders, yet the time may come (if it be found expedient) that I may acquaint you with many particular matters of this nature, which her to write I have not obtained permission from the God of Nature.

Of this Celestial nature, it is said in the Book of Prognosticks, certainly in Medicine, Celestial Gifts are found, but to proceed further, when you have sublimed this Mercury, take fresh and new with its Blood or Ferment, that it may not grow old or stale. Present it to its Parents, Luna and Sol to the end that of these three things, to wit Sol, Luna and Mercury our Composition may be made, and that the Second Degree of our Stone may begin.

The Second Degree, if thou wouldst have then good multiplication in the strongest qualities and mineral virtues by the operation of the Second Degree, and the help of Nature.

Take the clean Bodies and with them unite the said Mercury in such weight or proportion, as is known to the masters of this magistry, and to conjoin the said dry Matter (or Sulphur) which is the Sulphur of the Elements, and which is called Oil of Nature, and Mercury sublime, subtilized, dissolved and hardened by the operation of the First Degree in rejecting nevertheless all the residue and Faeces, that is made in sublimation, as of no value. But it is not to be understood in our sublimation the thing sublimed should remain in the top of the vessel, as it happens in the sublimation of Sophisters, but in our sublimation what is sublimed is a little elevated above the Faeces of the vessel and sustains itself and is joined to the sides of the vessel, and that which is foul and impure remains in the bottom, by Nature which desires to lose of its own accord, by a certain manner of evacuation, to the end it may be restored in melioration, in losing its impure parts that it may recover pure and better by which parts the third cause of its necessity, which is that as Mercury is clean white, incumbustible it illuminated our Stone and defends it from adjution, and keeps it

from burning temporals and moderates the excessive ardour of Fire against Nature, reducing and bringing it back to a true Temperature and concord with the Natural Fire.

For the Philosophical Mercury contains an excellency of the fire in natural and sovereign virtue of which is to qualify against the heat of the Fire against Nature, naturalizing that is converting itself, or making itself natural by sweetly, according to the natural Fire, which is a great increase known to few.

Wherefore here Mercury is called the Earth or Nurse in this part, as it is the Matter or Sperm, without which the Stone cannot grow or multiply, whereof saith Hermes, "Ye Nurse of our Stone is the Earth (of Mercury) of which Sol is the Father and Luna the Mother, it mounts from Earth to heaven, again descends to the Earth, of which the strength is entire, if it be turned to Earth, which Earth and the two perfect Bodies, the right composition of the Philosophical takes birth and beginning".

Let these two Bodies then be sufficient for thee, being such as are sought and required, as saith Arnold de Villa Nova, that as the end of the state is perfection it perfects the Mercury of the Vulgar and other imperfect Bodies and transmutes them. We must then necessarily acquire this virtue which is found where it is, now it is likely no ways better to be found than in perfect Bodies, for if in Bodies pure and fine there be not force and virtue to transmute imperfect Metals into perfect and true Sol, in vain should we seek it in the base, the like say of Lune and all imperfect Metals, Sol and Luna only are perfect, and all the rest are imperfect.

To obtain then this mercurial substance, wherewith all the perfect virtue to transmute into Sol and Lune the imperfect metals, you must have recourse to the two perfect Bodies and no other. Wherefore it is to be known, that the conjunction of these two Bodies is the natural term of the last subtilization and of Transmutation of the First Matter of Regeneration, because of by this conjunction, by the first simple Matter is made generation of the true Elixir. Lune reduced into its First Matter is the passive matter, for truly, she is the wife of Sol and he is her husband, that is in very near affinity to each other, such is the conveniency between the Male and the Female in this kind of Art, of both which is engendered Sulphur White and Red, glutinous and congealing Mercury certainly better creation and nearer transmutation is made, when the proper Male is joined to its proper Female into one nature, and the Male joins most profoundly in the passive Matter by the subtility of its nature, and transmutes it more, converting its nature into another nature, and transmutes it more, converting its nature into another nature, to wit, into the nature of Sulphur; of which conjunction saith Dastin, "If the White Woman be married to her Red Husband they incontinently embrace one another, and are joined together. They are dissolved by themselves that these which were two might be made one Body". This copulation is the philosophical marriage and indissolvable Bond, wherefore it is said also, where these two Bodies are made one by conjunction, that they may hold one nature, to wit, our Mercury, which is by some called the Ring or Sovereign Bond, also it is called the Daughter of Platon, which conjoin Bodies assembled in Love. Compose then this our Stone of these three things, and not any other, for in other matters is not lodged that which so many do seek. This amalgam, or Philosophical composition thus ordered, it may be truly said of it, that the Stone is made but of one Thing. For this composition is a mixture of inestimable price and value, that is of such a price as cannot be sufficiently thought.

This is our Brass, that is our amalgam or composition, made of the above said three things or Matter only, and then begins the second part of our most noble Stone, and the stone of the Second Degree which is called Mineral.



Now it is to be noted, that by the Second Regimen or Operation, the Stone of Mercury which was born by the First Operation, so clear and resplendent, is mortified, blackened and made vile and ugly, in fire, is so deformed with the whole compound, that it may revive with great victory, with great clarity, purity and force than it had first, For this mortification is vivifying, for in mortifying it revives itself.

And certainly these two Operations are so chained and interlaced one with another, that one cannot be without the other, as appears in the doctrine of Philosophers, for the corruption of one is the generation of the other.

All this business then is nothing else but to create Sulphur of Nature and reduce the composition to its First Matter of the Metallick kind, for as Albertus saith in his Book of Minerals; "We must not so much alter or distance our Stone from the nature of Metals". Know then that this Compound is the substance out of which ought to be drawn the Sulphur of nature by comforting it, and nourishing it in joining to this substance the Mineral Virtue, to the end it may be made a new Nature stript from all its Sulphureous terrestricity and corruption and all phlegmatic humidity, hindering digestion. It is further to be observed that according to the divers alterations or change of the one and the same Matter in digestion, divers names are imposed on it by the Philosophers according to its divers complexions, some have called it a coagulating pressure, some Azoc, Arsenic, others Album and tincture illuminating all bodes, some have called it, Philosophical Egg, for a Egg is composed of three parts, viz., Shell, White, and the Yolk, so is compounded out Philosophical Egg, or Body, Soul and Spirit. Although in truth our Stone is but one thing according to Body, Spirit and Soul, but according to the divers reason and intentions of Philosophy, is now called one Thing, and then another, which Plato meant when he said, "The Matter flows infinitely or always, if the Form stay not its flux", so is it Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, for there is Body, Soul and Spirit. There is also Sulphur, Mercury and Arsenick, for the Soul breathing, that is casting out its Vapours by Arsenick Works in conjoining Mercury of which philosophers say that the property of Arsenick is to breathe, or respire, the property of Sulphur is to coagulate or congeal Mercury, nevertheless this Sulphur, this Arsenick and this Mercury are not those the vulgar think of which are not those venomous Spirits the Apothecaries sell, but the Spirits of the Apothecaries are those vulgar Spirits, theirs are more of imperfection and corruption, to prejudice rather than repair imperfect Metals. Wherefore it cannot give perfection and incorruption to them, which perfection ought to be given by our Medium, Vainly therefore do those Sophisters work, who endeavor to make the Elixir, from such venomous Spirits full of corruption. For certainly, in no other thing is lodged the Truth of the Sovereign subtilty of Nature, but in the three matters above said, to wit, Sulphur, Arsenick and Mercury Philosophical wherein the reparation and total perfection of Bodies that are to be purged, lodges, only all the Philosophers have imposed divers names on our Stone. Wherefore leave the plurality of names and regard only the compound, which is but once to be placed in one Vessel, from whence it is not to be taken till the Elementary Rotations be accomplished, that the force and active Virtue of our Mercury should be nourished and not be suffocated and entirely lost, for the seeds of Vegetables in the Earth are not propagated by growth and multiplication if their force and generative Virtue be taken from them by any strange quality whatsoever. In like manner also, this nature will not multiply, or be multiplied if it be not prepared in manner of Water.

The Matrix of the mother after Conception remains shut up or the Fruit will be lost, so our Stone ought always to remain closed in its Vessel, nor any strange thing ought to be added, but only should be nourished and informed by the Formative Virtue of its multiplicative Virtue, not only in quantity but greatly in quality, in such maner must be influenced or put into the said Matter, the vivifying Humidity by virtue whereof it is

nourished, increased and multiplied.

After then our Compound is made, the first thing to be done is to animate it, putting to it the natural heat, or vivifying humidity, or the Soul, Air or life. By the work of solution or sublimation with congelation, and as you have made thy compound so must thou have a certain manner of proceeding according to the internal heat enclosed in the matter, otherwise it may remain void of its designed end, without Soul, deprived of its noble high virtues, and would have no motion to generation as other things by nature produced. The manner how to put Fire into the said Matter, and to convert it from disposition to disposition, from nature to nature, that is from low to high degree. The manner of this disposition is made by proper sublimation, Impregnation, mortification for Resurrection and Sublimation in the light Elements, so that all the circle of this noble Magistry is nothing but sublimation perfect, which nevertheless hath many particular operations annexed, chained, interlaced or joined together, but two are principally attending the whole Circle, which are perfect dissolution and perfect coagulation. So that the whole Magistry is perfectly to dissolve, and perfectly to congeal, dissolve the Body and congeal the Spirit, and this operation has ties and alliances together, that the Body never dissolves but the Spirit congeals, nor also the Spirit congeals not, except the Body be dissolved. As Raymond and all the Philosophers say, that the whole Magistry is nothing but Dissolution and Congelation by the Ignition, of which Operation many great and learned in this Science have been deceived, thinking to understand by confidence in their learning, the Circles of Nature, and the manner of Circulation.

It is then expedient to understand the manner of this Circulation, which verily is nothing else but to imbibe, refresh, or moisten the Compound in due weight or proportion with our Mercurial Water, which Philosophers command to be called Permanent Water, in which Imbibitions the Compound is digested and congealed to its natural accomplishment.

T'is most certain, that if Earth is to be made Fire, it must be subtilized or prepared, that it may be brought to greater simplicity, so is the Compound attenuated and subtilized, until the Fire bear rule therein.

And this Sublimation of Earth is made by Subtile Water, most highly sharp and penetrating, not having any feculency or odour, as Geber said in his Summary, "Such is the Water of our Argent Vive, sublimed and brought back to the nature of Fire, under the Vive, sublimed and brought back to the nature of Fire, under the name of Vinegar, Alum, Salt and many other sharp Liquors and other like things (even until now hid and covered), by which Waters bodies are subtilized, reduced and brought back to their First Matter, neighboring Stone, or Elixir of Philosophers, where it is to be known that as the Infant in the Mother's Belly ought to be nourished with natural nourishment, which is Menstrual Blood, to the end it may be increased and grow in quantity and stronger in quality, so ought our Stone to be nourished with its Fatness (as saith Aristotle) of its own proper nature and substance, but what this fatness is that is the nourishment of life, increase, and multiplication of our Stone the Philosophers have wholly concealed it, as being the greatest Secret they have sworn never to reveal or make manifest to anyone, otherwise than their writings declare, but have remitted it to the hand of God alone, to reveal or conceal as it shall please Him". Nevertheless this fat and viscous humidity, vivifying or giving Life, the Philosophers have called Mercurial Water, or Oil Permanent, a Water abiding the Fire and also a Divine Water, and is the Key and Foundation of the whole Work, and this Mercurial Water impregnated and permanent, it is said in Turba, "That Bodies must be wrought by flame of Fire that they may be broken, torn and debilitated", to wit, by this Water full of Fire wherein the Perfect Bodies are so much washed as it is dissolved and made Water, which is not Water of the Clouds, or Fountain Water, as think the ignorant and foolish Sophisters: But this our

Permanent Water which cannot yet be made permanent without the Body with which it is joined, that it resists the Fire without flying, wherein our Permanent Water is the whole Secret of our Stone, for by that Water is our Stone perfected, for that in it lodges the vivifying humidity of our Stone, as being the Life and Resurrection of it, of which our Secret Water it is said in Turba, "The Water alone does all, for it dissolves all, it congeals all that is congealable and divides and rends all without any other aid. It is that which Tinges and is Tinged". In brief, Our Work is no other thing than Vapour and Water, which is called whitening and rubifying and casting off the Blackness of the Bodies, which Philosophers have called Permanent Water, fixed and incorruptible and incombustible Oil, that cannot burn. T'is the matter which Philosophers have divided into two parts, one of which dissolves the Bodies by Calcination, that is, by reducing it into calx and by congealing itself and the other part of the said Water cleanses the Body from Blackness, Whitens and reduces it, makes it fluid and running in multiplying its parts.

This Water is called in Turba, "Most sharp Vinegar, and penetrating kindly by a vivifying heat, containing an invariable Tincture, which cannot be defaced or blotted out".

This Water is named by Artephius, temperate or the Moisture of the Wise, Wine of Choleric Youth. This Water is greatly concealed by the Philosophers under divers and various names, and is known but to few people. Hermes possessed it, and handled it, Alphidius hath treated of it, Morienus hath written of it, Lully understood it, Arnold perceived it, Raymond hath feasilly declared it, Geber knew it, the Text was not ignorant of it, Rasis, Avicen, Galen, Haley, and above all Albertus hath wisely hidden it. Dastin Bernard de Greves, Pythagoras, the Ancient Merlin, and Aristotle understood it well. In short this Water is crowned Victorious Secret, Celestial and Glorious Water, the last and final Secret for the nourishment of our Glorious Stone, without which it is never amended, increased, nor multiplied, for which Philosophers have concealed the manner of making it, as the Key of their Magistery, and in truth, I have read above one hundred books of this Art, and in none of them I found the perfecting of this Mercury and Permanent Water and have seen great and learned men in this Science, among whom I have not found one that had this secret, except one able Physician, who told me he had been 36 years in earnest prosecution before he obtained it.

Of this nature it is said that a double nature is given to it, to wit, of Sol and Luna, in the bowels of whom this Argent Vive is multiplied, as in the proper Belly of its Mother, lodged and purged, and converted into White Sulphur not burning in the action of the heat of the Fire, being therein regularly informed by Art and qualities of Sulphur, having been before introduced or placed in the said Argent Vive. So that this Mercurial Water is nothing else but the Spirit of Bodies converted into the nature of Quintessence giving virtue to our Stone and governing it, and the Stone of our Composition is the containing Matrix or expedient place, to wit, Mother Earth, or vessel of Nature, retaining the formative Virtue of the Stone, wherein natural heat is placed, which is formative Virtue issuing from the Vessel by the Fifth Spirit, wherefore it is called Mother and Nurse as giving natural Virtue to Sulphur, feeding and nourishing it.

This is our Composition, wherein this natural Vessel, whereto the Spirits are transmuted from nature to nature as they proceed, and so much the more as they are transmuted and altered in this Vessel retained so much, the remoter they are moved from their corruption and imperfection whatsoever, and the more they approach to the terms of purity and perfection, so long till they obtain the accomplishment of a Quintessence.

Wherefore they take, or are clothed with a New Nature, which is clean, White, pure, cleansed from all corrosiveness, and phlegmatic volatility.

In such affinity then of Vessel the humidity of the Spirit wherein the abovesaid is enclosed by its viscosity or glutinous nature is retained in adherence, or firm and natural conjunction and heat, as in its Radical Humidity mixt and mortified, and after Death revived by sublimation by a joyful deliverance in elevating itself wholly from a Saline and Bitter Nature.

Then it is mighty to sustain itself, nourish and multiply itself, as being already a kindled Fire and simple nature, which t'is convenient to nourish with Whey, to wit, its enlivening Humidity of which in part it was engendered, which is Permanent Water, Virgin's Milk or Aqua Vitae coming from the Vine, for they are wholly different. It is nevertheless called Aqua Vitae for that it vivifies our Stone to Resurrection, it is also called Blod incrudated, White Mentrueum, nourishment of the Child, Food of the heart, Water of the Sea, Food of the Dead, and Argent Vive of Philosophers depurated from feculent terrestriety by Philosophical Sublimation. After then our Compound is made, it should be placed in its Secret Vessel and decocted, or baked in a very soft heat moist or dry, and moistened and congealing soften till the Earth arise Foliated, which must be afterwards calcined and infinitely incrated in fixing with the said Water, which is called fixed incombustible Oil, till it flows and metls soon like unto wax, of which saith Raymond, "The manner of creation is, the Stone be sublimed with part of the reserved humidity which never leaves its Body, being mixed, with circulation gives true fusion", and afterwards he said, "It is commanded that thou moisten or refresh our Stone with its permanent Humidity, whereby its parts are clarified as appear, for after the perfect clearing or purgation of our Stone from all corruption, particularly the Sulphureous humours, to wit the unctuous combustibile fatness and phlegmatic vaporeity, the Stone is brought to its proper nature and substance, not burning, and without this Humidity, our Stone is never amended, nourished, augmented or multiplied".

It is to be noted also that our Stone in digestion is moved to all the colours in the World, but three are principal, of which good care and notice are to be taken, to wit, Black colour, which is first and it is the key of the Beginning of the Work; of the Second kind or degree, the White colour is the Second, and the Red is the third, whereof it is said that the thing of which the head is Red, the feet White, and the eyes Black is our Magistery.

Note then that when our Compound begins to be moistened with our Permanent Water, then is all the Composition turned like melted Pitch and is Black like a coal, and at this time is our Compound called Black Pitch, Burnt Soot, Melted Lead, Foul Laton, Magnesia, and the Black Bird. For there is seen a Black Cloud flying in the middle region of the vessel in desirable manner being elevated about the vessel, and at the bottom, the Matter melted like Pitch, of which saith James of the bough of St. Saturnia, a blessed Cloud flying about the vessel wherein the Sun is eclipsed, and Raymond says, "When this mass is thus Black then it is dead and deprived of Form, then it is said to be a dead Body, and out of good temperature, its Soul being separated from it, then is the humidity manifest in the colour of Black Quicksilver, and stinking, which before was dry and White, of good odour heating, cleansed from Sulphur by its first operation and is now depurating by this Second Operation."

And for this is thy Body deprived of Soul which it hath lost with its Splendour and marvelous lucidity which at first it had, and all now is Black and Ugly, wherefore Geber names it from its properties, stinking Black Spirit, occultly White and manifestly Black, naming it Living Water and Dry.

This Mass thus Blackened is the Key and sign of perfect invention of this manner of Work of the Second

Regimen of our most precious Stone, wherefore saith Hermes: "This Blessing being seen, believe that you are in a good Path, and have kept in the Right Way".

So that this Blackness in colour shows the true and right manner of working, for hereby the matter is made deformed and corrupt with a true Natural corruption from whence follows generation and real disposition in this Matter, to wit, the requirements of a new Form which for lucid serenity or clearness, beauty, purity, marvelous splendour and fragrant odour or great sweetness.

Now when the work of Blackness is accomplished we must come to the Work of Whiteness, which is one of the Roses in the Philosopher' Garden, by many desired, required and expected, but as above said before Whiteness appeareth, all the Colours that may be thought of are seen and perceived in this work, of which care need not be had, but only to Whiteness that must be expected with great constancy. The way nevertheless of working to the Black, to the White, and to the Red is always one, to wit, bake and decoct the Compound in feeding with our Permanent Water, to wit, decoct. Compound with Red, by which imbibitions and digestions is extracted from the Stone this middle Substance of Mercury, which is the whole perfection of our noble Mastery, in such manner that our Stone should be purged not only from sulphureousness but also from earthiness by sublimation of Water, Calcination of Earth, moistening and decocting of them by reduction, between distillation and calcinations, and after conjoining with proper Sulphur, by its measured natural heat decoct, or bake so long until it be congealed and deprived of all Sulphureous humidity by the union of natural heat and Fire thereto corresponding, and after it is sublimed into Sulphur most White like Snow.

By this it appears that our Stone contains two substances of One Nature, one volatile, the other Fixt, which, and either of which the Philosophers call Argent Vive, because in the operation of this Stone, the Stone ought to be separated from all combustibile and corrupt Sulphureity, and that there remains only the pure subtilty and middle Substance of Argent Vive congealed and depurated of all external Sulphur or strange corruption, and this depuration is made when the Body is turned into Spirit, and the Spirit into Body by reiterated calcinations, reduction, and sublimation, whereby is made the dissolution of the Body, and is but One Operation whereby all these things are performed, to wit, solution of Argent Vive fixed with congelation of certain parts of the Volatile, and Ablution thereof with Water proportioned (with Fire) and the congelation of the said Water into a Stone, by the medium and operation of Heat of the Male and the Female, then truly is born the Stone after the first conjunction of them and not before, as in Man and Woman by this operation is the Body divided, subtilized and diligently governed, till its subtile Soul is extracted from its solidity and turned into a thin attenuated and impalpable Spirit. Then the Body is made no Body, and the no Body is made a Body, and this is true, and the true invention of the rule of working.

It is to be known though all Bodies are to be dissolved by a penetrating Spirit, with which it is to be mixed and whereby without doubt is made a like Spiritual, and as this Spirit is sublimed it is named Water, which washeth itself and cleanseth as above said, in rising with a most subtile Substance, opening the corrupted parts and of it. And this Ascension Philosophers have called Distillation, Ablution, and Sublimation perfect and accomplished. The Stone is then vivified by the vivifying Spirit or natural Soul of which it was deprived in Blackness, and is now inspired, animated, resuscitated, reduced, and carried to its last end of subtilty and purity, and is a Stone, Crystalline, White as Snow, rising from the bottom of the vessel sticking to the sides of it, the remainder of its resting in the bottom of the vessel below this Crystalline Stone separated from its residence gathered apart and sublimed without the said residence for if you try to sublime it with its residence gathered apart and sublimed without the said residence for if you try to sublime it with

its residence you shall never make separation of them, and so your labour will be lost.

Sublime it then without its residence, and it is the White Foliated Earth of the White Sulphur not burning, congealing, and after perfectly fixing Mercury, cleansing all foul Bodies and perfecting the imperfect, reducing them to true Luna.

This Sulphur so sublimed, no whiteness in the world exceeds it, for it is divested of all corruptible things, and is a new nature, a Quintessence arising from the pure parts of the four Elements. T'is the Sulphur of Nature, Arsenic, not burning, the incomparable treasure, the Joy of Philosophers, and the Delight so much desired by them, the White, Clear and Foliate earth, the Bird of Hermes, the Daughter of the Great Secret, and the new White Black Bird whose Feathers exceed Crystalline Brightness, White as Snow, of clean subtilty and agility.

This Philosophical White Black Bird is of venerable virtue, for it is the Substance of the purest Substance in the world which is the simple Soul of the Stone, clean, noble, separated from all corporeal thickness and by great subtilty divested of all bodily grossness. This White Incombustible Sulphur it is convenient to calcine the space of its dry decoction, so long till it becomes most subtile powder, impalpable, deprived of all sulphureous humidity. Then let it be incerated with White Oil of Philosophers by little and little till it suddenly flow like wax, and without creation being finished, which is nothing but reduction, to fusion or melting the thing would not melt. Then is our Glorious White Stone of Philosophers finished, fusible and melting, White as Snow, of new verdure, persevering in the Fire, retaining and congealing mercury after fixing it, tingeing and transmuting all imperfect bodies of Metals into Luna, of which cast one part upon one thousand parts of Mercury or other imperfect Metal, it shall change it into better Silver, finer, purer and whiter than that of the Mines. The manner of Projection and Multiplication of the White and Red Stone are both one, but the multiplication may be done in two manners, one by projecting one part upon one hundred parts more into pure Luna or pure Gold. There are other ways more profitable and secret to multiply the Medicine in Projection, wherein I am at present silent, but by multiplication the Stone is augmented without end, to wit, by Digestion, animation and Imbibition with Mercurial Oil, which Oil is also named of the nature of Metals, and this multiplication is only done by Imbibing and refreshing the Stone with the said Mercurial Oil Permanent, by dissolving and congealing so often as one will, for the more the Stone is digested the greater is its Perfection, and the more it will transmute, for it will be more subtile. And herein is accomplished the White Celestial Rose, of good odour, embraced by all the Philosophers.

When the White Stone is accomplished, you must dissolve one part of it, and so calcine it (as some will have it) by long decoction till it becomes like impalpable Ashes, so soft not to be touched, coloured Citrine. Then imbibe it with the Red Oil till it become Rd as Coral, as Raymond saith in his Codicil in his Chapter on Calcination of the Earth, "Forget not to Calcine it in its kindled Fire".

The Matter of the Earth foreknown of thy Stone, with reiterated dissolution, distillation of Water, and calcinations of the Body till the Earth remain White, void of all humidity and after a longer and stronger continuation of the Fire and imbibition of the Water till it become like a Hyacinth in powder, impalpable to the touch, the sign of which is manifestly shown.

As to its last Calcination it remains deprived of all humidity, spoken of in the second principle process in the Second Regimen which is to take the Stone Red, of which saith Geber it is not without the addition of a thing tingeing (or Ferment) it, which Nature well knows, to wit, without it be imbibed and tinged with this

Celestial Water or Oil, of which says the Lily of the Philosophers, "Oh Celestial Nature, how dost thou turn our Bodies into Spirits, Oh Marvelous puissant who is above all, and surmounts all, and is the Vinegar which turns the Sol into true Spirit and Luna also, without which neither Black nor White nor Red can ever be produced in our work. For without this Nature is joined to our Body, which converts it into Spirit as Spiritual Fire, tingeing it with venerable Tincture that can never be blotted out".

This Water Hermes hath called the Water of Waters, Alphidius, Water of the Indian, Babylonian and Egyptian Philosophers. This Water whereby Bodies are turned into Spirits and their First Nature and Matter of our Stone, are never amended without it, but add to the White the White Water, let then the Red Stone be moistened with the Red Water to that end by long decoction or bathing, as by long imbibition, and by continual moistening, it be made as Red as Blood, the Hyacinth Scarlet or Ruby, shining as a Light in a dark place as a kindled Light.

And lastly, that our Stone be adorned with a Red Diadem, of which saith Diomedes, "Honour our King coming from the Fire with his Wife and take heed of burning them by too great heat, bake and decoct them sweetly that to the end they may be made Black, then and afterwards Citrine and Yellow, then Red, and last of all Tingeing Venom". For these are to be made by the division of the said Water, as said Egisue, "I command that you put not all the Water together but by little and little, and bake gently till the work be accomplished".

And so it will appear that the Stone will remain Red of a true Illuminated Redness, clear lively, melting like wad, by the Tincture whereof Vulgar or Argent Vive and all other imperfect Metals may be presently turned into true Sol much better than the Mines produce, wherein is accomplished our precious Stone, which is infinite Treasure to the Glory of God who lives and Reigns perpetually.

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CHANG PO-TUAN OF T'IENT'AI,

HIS WU CHÉN P'ÏEN, ESSAY ON THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRUTH

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF CHINESE ALCHEMY

BY TENNEY L. DAVIS AND CHAO YUN-TS'UNG





CHANG PO-TUAN

Picture reproduced from the *Lieh hsien ch'üan chuan*. In his hand the jade flower (*Hydrangea*) which he brought back from the spirit journey to Yang-chou.

## HIS WU CHÊN P'ÏEN, ESSAY ON THE UNDERSTANDING OF THE TRUTH

## A CONTRIBUTION TO THE STUDY OF CHINESE ALCHEMY

BY TENNEY L. DAVIS AND CHAO YÜN-TS'UNG

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## INTRODUCTION

a.) The *Wu chên p'ien* 悟真篇<sup>1</sup> (Essay on the Understanding of the Truth) of *Chang Po-tuan* 張伯端 was written more than nine hundred years later than the *Ts'an lung ch'i* 參同契<sup>2</sup> of *W'ei Po-yang* 魏伯陽, which is the earliest known treatise on alchemy. It is however, an important classic, for later Chinese alchemists wrote commentaries upon it, and these same commentators wrote works on alchemy which, like the *Wu chên p'ien*, had wide circulation and influence. The present translation, by *Chao Yün-ts'ung* 趙雲從, represents, we believe, the second case in which a Chinese alchemical treatise has been translated *in extenso* into a European language.<sup>3</sup> *Chang Po-tuan* (983-1082 A. D.) was a contemporary of Avicenna (980-1037); there is no reason for sup-

<sup>1</sup> For the romanization of Chinese words we have followed the spellings which are used in Giles' Chinese-English Dictionary, 2nd. ed., London, 1912. As this does not completely identify the words, we have printed the Chinese characters at the places of the first occurrence of the words. Later occurrences are indicated in the Index of Chinese Words. To facilitate indexing, the paragraphs of the Introduction are lettered alphabetically, a to z, then aa, ab, etc., and the poems of the translation are numbered. Chinese personal names are given in the Chinese manner, family name first.

<sup>2</sup> Translated by *Wu Lu-ch'iang* 吳魯強 with Introduction and Notes by Tenney L. Davis, *Isis*, 18, 210-289 (1932).

<sup>3</sup> It is hoped that a fairly complete job on the Inner Chapters of *Pao-p'u-tzu* 抱朴子 will soon be finished. Inner Chapters 4 and 16, translated by *Wu Lu-ch'iang*, have been published, *Proc. Amer. Acad. Arts and Sciences*, 76, 221-284 (1935). A translation of Inner Chapters 8 and 11 by *Ch'ên Kuo-fu* 陳國符 is in manuscript, and it is hoped that it will be published in due course along with translations by the same hand of Inner Chapters 2 and 7 and the autobiography of their author together with Brief Summaries of the other Inner Chapters.

posing that the Chinese and the Arab were acquainted with one another's work, but the *Wu chên p'ien* supplies abundant new evidence in support of the opinion that the fundamental alchemical doctrine of the Chinese and of the Arabs and later Europeans was the same. It resembles the *Ts'an lung ch'i* in containing no practical chemistry. The fact that it deals with theoretical alchemy makes it of especial interest for the student of the history of the transmission of ideas. It maintains and amplifies the doctrine of the *Ts'an lung ch'i* by setting forth clearly a dualistic theory of alchemy. It resembles the earlier work in making use of the *kuo* 卦 and the symbolism of the Book of Change, and in using Taoist language, but differs from it in showing the influence of Buddhism. It uses so many symbolic and metaphorical names for the two principles that it reminds one of the later European treatises on alchemy, say those of the seventeenth century, of such men as Count Michael Maier, Sendivogius, Eirenaeus Philalethes, and Samuel Norton who wrote not wholly for the purpose of expounding alchemical theory but rather in large part for the sake of the satisfaction which an artist derives from arranging his symbolism and imagery. The ninety-nine poems or songs of which the *Wu chên p'ien* consists are masterpieces of Chinese literary craftsmanship. All or certain ones of them, particularly those near the end of the Essay, were probably intended to be sung or chanted.

b.) The European alchemists wished to make gold from base metal, to prepare the Philosopher's Stone or transmutatory Powder of Projection, and in general were actuated by a desire for the gold itself because of its intrinsic value. The Elixir of Long Life or Universal Panacea, while a major objective, was commonly a secondary one. It was potable gold. Gold and the Philosopher's Stone alike were to be prepared by the interaction or combination of the two prime contrary princi-

ples, Sulfur and Mercury, masculine and feminine, positive and negative. The two were made to react by being heated together in a closed vessel, from which no material might escape, first with a gentle fire and then with a stronger one. The motives of the Chinese alchemists were different from those of the Europeans. They wished to prepare gold because of its magical efficacy. The eating of food out of vessels of gold, of real gold whether native or the product of the alchemical process, would confer longevity upon the eater. And the eating of gold itself, *chin tan* 金丹 (gold medicine), would convert the eater into a *hsien* 仙 or supernatural immortal endowed with extraordinary powers. But the alchemical process was the same. That which is described in the thirteenth century *Speculum Alchemiae* of the real or pseudo Roger Bacon is the same as that which *Hsi Po-yang*, who called his principles *yin* 陰 and *yang* 陽, Moon and Sun, Tiger and Dragon, described in the second century in the *Ts'an Yang ch'i*. *Chang Po-tuan* describes the same process, for example in the eighteenth poem of the *Hu chên p'ien*, where he says that the *wu* 烏 (crow) (representing the Sun or the positive principle) and the *lu* 兔 (rabbit) (representing the Moon or the negative principle) are to be put together into the pot and treated as in cooking. "When you drive the two things into the yellow way, there is no reason why the Gold Medicine will not form."

c.) After the nature of the two contrary principles had been established, the theory made clear and the process described, the alchemists turned their ingenuity, or a part of it, to the devising of synonyms, similes, symbolism, and imagery by which the two principles might be represented. The great similarity between Chinese and European alchemical symbolism has been pointed out,<sup>4</sup> and has been taken as confirmatory evidence of the identity of Chinese and European alchemical theory. The *Hu chên p'ien* supplies further

evidence, for *Chang Po-tuan* uses many different names<sup>5</sup> and symbols to represent the two prime materials for the preparation of *Chin tan*. Some of these are tabulated below.

Yin	Yang
Moon	Sun
Tiger	Dragon
Mercury	Lead
<i>Kua</i> of <i>li</i> 離 (☲)	<i>Kua</i> of <i>k'an</i> 坎 (☵)
<i>K'un</i> 坤 (Earth)	<i>Ch'ien</i> 乾 (Heaven)
<i>Pai hsüeh</i> 白雪 (White Snow), <i>ch'i</i> 氣 (ethereal essence) of Tiger	<i>Huang ya</i> 黃芽 (Yellow Sprout), <i>ch'i</i> of Dragon
<i>Ch'ü nü</i> 姮女 (Elegant Lady), the beloved bride, the true mercury of <i>li</i> , fluid of wood.	<i>Chin kung</i> 金公 (Golden Fellow), the aged husband, the true lead.
Quicksilver, <i>yin</i> substance, <i>ch'i</i> of Tiger	<i>Yü jui</i> 玉槩 (Jade Bud) <i>yang</i> substance, <i>ch'i</i> of Dragon
<i>T'u</i> (rabbit); <i>shan</i> 蟾 (Toad)	<i>H'u</i> (Crow)
<i>Shui</i> 水 (Water)	<i>Chin</i> 金 (Metal)
Wood	Gold
Obedient	Compassionate
Internal	External
West	East
Host	Guest
Tortoise	Snake; Phoenix

The use of the term, lead, to designate the positive principle, suggests the possibility of a relationship between Chinese alchemy and Alexandrian chemistry, but the point is one which we wish to investigate more fully and to discuss at a later time.

d.) The *Lieh hsien ch'üan chuan* 列仙全傳 (Complete Biographies of the Immortals) contains a biography and a picture of *Chang Po-tuan*. Since the biography is a coherent and interesting story, even though it is a secondary account, we

<sup>4</sup>In a paper on "Pictorial Representations of Alchemical Theory," *Isis*, 28, 73-86 (1938). In this paper a page from an alchemical text of *Ch'ên Chih-hsi* 陳致處, otherwise *Ch'ên Kuan-wu* 陳觀吾 or *Shang-yung* 上陽子, is reproduced, a page which pictures a "Diagram of the Medicine-Laboratory of *Tzu-yang* 紫陽." The diagram is a table of contraries, from which fact it is inferred that the alchemical laboratory is the place where the contraries are brought together. We now know that the *Tzu-yang* in question is the same man as *Chang Po-tuan* to whom the present paper is devoted.

<sup>5</sup>There is confusion and apparent contradiction in the case of *nü tzu* 女子 (lady) who dresses in green and who, *Hsieh Tao-kuang* 薛道光 says, is the *ch'i* of Dragon (i. e. *yang*) and in the case of *lang chün* 郎君 (husband) who puts on mourning white and who, the same commentator states, is the *ch'i* of Tiger (i. e. *yin*) (Poem 17). *Lang chün* is elsewhere (Poem 86) represented as the essence of Gold (*yang*). *Hsieh Tao-kuang* also says that *lang chün* is *yang tan* 陽丹 and *Shang-yung-tzu* that it is the lead of *k'an* (*yang*).

prefer to quote it first, and afterwards to discuss the material which is given in the gazetteers.

e.) *Chang Po-tuan* was born at *T'ien'ai* 天台. When he was a young boy he loved study. When he was mature he was taught the *Tao* 道 of *huan yüan* 混元\* (Mixed Elements) but did not yet understand it thoroughly. He sought for it very diligently, and made journeys in all directions. In the second year of the reign of *Hsi-ning* 熙寧 (1068-1078 A. D.) of the *Sung* 宋 dynasty, he travelled into *Sai-ch'uan* 四川 and met a man named *Liu Hai-ch'an* 劉海蟾 by whom he was instructed in the secrets of the fire and the season for compounding *chin i huan tan* 金液還丹 (Gold Fluid Returned Medicine). He then changed his name to *P'ing-shu* 平叔 (Peaceful Younger) and assumed the title of *Tzū-yang* (Purple Yang). Meanwhile he met a monk named *Ting-hui* 定慧 who had been trained in the deepest doctrines of Buddhism. This monk was able to behave like a deity and to travel back and forth over a few hundred miles of distance in a few minutes of time. The monk became a sympathetic friend of *Tzū-yang*.

f.) One day *Tzū-yang* said to the monk: "Buddhist Teacher, can you take a journey with me to a far distance today?" The monk replied: "Yes." *Tzū-yang* said: "Where do you wish to go?" The monk answered: "I should like to go to *Yang-chou* 揚州 where we may enjoy the jade flowers." *Tzū-yang* and the monk then went into a quiet room and sat down face to face with their eyes closed. After sitting Buddha-wise for a while, *Tzū-yang* arrived at *Yang-chou* — but the monk was there ahead of him. They walked around the flowers three times. *Tzū-yang* said: "Let us take a flower for a memento." Then each of them took a flower, and came back. After a while *Tzū-yang* and the Buddhist Teacher yawned and then awoke. *Tzū-yang* said: "Buddhist Teacher, where is your jade flower?" The Buddhist Teacher looked in his sleeve, and the sleeve was empty. However *Tzū-yang* took out his own jade flower from his sleeve, and enjoyed the flower with the monk.

g.) *Tzū-yang's* disciples then asked him: "The Buddhist Teacher and our teacher went together on a spirit-journey. Why this difference that one has a flower and the other has not?" *Tzū-yang* replied: "When I learned my *chin tan* (gold medicine) Great *Tao*, I trained both in *hsing* 性 (nature of man) and in *ming* 命 (life). Therefore, when (the *Tao* is) gathered, it takes material forms, and, when dispersed, it takes the form of *ch'i* (ethereal essence). Wherever I arrive, since I am a genuine spirit, I take a visible material form. This is known as the spirit of *yang*. The monk's

training sought to attain the effect quickly: he did not learn the *ming*. Therefore, wherever he goes, men cannot see his material form or his shadow. This is known as the spirit of *yin*. The *yin* spirit cannot move material things.

h.) In the reign of *Ying-tsung* 英宗 (1064-1068 A. D.) (*Sung* dynasty) he followed *Lung-f'u-lu-kuang* 龍岡陸公 to live at *Kwei-lin* 桂林. Later he wandered to *Ch'iu-lung* 秦隴. Still later he visited *Ma Ma Ch'u-hou* 馬默處厚 at *Ho-lung* 河東. At this time he gave *Ch'u-hou* 處厚 his writing, *Wu chên p'ien*, and said: "The learning of my life is here. I hope that you will be able to circulate the book. Someone will make use of it, and understand its meaning."

i.) In the summertime of the fifth year of the reign of *Yüan-feng* 元豐 (1078-1086 A. D.), he sat himself down Buddha-wise, and died at the age of ninety-nine years. His disciples burned the body, and obtained thousands of *shé li* 舍利 (relics). The larger ones were as large as water-chestnuts, and had a jade-green color. People who knew these things said: "These are the *shé li* which are called as beautiful as gold."

j.) Seven years later, *Liu Fêng-chên* 劉奉真 met *Tzū-yang* who came out from *Wang-wu* 王屋 (Wang's House, name of a mountain). *Tzū-yang* left a stanza of poetry, and then went away. *Tzū-yang* had said that *Huang Mien-chung* 黃勉仲, *Wei Yang-yü* 維揚子 and he himself were stars of *Tzū-wei* 紫微 (a star god invoked when building), acquiring the title of *Chiu-huang-chên-jên* 九皇真人 (True Men of the Ninth Kingdom) (Very Almighty True Men) because they made mistakes in proof-reading certain books, so that they are banished to the human world. Now in the city the stars which are seen brightly luminous are the six stars.

k.) With the kind assistance of *Dr. Hsü Chia-lin* 徐家麟 Librarian of the Harvard Yenching Institute, we have been able to find further information about *Chang Po-tuan* in the county and provincial records.\*

\* *Chê-chiang f'ang chih* 浙江通志 (General Record of Chê-chiang Province), *chüan* 卷 200, section *hsien* and Buddhist, part *T'ai-chou fu* 台州府, written between the ninth and thirteenth years of the *Yung-chêng* 雍正 reign (1723-1736) by *Chi T'ung-yün* 稽曾筠 and others. *T'ai-chou fu chih* 台州府志 (Record of the District of T'ai-chou), *chüan* 100, section *fang wai* 方外, written during the *Kuang-hsi* 光緒 reign (1875-1908) by *Wang Chou-guo* 王舟瑤 and others. *Sai-ch'uan f'ang chih* 四川通志 (General Record of Sai-ch'uan Province), *chüan* 167, section *hsien* and Buddhist, part *Ch'eng-tu* 成都, written between the seventeenth and nineteenth years of the *Chia-ch'ing* 嘉慶 reign (1796-1821) by *Li Luann-hsiün* 李燮寅 and others. *Shan-hai f'ang chih* 山西通志 (General Record of Shanxi Province), *chüan* 160, section *fang*

\* *Hsieh Tao-kuang* says: "There was something formed by mixing before the heaven and the earth. This thing has been put into words constrainedly and is known as the *Tao* of *huan yüan*."

† Jade flowers, *ch'uang hua* 瓊花, a kind of *Hortensia* (i. e. *Hydrangea*) said to confer immortality if eaten.

l.) The county city of *T'ien-l'ai* is situated about 150 kilometers southeast of *Hang-chou* 杭州 (*Hangchow*), the capital of *Chê-chiang* 浙江 province, near the coast of China. The famous *T'ien-l'ai* mountain is northeast of the city. About thirty kilometers south of *T'ien-l'ai* city is the county city of *Lin-hai*, the old name of which was *T'ai-chou*, the county city of *T'ai-chou-fu* (the District of *T'ai-chou*) of which District *T'ien-l'ai* was once a part.

m.) The *Chê-chiang t'ung chih* (General Record of *Chê-chiang* Province) states that *Chang Po-tuan*, *P'ing-shu*, acquired the title of *Tzû-yang*, that he was born at *T'ai-chou*, and that he met *Liu Hai-ek'an* by whom he was instructed in the method of *chin tan*. It says that he wrote down all that he knew in the *Wu chên p'ien*, but does not mention any other of his writings. The General Record of *Chê-chiang* Province and the *Shan-hsi t'ung chih* (General Record of *Shensi* Province) both repeat the whole story of the spirit-journey with the Buddhist monk, in language identical with that of the *Lich hsien ch'üan chuan*, and state that *Chung Po-tuan* died in the fifth year of *Yüan-fêng* at the age of ninety nine years.

n.) The General Record of *Chê-chiang* Province further states that the County Record of *Lin-hai* tells that *Chang Po-tuan* was a citizen of the district, that he had another name *P'ing-shu*, and that he was for a time magistrate or administrative officer of the district. He liked to eat fish. When he was employed in his office, his food was sent to him from his home. His colleagues one day hid his fish in the upper part of the room. *P'ing-shu* suspected that it has been stolen by the

maid, and went back to beat her. The maid, terrified, killed herself. Later, a worm dropped down from the rafters. *P'ing-shu* examined it, and found that it had come from decayed fish. He then regretted the matter deeply, and said: "My documents concerning law cases have filled all of the boxes; yet I do not know how many of these cases may be like that of the stolen fish." He wrote a poem, as follows, and burned up all of his law papers.

o.) I have written on my law papers for many decades. The cases in which right seems wrong and wrong seems right have been thousands of thousands. Moreover, when one family keeps warm and has enough to eat, there must be hundreds of families which are left in want. Half a life of high rank makes enmity for generations. From now on, the golden seal tied with purple ribbon is finished (for me). I must again wear my straw slippers and use my bamboo stick—and let my life pass happily. If anyone chooses to ask me the way to *P'êng-lai* 蓬萊, I shall reply to him that it is the clouds on the blue mountains and the moon in the sky.

p.) He was found guilty of burning the documents, and was exiled. In exile he met a man who was addicted to the eating of salt, and often ate ten catties at one time. *P'ing-shu* served this man faithfully. When they separated, the man said to *Po-tuan* 伯端: "Whenever you meet misfortune, shout three times 'My teacher!', 'My teacher!', 'My teacher!'; then your misfortune will disappear." Later he visited the spring, *Pai-pu-chi* 百步溪 (Hundred Steps Spring) on the mountain, *Pai-pu-ling* 百步嶺. The weather was hot; he washed himself—and went away to *hsien*. Later a temple of *Tzû-yang-chên-jên* was built on *Pai-pu-ling*, a sign at the gate saying that it was "The place where *Tzû-yang* became a *hsien*." The story that *Chang Po-tuan* became a *hsien* is reported in the portion of the Provincial Record which relates to *hsien*. The historian states that its truth has been debated.

wei, part 1, written in the eighteenth year of the *Kuang-hsi* reign by *Chang Hsi* 張璽 and others. *Ssu K'u ch'üan shu tsung mu ti yü* 四庫全書總目提要 (Abstract of the Comprehensive Treatise on Books of the Four Cabinets), written in 1782 by *Chi Yün* 紀昀 and others, contains an account of *Chang Po-tuan* and an evaluation of the *Wu chên p'ien* in division 120 子, sub-division 56, part Taoists, vol. 146. The great encyclopedia, *Ku chin ta shu chi ch'üan* 古今圖書集成 compiled by *Chiang T'ing-hsi* 蔣廷錫 and a committee of scholars under the personal supervision of the Emperor *K'ang-hsi* 康熙 (1662-1722) contains in division 30 *wo hui p'ien* 博物彙篇, sub-division *chên ti tien* 神異典, *chüan* 252, section *shên hsien* 神仙, sub-section *lich ch'üan* 列傳, part 29, *Sung* 1, material on *Chang Po-tuan* from the County Record of *Lin-hai* 臨海 and from the General Records of *Shan-hsi* 山西 and *Shan-hsi* 陝西 (*Shensi*) Provinces.

q.) The *Shan-hsi t'ung chih* 山西通志 (General Record of *Shan-hsi* Province) reports the same story as the *Lich hsien ch'üan chuan*, but in an abbreviated form, and omits the story of the Buddhist monk and the spirit journey.

r.) The *T'ai-chou fu chih* (Record of the District of *T'ai-chou*) appears to contain the most reliable story written by the best historian. It states that *Chang Po-tuan* was born at *T'ai-chou*, that he had another name, *P'ing-shu*, and acquired the title *Tzû-yang*, that he visited *Ch'êng-tu* the capital of *Ssu-ch'üan*, and met *Liu Hai-ek'an*

from whom he learned the method of compounding *tan* 丹. He wrote all that he learned of the secret in eighty-one poems (we find ninety-nine) entitled *Wu chên p'ien*—this from the record of the city of *Ch'ih-ch'êng* 赤城 which is near *T'ai-chou*—and gave the book to *Ma Mo Ch'u-hou* of *Fu-fêng* 扶風 (a city of *Shensi* Province) saying: "The learning of all of my life is here." Later generations regard the book as "one of the books of the Taoist ancestors." *Chang Po-tuan* died at the age of ninety-nine years. Afterwards a temple of *Tzŭ-yang-chên-jên* was built on *Pai-pu-ling*, and a School of *hsien* of *T'ien-t'ai* flourished there, followers of his teaching.

s.) An extra note written by the same historian is as follows. "It is stated in the County Record of *Lin-hai* that *Po-tuan* encountered an incident. Because of his eating fish, he made a mistake on his maid, and the maid died of it. He was found guilty and went to *hsien* at *Pai-pu-ch'i*. This account does not agree with that recorded in the Record of the City of *Ch'ih-ch'êng* and is not found in *Fang wai chih* 方外志 (Local Extra Record). I suspect that this story is not the actual fact but was so recorded merely on the rumors of the local vulgarians, and for that reason I do not dare to copy it here."

t.) The *Wu chên p'ien* is discussed in the *Saï k'u ch'uan shu tsung mu t'i yao* (Abstract of the Comprehensive Treatise on Books of the Four Cabinets), written in 1782 by *Chi yün* and others, in a manner which is of especial interest to us because it shows how the Chinese have evaluated the book.

u.) The *Wu chên p'ien* was written by *Chang Po-tuan* of the *Sung* and was commented upon by *Wêng Pao-kuang* 翁葆光 and *Tai Ch'i-tsung* 戴起宗 (as in our *Ming* 明 edition described below). *Po-tuan* had another name *P'ing-shu*. He was born at *T'ien-t'ai*. He himself says that he was in *Saï-ch'uan* during the *Hsi-ning* reign, where he met a stranger who taught him the secret of *tan*. He died at *Chin-hu* 荆湖 during the reign of *Yüan-fêng*. The common people say that he became a *hsien*.

v.) This book describes the essentials of *chün tan* and is considered as important as the *Ts'an t'ung ch'i* as one of the real ancestors of Taoism. The book says that one must know the sources of the native medicines. The direction for seeking them is in the southwest of your town (cf. Poem No. 7.). The ideas are like those of the *Ts'an t'ung ch'i* that things which are produced in three days are *hsün* 巽 (a *kua*). *Chên* 震 (a *kua*) grows in the direction west of *k'eng* 庚 (a symbolic number). The book says that in case the whole contents weighs one catty, then each component should be

one half of a catty (No. 7.). This resembles the statement in the *Ts'an t'ung ch'i* that the *ts'ui* 兌 (a *kua*) of the first part is eight and the *kên* 艮 (a *kua*) of the last part is also eight. The book says that three, five and one are written only with three numbers the meaning of which has been understood rarely by workers whether of ancient or of recent times (No. 14). This is like the statement in the *Ts'an t'ung ch'i* that three, five and one are the supreme essentials of heaven and earth, and may be imparted by oral instruction but cannot be written on paper. The book says that fire is produced from wood, the inflammability of which however, is hidden, and that to overcome this difficulty it is advised to seek for *chün kung* (No. 41). It resembles the *Ts'an t'ung ch'i* in teaching that *ho ch'ê* 河車 (river car) and *ch'ü nã* (elegant lady), when they possess fire, will fly. If one wishes to control them, *huang yu* (yellow sprout) supplies the means. The rest of the work is also interpreted correspondingly.

w.) When the book began to be known by the people, the Taoists transmitted it from hand to hand but the Confucianists practically never gave instruction in it. During the reign of *Ch'üan-tsu* 乾道 (1165-1174 A. D.), *Wêng Pao-kuang* wrote the first commentary, and divided the work into three parts. At a later time *Wêng's* commentary was erroneously supposed to have been written by *Hsieh Tao-kuang*, and *Wêng's* name was accordingly suppressed. During the reign of *Chih-shun* 至順 (1330-1333 A. D.), *Tai Ch'i-tsung* got the old book, restored *Wêng's* name to *Wêng's* commentaries, and himself wrote another commentary on the work.<sup>19</sup> It has never been heard that these two men became as light as feathers and ascended to the sky.

x.) We have worked with two editions of the *Wu chên p'ien*. The earlier *Ming* edition with commentaries by *Tai Ch'i-tsung* and *Wêng Pao-kuang* comprises three volumes of a twenty-four volume collection of works on alchemy, *Chün tan chêng li tu ch'üan* 金丹正理大全 (Comprehensive Account of the Genuine Preparation of the Gold Medicine) printed during the reign of the *Ming* Emperor *Ying-tsung* 英宗 with the reign title *Ch'êng-t'ung* 正統 (1436-1450 A. D.). In this edition the text is accompanied by an author's preface dated the year of *i wu* 乙卯 of the reign of *Hsi-ning* (1068-1078 A. D.) of the *Sung*

<sup>19</sup> *Wêng Pao-kuang* was also named *Yüan-ming* 淵明 and had the title *Wu-ming-tzu* 無名子. He was born at *Hsiang-ch'uan* 象川.

<sup>20</sup> *Tai Ch'i-tsung*, also named *T'ung-fu* 同甫 was born at *Chi-ch'ing-tu* 集慶路. He was a Confucian teacher and at one time administrative officer of *Shao-hsing* 紹興 in *Ch-chiang* Province.

<sup>21</sup> One of the prefaces of our *Ch'ing* 清 edition emphasizes the fact that *Hsieh Tao-kuang's* commentaries were mistaken for *Wêng's* commentaries.

dynasty, "written by *Chang Po-tuan P'ing-shu* of *T'ien t'ai*." The later *Ch'ing* edition comprises three volumes printed in the fifteenth year of *Ch'ien-lung* 乾隆 (1736-1796 A. D.), hence 1750 A. D. The text is accompanied by the commentaries of *Hsieh Tao-kuang*, *Lu Shu* 陸默 otherwise *Tzū-yeh* 子野 and *Shang-yang-tzū*, and by two author's prefaces, the first of which is identical with the preface of the *Ming* edition. The second, and more interesting, of the prefaces has been translated in full, as follows:

y.) I feel that a man is born into this world because of an error by which he acquires his body. Since he has his body, he then encounters misfortunes. If he did not have his material body, how could misfortunes affect him? Whenever a man wishes to avoid misfortune he ought to embrace the supreme *Tao*. If he wishes to embrace the supreme *Tao*, he ought to understand clearly *pên hsün* 本心 (original moral nature). Therefore, *hsün* 心 is the entity (being) of *Tao*, and *Tao* is the embodiment of *hsün*. When a man is able to observe *hsing* 性 (nature of man) and to understand *hsün*, then the perfect round and shining body will appear naturally. The use of *wei wei* 無爲 (not-doing) will succeed naturally. He will not need to consume his energies, but will pass over to the other bank immediately. If he does not possess a shining mirror of *hsün* and a clear wonderful pearl (i. e. manner, expression, appearance), how then can he separate promptly all of the faces without touching them with the least particle of dust?—and how can he retain the germinating power of *Hsin*?—and how can he know the matter of *wei shêng* 無生 (non-living)?

x.) Moreover, those persons who apprehend and attain *Tao*—their bodies will not involve their *hsing* to disadvantage. Their circumstances will not confuse their truth. How then can they be hurt by swords and weapons, by a tiger or a rhinoceros, by fire or flood? A clever man's *hsün* resembles a shining mirror which reflects but does not retain the light. He is able to make changes according to the environment, to keep in tune but not to sing himself. Therefore, he can overcome material things without damage to himself. This is the so-called wonderful *Tao* of the unexcelled and supreme truth.

aa.) Originally, *Tao* had no name. The sages named it artificially. Originally, *Tao* had no word. The sages put it into a word artificially. Consequently, the name and the word resemble silence. Hence, the common people cannot apprehend its being, and themselves be led to the truth. Therefore, the sages have created the teaching and built up words in order to make the *Tao* manifest. Hence, *Tao* is made manifest by words, and words are forgotten by *Tao*.

ab.) Alas, this *Tao* is most perfect and most subtle. The common people are not intelligent enough. They hold to their material bodies, and desire to live, and

are afraid to die. Finally, they have difficulty in understanding. *Huang-ti* 黃帝 and *Lao-tzū* 老子 took pity on their incompetence, and accordingly gave them the secret of long life in order to satisfy their wants and to develop them gradually.

ac.) I know that the essential of long life is *chün tan*, and the essentials of *chün tan* are *shên shui* 神水 (spiritual water) and *hua ch'ih* 華池 (beautiful pond). Therefore the teachings of *Tao tē* 道德 (Way of Virtue) and of *Yin fu* 陰符 (Amulets of Yin) are able to diffuse throughout the world. Presumably the people want to live, but the words are obscure and the principle is difficult. Even though the disciples read the writings, yet they do not comprehend the meaning. If they do not meet a *chih jên* 至人 (supreme man) to instruct them orally in the secret, I suppose that they will make hundreds of guesses; they will not in the end be able to achieve the matter and prove its efficacy. Is it not like this: that the number of disciples is like the number of the hairs of a horse, while the successful achievers are as scarce as unicorns?

ad.) *Po-tuan* (the author) (on a certain date) visited *Ch'eng-tu* (the capital of *Sou-chuan*) and met a teacher by whom he was taught the method of compounding *tan*. In the same year the teacher had a breakdown. Afterwards, he (*Po-tuan*) three times gave instruction to people, and three times he suffered misfortune—all within twenty days. Thereupon, he remembered his teacher's warning that whoever should loose his bridle and loek was to be given instruction; to others it was not permissible to give it. Afterwards, he (*Po-tuan*) wished to write commentaries on famous books, but he feared that the followers of *Tao* would not believe him. Consequently, he wrote this *Wu chên p'ien*, describing *tan* medicine from beginning to end. After he had finished this book, disciples rapidly gathered about him. He recognized their earnestness, and permitted no concealment of the secret. Accordingly, he selected his subject and instructed them in it. However, the disciples whom he was teaching were not persons of great social rank or of influence by which they could save one from danger or from sinking to the bottom; nor were they successful in life, nor able to practice benevolence and understand *Tao*.

ae.) Formerly he (*Po-tuan*) suffered again and again from misfortune, but he did not recognize it until the third time. He then regretted his earlier errors. He knew that the secret of the great *tan* is the simplest and the easiest, even though stupid common people were able to acquire it and to practice it, and by means of it were able to penetrate to the place of the sages. Therefore, the will of heaven loved the secret and did not permit it to be taught to those who were not the right ones. However, *Po-tuan* did not heed the words of the teacher and repeatedly disclosed the secret. Having his material body, he frequently encountered calamities for that reason. This was a severe punishment from heaven which arrived promptly. He said: "Should I not be afraid and control myself? From this time

onward, I must keep my mouth closed and my tongue motionless, even though a *ting* 鼎 and a kettle (punishment with hot oil) are before me, or a sword is upon my neck. I shall not dare to blab again."

af.) The *W'u chên p'ien* sings of the great *tan* and the medicine, and describes the details of the fire and the season. Nothing is omitted. Those who love the art and have in their bones the qualities of *hsien* will read it and will themselves find it intelligible. They will find the meaning in the writing if they examine it critically. This will be as good as oral instruction from *Po-tuan*. Moreover, this book is a gift from heaven and is not alone the private instruction of *Po-tuan*.

ag.) At the end of the Essay he (*Po-tuan*) sings and chants about the *fa* 法 (method, technique, Buddhist practice) of seeing *hsing*. This is the so-called *Tao* of *wu wei* and *miao chiao* 妙覺 (super-sense, wonderful awakening). Moreover, the *Tao* of *wu wei*, which regards the equalizing of things as *hsin*, does not hold it a serious error if a secret is disclosed. Why do the common people who are sometimes rich in endowments and sometimes poor, who are sometimes intelligent and sometimes stupid, hear a single note and then confuse it into different tunes? Therefore, when the Buddha demonstrated his divinity, that was only one degree (degree of rank among seldoms). Those who have heard of this explain it in many ways and make it a matter of three degrees. Anyone who has a keen mind and who reads this Essay will know that *Po-tuan* has acquired the highest degree from the sixth in line from *Ta-mo* 達磨 (a Buddha) and has been able to understand thousands of *fa* from hearing a single sentence. If the reader still retains the mental attitude of a common person and has only mediocre knowledge, that is not the fault of *Po-tuan*.

ah.) The date is in the year *wu wu* 戊午 (1078 A. D.) of the reign of *Yüan-fêng* (1078-1086 A. D.), the second month of summer, the day of *wu yin* 戊寅. Written by *Chang Po-tuan P'ing-shu*.

ai.) In addition to the *W'u chên p'ien* we have at hand two other works ascribed to *Chang Po-tuan*, namely *Yü ch'ing chün sù ch'ing hua pi wên chün pao nei liu tan chüeh* 玉清金簡青華秘文金寶內鍊丹訣 (The Secret of Compounding Internal *Tan* from the Secret Papers in the Golden Clear Jade Box of *Ch'ing Hua*), 3 vols., *Ming* printing (probably not the work of *Chang Po-tuan*) and *Chün tan sù p'ai t'ü* 金丹四百字 (Four Hundred Word *Chün Tan*), 1 vol., the text of *Chang Po-tuan* with the commentaries of one writer in our *Ming* edition and of one writer and two disciples in our *Ch'ing* edition). Neither of these works is mentioned in the official histories which we have consulted. But the second appears to be genuine. We hope to report upon it more fully at a later time.

aj.) The translation of the *W'u chên p'ien* and of the other material from the Chinese is the work of *Chao Yün-t'ung*. We have gone over it together word by word, and have taken every pains to make the translation as literal as possible. We have discussed all points together, and each of us has profited by the advice and suggestions of the other. We are grateful to Professor James R. Ware of Harvard University for reading the manuscript, for helpful suggestions, and for procuring the use of the Chinese type.

## TRANSLATION

### PART I

#### POEMS OF FOUR RHYMES

##### Sixteen Poems to Serve as Criteria for Two-Eight, Making a Catty<sup>1</sup>

1. If one does not seek after the great *Tao* (Way) in order to release himself from the wrong mode of life, he will finally lose his chance of possessing the talent—and is not to be regarded as a wise man. A hundred years of living is but a transient moment, the length of which resembles only a spark struck from a stone. The fate of life is like a bubble floating on water. Those who know nothing but income, emolument, fame, and rank will soon see their faces turning pale and their bodies degenerating. I suppose that the gain of money is capable of filling the valleys; however this non-permanent possession cannot purchase the things which do not come back.

2. Although life at best has a period of a hundred years, there is not a single known method by which one may be able to anticipate or to control his fate for a long or for an untimely end, for happiness or for suffering. (For example,) a man was actually riding on horseback yesterday, and this morning he is laid in his coffin. The beautiful wife and the possessions which he left are now no longer his, but the evil (which he did to get his possessions) will not permit him to be overlooked. The great medicines which await the search will not search for you. If you have them in hand and do not work at compounding them, you are merely ignorant.

3. If you are learning to be a *hsien* (immortal), you should learn to be a heavenly *hsien*. The most accurate means (for the purpose) is *chün tan*

<sup>1</sup> "Two-Eight Making a Catty" as sixteen ounces makes up a Chinese pound.



(gold medicine). The two things, when put into contact with each other, will indicate harmonious properties. The Tiger and the Dragon locate at the places where the *wu hsing* 五行 (five elements) are perfected. I desire to send *wu ssi* 戊巳 as a matchmaker to make them husband and wife and to bring them into a union from which real happiness will arise. Wait for the success of the compounding, and you will return to see the north gate of the Imperial palace. You will be able to ride on a phoenix's back, to fly high into the cloud and the light of the sky.

4. This method is very, very efficacious and true because it is developed according to a new idea of my own which is different from that of others. I know that topsy-turvy-ness is caused by *li* and *k'an*.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, who can tell which portion will float and which portion will sink, which will be the host and which will be the guest? When we wish to detain (fix) mercury of red (cinnabar?) in the golden *ting* (tripod, furnace), we must first put the silver of water (quicksilver?) into the *yü ch'ih* 玉池 (jade pond). The wonderfully effective management of the fire will not be (completed) in a single morning. A wheel of moon will appear in the deep gulf.

5. The Tiger is dancing, the Dragon is flying, the wind roars and the storm rages violently. The mysterious pearl forms in the favored central position. It is like the ripening of fruit on the tree and the birth of the foetus from the womb, for the former is certain to ripen and the latter certain to be born. (This has been agreed) by all authorities, both of the North and of the South, and of the *kua* and of the *hsiang* 象 (the lines which compose the *kua*). The fire and the season are to be maintained day and night so that they will conform to the principle of heaven. It is known that the great work can be carried out in cities, and that it is unnecessary to watch over solitude in large mountains.

6. Everyone has a chance of getting the medicine of long life, but unfortunately most people are unintelligent and allow the medicine to be wasted. *Kan lu* 甘露 (sweet dew) is produced by the combination of heaven and earth, and *huang ya* (yellow sprout) is formed by the interlocking of *k'an* and *li*. Frogs, living in a well, can never see the abode of dragons high in the sky; orioles, flying so low, know nothing about the

nests of phoenixes; (and people who are short-sighted will never see the medicines). *Tau* when ripened will give a man plenty of gold. One need not then pay too much attention to such matters as the cutting of wood or the burning of grass (for the cooking of food).

7. One must know the sources of the native medicines. The direction for seeking them is in the southwest of your town. Lead will form at the hour of *kwei sheng* 癸生 (belong-to-growth), and it should be collected as soon as it has just appeared. Gold at the hour of *wang yüan* 望遠 (after-the-full-moon) (long exposed) becomes worthless and cannot be tasted at all. (When you have procured the right lead,) put it into an earthen crucible, close the latter tightly and then add to it the proper proportion of *liu chu* 流珠 (flowing pearl) (mercury?). (In case) the whole contents weighs one catty, then each component should be one half of a catty. The fire and the season are regulated according to the principle of *yin* and *yang*.

8. Do not compound the Three Yellows and the Four Spirits.<sup>3</sup> Medicines of vegetable origin are still more different from the real medicines. *Yin* and *yang*, when they are of the same sort, will interlock with each other. Two-eight, the right proportion, will arouse naturally the affinity (of the constituents). At the moment when *yin* is exhausted, the body which resembles the red (image) of the sun in the bottom of a pond will appear. This will be the new sprout of the medicine and will turn into a color as white as the moon. Our fellow-workers must be able to recognize the true lead and mercury, which are neither common cinnabar nor mercury.

9. Medical preparations which are built up with *yin* inside of *yang* are not permanent. A man's achievements will turn out but lean if he works on a single substance. All busy, bustling, and stirring lives are antagonistic to *Tao*. It is crazy to take doses of the *ch'i* (ethereal essence) or of mist. The whole world wants to eat the lead and mercury (medicines); but when shall we see the arrival of the Tiger and the Dragon? I suggest that you should investigate thoroughly the immaterial origin of life. The substance which enables you to return to the origin and go back to the initial state is the king of medicines.

10. If you wish to search intensively for the

<sup>2</sup> *Li* and *k'an* are two of the *kua* or magic figures of the Book of Change 易經. *Li* symbolizes *yin* (negative) and *k'an*, *yang* (positive).

<sup>3</sup> The commentator, *Shang-yang-tzu*, states that the Three Yellows are sulfur, orpiment, and realgar, and the Four Spirits alum, cinnabar, lead, and mercury.

true lead, do not allow your time to pass easily by. Capture the red mercury with the soul of the earth; then there will appear naturally the soul of heaven for controlling the *shui chin* 水金 (watery gold). It is known that the Tiger and the Dragon will surrender to the highly learned *Tao*. One can say that devils and spirits can be made to venerate you because of your glorious virtue. After you know that your life is as long as heaven and earth, then nothing of sorrow will come into your mind.

11. *Huang ya* (yellow sprout) and *pai hsüeh* (white snow) are not difficult to find.<sup>4</sup> A clever man who is likely to succeed ought to have a high moral purpose as his basis. The four signs<sup>5</sup> and the five elements depend primarily upon earth (the matchmaker). The three principles and the eight *kua*<sup>6</sup> go hand in hand (with the true single *ch'i* (ethereal essence)). The efficacious pills which they form can destroy all the devils of the *yin* region and can prevent attacks by ghosts, yet these accomplishments are hardly recognized by people. I desire to leave the secret of performing them to the human world; however, I have so far never met a man who appreciates my subject.

12. In the vegetable world grass and trees are also actuated by *yin* and *yang*. They could not grow in the absence of either one of these two forces. At the beginning, *yang* dominates and is indicated by the budding of green leaves. Then, after the development of blossoms, *yin* (destructive) follows. This principle of the *Tao* of constancy has long been the common practice of nature; but how many can understand (the principle of) *chên yüan* 真源 (true spring),<sup>7</sup> which can alter this process (of nature)? I advise all of you, who wish to learn *Tao*, not to begin your work before you understand the principle of *yin* and *yang*.

13. If one cannot realize the topsy-turvy-ness

<sup>4</sup>The commentator, *Hsieh Tao-kuang*, states that *huang ya* is the *ch'i* (ethereal essence) of the Dragon and *pai hsüeh* that of the Tiger.

<sup>5</sup>According to the same commentator the four signs are wood, fire, gold, and water.

<sup>6</sup>According to *Hsieh Tao-kuang* the three principles are Dragon, Tiger, and *tan*, and the eight *kua* are *ch'ien* 乾 which stands for father, *k'un* 坤 for mother, *chên* 震 for the first son, *k'an* 坎 for the second son, *kên* 艮 for the youngest son, *hüan* 巽 for the first daughter, *li* 離 for the second daughter, and *tui* 兌 for the youngest daughter. The males of course are *yang*, and the females *yin*.

<sup>7</sup>*Shang-yang-tzu* says that True Spring is *tan*.

and topsy-turvy-ness again of the technique of *hsüan* 玄 (mysterious), how can he understand that it is possible to cultivate lotus flowers in an atmosphere of fire? Bring the White Tiger back home whereby it is fed. A glittering pearl will be born which has a shape as round as the moon. Watch with care the fire and the season of the medicinal pot, and let whatever happens occur naturally and without hurry. The *tan* will ripen at the moment when all of the *yin* is eliminated—and (by this achievement a man) can escape out of the cage (of death) with a life of ten thousand years.

14. Three, five and one<sup>8</sup> are written only with three numbers the meaning of which has been understood rarely by workers whether of ancient or of recent times. Three in the east and two in the south make five; one in the north and four in the west give the same number. In the location of *seu sü* there appear a few fives. *Ying ér* 嬰兒 (the infant), the only one which consists of the true *ch'i* (ethereal essence), will be produced by the contact of the three families. After ten months of gestation, the womb ripens and (it) is able to penetrate to the place of the sages.

15. If one does not know the real ancestor of the true lead, his work will always be wrong no matter how much he has done. It is of no use for a man to abandon his wife and to starve himself (for the purpose of learning *hsüan*) because *yin* and *yang* (the interlocking of which gives *tan*) are still separated. Grass, trees, gold, silver, and so forth are all residual material things. Clouds, mist, the sun and the moon only obscure the view. I suppose that you can also practice both "breathing" and "thinking" (in order to acquire *Tao*). All these necessarily differ from the affairs of *chin tan*.

16. The statement that *chin tan* is the most fundamental will be found to be identically set down in actual thousands of volumes of Books of *hsüan*. As a rule, the bodies produced at the *k'un* position will be moved into the inter-influential chamber of the family of *ch'ien*. It is not to be wondered at that the secret of heaven has been entirely disclosed here, but the followers (who fail to get the secret) confuse themselves. If anyone understands the idea of these poems, he will at once see *Tai-shang-wing* 太上翁 (the greatest of the *hsüan*) at the place of *San-ch'ing* 三清 (Three Clear).

17. The *nü tzü* (lady) dresses in green whereas

<sup>8</sup>None of the commentators known to us have a satisfactory explanation of the numbers.

the *lang chün* (husband) puts on mourning white.<sup>9</sup> If they are visible, then they cannot be used for our purpose. Things which are useful are invisible. They encounter one another in a state of obscurity whereby they make their changes indistinctly. At the moment when a flame flashes out suddenly, the *chên jên* 真人 (true man) appears to us.<sup>10</sup>

## PART II

## POEMS OF TWO RHYMES

Sixty-Four Poems to Imitate the Number Eight-Eight, hence the Sixty Four *Kua*

18. (1) It is advised first that *ch'ien* and *k'un* be procured as the *ting* and pot, and second that *wu* 烏 (crow) and *lu* 兔 (rabbit) be put into them and treated in the same manner as in cooking. When you drive the two things into the *huang tao* 黃道 (yellow way), there is no reason why the *chün tan* will not form.<sup>11</sup>

19. (2) The arrangement of the *ting* (furnace) and the pot follows the method (or the will) of *ch'ien* and *k'un*. The compounding of the essences is capable of controlling the spirits. Changes occur through the gathering and scattering of the generative fluids of heaven and earth. I dare to say that this wonderful mystery is indispensable.

20. (3) Do not waste your time in building mud furnaces for *tan*. The compounding of medicines should be carried out in a *yen yüeh lu* 偃月爐 (lie-down-moon furnace)<sup>12</sup> which has a natural true fire and season, and does not require a supply of wood or charcoal and the blowing of air.

21. (4) The *yü jui* (jade bud) is produced in

<sup>9</sup> *Hsieh Tao-kuang* says that *nü tsü* is the *ch'i* (ethereal essence) of the Dragon, *lang chün* that of the Tiger, and that *chên jên* is *chün tan*.

<sup>10</sup> This is an extra poem beyond the sixteen which the author mentions in his sub-title. It is a poem in two rhymes—and symbolizes the grand One which contains the true *ch'i*.

<sup>11</sup> *Hsieh Tao-kuang* says that *ch'ien* and *k'un* stand for the Sun and the Moon, that *huang tao* is the favored central position at which *chün tan* is formed, and that *wu* and *lu* are again the *ch'i* (ethereal essences). *Ch'ien* and *k'un* are commonly known to stand also for the heaven and the earth.

<sup>12</sup> *Wei Po-yang* in the *Ts'ao Tung ch'i* says: "Like the moon lying on its back is the shape of the furnace and the pot." *Isis*, 18, 239 (1932).

the *yen yüeh lu* (lie-down-moon furnace).<sup>13</sup> Quicksilver lies flat within the *ting* (furnace) of cinnabar. *Huang ya* (yellow sprout) grows gradually because of the force of the regulated fire.

22. (5) It is the practice of common people to take doses of saliva and *ch'i* (ethereal essence), but the medicine must be present before it can create anything. If the true seed or germ of the medicine is not found in the *ting* (furnace), the operation will be as futile as firing an empty kettle.

23. (6) In blending lead and mercury to produce *tan*, the amount of each should be such that it does no harm to the other. If you wish to inquire what the true lead is, the answer will be that the moonlight shines all day long on the western river. (Compare Title of Part III.)

24. (7) Do not go into the mountains before you succeed in compounding the *huan tan* 還丹 (returned medicine), for no sign of lead appears either on the exterior or in the interior of mountains. This kind of precious thing will be found in every house. Nevertheless, ignorant people are not able to recognize it.

25. (8) For repairing a broken piece of bamboo ware, you must use bamboo. When you want your hen to hatch chickens, eggs and not stones must be supplied. Working on medicines of unlike kinds is merely a waste of energy. What can be better than the true lead for fulfilling the secrets of the sages?

26. (9) In the use of lead it is not allowable to employ the vulgar lead. The true lead after its use is nonetheless discarded. This is the rule of using lead. It is a sure statement that lead is used and is not used up.

27. (10) The terms, empty mind and full stomach, contain deep meanings. It is possible for an empty mind to accept readily the warm feelings (of those who show the way). But it is even better first to compound the lead (medicine) to fill the stomach—by which means the hall dazzling with gold and jade can be attained.

28. (11) I dreamed that I visited *Hsi-hua* 西華 (West Beauty) and also arrived at *Chün-t'ien* 九天 (Ninth Heaven),<sup>14</sup> and there I met the *chên jên*, the *hsien*, by whom I was given the essay,

<sup>13</sup> According to *Hsieh Tao-kuang*, *yü jui* is *yang* substance or the *ch'i* (ethereal essence) of the Dragon, and Quicksilver is *yin* substance or the *ch'i* of the Tiger.

<sup>14</sup> These two places are popularly known as desirable parts of heaven.

*Chih hsüan p'ien* 指玄篇 (Guide to the Mystery).<sup>15</sup> There is not much mentioned in the essay, and everything in it is simple and easy. Its main idea is to teach the people how to compound mercury and lead.

29. (12) *Tao* resides in the domain of emptiness, and produces a single *ch'i*. From this *ch'i* the forces of *yin* and *yang* are born. Through the combination of *yin* and *yang* the three bodies<sup>16</sup> are formed. Having these three material bodies, we get all things in the universe.

30. (13) Thunder roars in *chün* (metal) and *shui* (water). Fire blazes with *yin* and *yang* in the *K'un-lun* 崑崙 mountains (the range of Koukun mountains in Gobi and Tibet). If the two things agree with each other, the *tan* will ripen naturally and will perfume the person (who works with it) with a fragrance throughout his body.

31. (14) If the *kua* of *li* and *k'an*<sup>17</sup> return without *wu ssü* (matchmaker, go-between), though the four signs are present,<sup>18</sup> the *tan* will not form. It is because both *li* and *k'an* contain the true earth that the return of *chün tan* is made possible.

32. (15) The sun placed in the *li* position becomes female, and the moon placed in the *k'an* position becomes male. One who cannot understand this principle of topsy-turvy-ness should not talk about his knowledge of these matters, for that knowledge is only as broad as vision through a tube.

33. (16) If we put the solid heart of *k'an* upon the hollow center of *li*, we get a coincidence of the inside and the outside, and the *kua* of *ch'ien* (☰) is formed which represents a perfectly strong body and which can hide or fly away at will.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The commentator, *Tai Chi-tsuang* says that the *Chih hsüan p'ien* was written in beautiful language, and discussed mercury and lead, but has probably been lost. In his commentary in our *Ming* edition he includes a song, two pages long, by *Kao Hsiang-hsien* 高象先, which is supposed to be similar to the *Chih hsüan p'ien*. A translation of this poem is soon to be published in *Isis*.

<sup>16</sup> The three bodies are commonly considered to be the sky, the earth, and mankind.

<sup>17</sup> The *li kua* is *yin*; the *k'an kua* is *yang*.

<sup>18</sup> *Shang-yang-tzu* says that the four signs are heaven, earth, sun, and moon.

<sup>19</sup> The *k'an kua* (☷) has a solid heart whereas *li* (☲) has a hollow center. *K'an* is *yang* and *li* is *yin*. *Hsieh Tao-kuang* says that *li* (☲) consists of *yang* on the outside and of *yin* on the inside, *k'an* (☷) of *yin* on the outside and of *yang* on the inside. If the inside *yang* is used to modify the inside *yin*, the result is *ch'ien*,

34. (17) The Dragon is a *yang* substance but comes from the place of *li*. The Tiger belongs to *yin* but is produced in the place of *k'an*. The two things are able to reverse the ordinary process in such fashion that a mother is born to her daughter. The five elements should enter wholly into the central position.

35. (18) When the half moon hangs high in the sky (the time *yang* begins to grow), one can hear the shouting of the Dragon and the roaring of the Tiger. Then he should start his work of treating two-eights (compounding in the right proportion). At this particular favored time, the *tan* will form within an hour.<sup>20</sup>

36. (19) The male Tiger roars on the western mountains of *Hua* 華; the female Dragon howls under the deep eastern sea of *Fu-sang* 扶桑. *Huang p'o* 黃婆 (yellow dame) (the matchmaker) knows how to bring them together and how to enable them to marry with unchanging loving hearts.

37. (20) The white Tiger grows angry in the western mountains and the green Dragon is irresistibly fierce in the eastern sea. Capture them with both hands and let them fight to death. They then change into a layer of the powder of purple gold.

38. (21) The red Dragon and the black Tiger are situated one in the east and the other in the west. The four signs 四象 interlock each other at the position of *wu ssü*. If, from this time onward, one can make use of the advantages of the *kua* of *fu* 復 (return) (*yang* begins to grow) and the *kua* of *kou* 姤 (meet) (*yin* begins to grow), who then says that *chün tan* will fail to form?

39. (22) It is suggested that one should first observe nature in order to understand what the five bandits<sup>21</sup> are and that he should then examine the ground in order to promote goodness for the

a strong substance representing *tan*, whence the name *yang tan*.

<sup>20</sup> The commentator, *Weng Pao-kuang* says that this time, being the clearest hour at which no material thing but *ch'i* is present, occurs only on a certain day of the year, at a certain hour of that day, in a certain quarter of that hour.

<sup>21</sup> According to *Shang-yang-tzu*, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and passion are the five bandits of heredity; women, music, perfume, taste, and the sense of touch are the five bandits of the surroundings; and love, lust, greed, anger, and stupidity are the five bandits of the interior of the body. All of them consume the ethereal essence or energy of the body and thus prevent one from acquiring the *Tao*.

people. When the country becomes rich and the people live in comfort, they should be forced to fight. After they have fought, they will be able to arrive at the place where the sages live.

40. (23) When legions are commanded in battle, they should be divided into right and left wings. If the enemy occupies a position much more advantageous than your own, then you should advance only with the greatest care and caution fearing lest you may lose the priceless treasure of your family.<sup>22</sup>

41. (24) Fire is produced from wood the inflammability of which however is hidden (in its ordinary state). If you do not know how to grind it up and drill into it, you should not handle it clumsily.<sup>23</sup> Any accident which may result will probably be injurious to you. To overcome this difficulty, it is advised to seek for *chin kung* (golden fellow).<sup>24</sup>

42. (25) *Chin kung* was originally the son of our east neighbor, but he has been given to our west neighbor at whose house he is growing up and at whose table he eats. If anyone recognize him, let that man call him back and raise him in his home and then marry him to *ch'a nü* (elegant lady), the beloved bride.<sup>25</sup>

43. (26) *Ch'a nü* travels in known directions. The first of her trips is short, whereas the later trip is long. When she returns however, she enters the house of *huang p'o* (the matchmaker) and weds *chin-kung* as her aged husband.

44. (27) Even though you know what the red cinnabar and what the black lead are, your efforts will still be in vain if you do not understand the fire and the season.<sup>26</sup> Success generally depends wholly upon the degree of your learning or training, but a slight variation (of the fire?) will cause the disappearance of *tan*.

45. (28) The subject has been discussed truly in the *Ts'an t'ung ch'i* and in other books and

songs. Nevertheless the fire and the season are never given in the written books. If one wishes to know the word-of-mouth rule which leads people to *hsian* (mysterious), he should talk thoroughly about it with the *hsien*.

46. (29) The moon shines brightly on the eve of the fifteenth day of the eighth month. This is the time at which the gold essence appears plentifully. At the moment when a single *yang* rises, start your fire without delay.

47. (30) *Tan* is compounded at the moment when the single *yang* begins to appear. The lead and the *ting* (furnace) will become hot, and the light emitted by them will shine on the curtains and the shades. They receive the *ch'i* easily under these conditions. Care must be taken to avoid danger on the addition or the removal of substances.

48. (31) The mysterious pearl increases as *yang* increases. With the supreme domination of *yang*, *yin* is made to vanish gradually. After ten months of work, when the weather turns cold, the *tan* is then ripened. At this time the ghosts and spirits will also be threatened.

49. (32) At the time after the first half-moon and before the second half-moon, the taste of the medicines is insipid and all of the appearances are shown. The medicines should then be collected and compounded in the furnace in which tonic products for your own cooking will be obtained.

50. (33) The first son suddenly drinks the wine of the west, and the young lady is in the north garden where flowers are growing for the first time. If *ch'ing t'ao* (green woman) is led to meet them, they will be locked in *Huang's* house (*huang p'o*) at that time.

51. (34) The months of *tu* 兔 (rabbit) and *chi* 雞 (cock) are the most particular times.<sup>27</sup> The medicines which arrive at one's door seem to be penalty on the one hand and beneficence on the other.<sup>28</sup> At these times the man who is working on gold and cinnabar should stop his work, and wash his hair and his body. If fire is still applied, danger will certainly follow.

52. (35) The sun and the moon meet each

<sup>22</sup> *Hsieh Tao-kuang* says that this verse is a metaphor for the application of fire. The same commentator says in another place that *tan* is formed in consequence of a battle between the Tiger and the Dragon.

<sup>23</sup> *Shang-yang-tzu* says that wood symbolizes the person himself, fire the ethereal essence, inflammability love and lust, and grind up and drill into symbolize study and investigation.

<sup>24</sup> *Chin kung*, according to *Hsieh Tao-kuang*, is the true lead.

<sup>25</sup> *Ch'a nü* is mercury according to *Hsieh Tao-kuang*.

<sup>26</sup> *Hsieh Tao-kuang* says that sages tells us only the materials, but the fire, which is known only by the *hsien*, is never told.

<sup>27</sup> The commentator, *Tzu-yeh* says that these months (respectively February and August) are the times in which spring and autumn are not clearly defined, so that the season is made up of *yin* with internal *yang* and of *yang* with internal *yin*; therefore the fire should be stopped.

<sup>28</sup> According to *Hsieh Tao-kuang*, *tu* represents beneficence and *chi* penalty.

other once in a period of thirty days. By imitating the divine efficacy one can accomplish the work of a day in a single hour. It is possible to forecast whether the defense of the city and the offense in the field are lucky or unlucky.<sup>29</sup> The formation of the efficacious cinnabar makes the *ting* fully red.

53. (36) By the interlocking of the *kua* of *p'i* 否 and *'ai* 泰 everything in the universe is formed. The *kua* of *l'un* 屯 and *mêng* 蒙 constitute the starting point of creation.<sup>30</sup> For understanding the delightful principle here, it is unnecessary to bring out the *hsiang*. Otherwise, you will find that the series of *yao* 爻 is laborious to investigate.<sup>31</sup>

54. (37) *Hsiang* are invented to put under the *kua* and are merely forms (for explanation). After you grasp the idea from them, they may be forgotten. Unfortunately, unintelligent workers of succeeding generations are bigoted on the *hsiang* and hope to rise and fly by practicing the *kua* and *ch'i*.

55. (38) Heaven and earth become *ying* 盈 (full, generating) and *hsü* 虛 (weak, degenerating) at definite times.<sup>32</sup> By examining this rule, one may get its key. From the beginning to the end, it has long been stated that the *Tao* will be acquired when all of the three corpses are destroyed.

<sup>29</sup> According to *Hsieh Tao-kuang*, divine efficacy means skill in firing, and offense in the field means the union of Tiger and Dragon.

<sup>30</sup> According to *Wêng Pao-kuang*, *p'i* (☷) and *ai* (☳) are two of a series of compound *kua*, and stand for half *yin* and half *yang*, not hot and not cold, and *l'un* and *mêng* (compound *kua*) are the heads of all *kua* and stand for the starting of the fire or the starting point of receiving creation.

<sup>31</sup> The terms *yao* and *hsiang* both mean the lines which compose the *kua*. When the lines signify motion or change they are called *yao*; when they signify pictures they are called *hsiang*. Continuous *yao* are *yang*; broken *yao* are *yin*.

<sup>32</sup> *Shang-yang-tzu* says that when the tide rises it is *ying* (full, generating), and when it ebbs it is *hsü* (weak, degenerating). These are the *ying-hsü* of heaven and earth. A full moon is *ying* and a waning moon is *hsü*. These are the *ying-hsü* of the moon. Things germinate in spring, grow in summer, degenerate in autumn and are exterminated in winter. These are the *ying-hsü* of the four seasons. When a man's *ch'i* is strong it is *ying*, when weak it is *hsü*. These are the *ying-hsü* of the human body. At the hour of *kuai shêng* (belong-to-growth) lead is formed, and at the hour of *wang yüan* (after the full moon) lead is worthless. These are the *ying-hsü* of *chün tan* (gold medicine).

56. (39) If you wish to be a god of the mountain and live forever, you must build a foundation on *hsüan* 玄 (mystery) and *p'in* 牝 (female animal). When the true essence goes back to the golden cabinet, a single spot of divine light forms and will never tarnish.

57. (40) The doors of *hsüan* and *p'in* are seldom known by the people. They are really not the nose and the mouth, as some persons think. Even if you practice breathing for years,<sup>33</sup> how can you make the golden *wu* (crow) capture the *l'u* (rabbit)?

58. (41) Having different names but coming from the same origin,<sup>34</sup> the two things are not usually recognized by people. Both of them, being mysteries of mysteries, become important keys. A man should be able to distinguish the injurious substances from the beneficial. For preserving life and taking care of the form, the Purple *Chün tan* is the most wonderfully strange.

59. (42) When a man begins with *yu tao* 有作 (acting, performing), the process is hardly recognizable. When he ends with *wu wei* 無爲 (not-doing, remaining passive), the people then realize it. *Wu wei* is known as the greatest of wonders. However *yu tao* serves as the foundation.<sup>35</sup>

60. (43) White within black is the mother of *tan*. Female within male is the sage womb.<sup>36</sup> The grand One<sup>37</sup> should be watched carefully when in the furnace. Then the gathered valuables of the three lands will satisfy the three terraces (temples in heaven).

61. (44) Hunt for the having-picture in the indistinguishable land, and search for the true essence in the obscure world. Real and unreal now blend into each other.<sup>38</sup> Yet I do not know

<sup>33</sup> Deep breathing as a means of attaining longevity and immortality.

<sup>34</sup> *Tzu-yeh* says that the single *ch'i* is divided into *yin* and *yang*, and thus has two different names; but both of these are produced by *T'ai chi* 太極 (the primordial) and have the same origin.

<sup>35</sup> According to several commentators, the compounding of *tan*, known as *yu tao*, by working with substances which have material form, is the early stage, while the ascent as *hsien* without material form, *wu wei*, is the later one.

<sup>36</sup> *Shang-yang-tzu* says that white within black is the *yang* which is present in *yin*. Female within male is the *yin* which is present in *yang*.

<sup>37</sup> I. e. the true single *ch'i*, according to *Wêng Pao-kuang*.

<sup>38</sup> *Hsieh Tao-kuang* says that having-picture is the *ch'i* of the Dragon; true essence is the *ch'i* of the Tiger; real and unreal are the *ch'i* of lead and mercury. Be-

how (the *chin tan*) can be obtained merely by thinking.

62. (45) When the four signs gather together, the mysterious body appears. A purple light shines where the five elements are perfected. Coming out from the womb and entering into the mouth, it (the mysterious body) enables a man to penetrate to the land of the sages. Then he will see the striving of countless dragon-gods.

63. (46) When he has finished the banquet at *Hua-ch'ih* (Beautiful Pond) where the moon shines brightly, he (the accomplished) rides on a golden dragon to visit *Tzū-wei* (the star gods). From that time onward, when all of the *hsien* have been interviewed, he rides above wide mountains and wherever he likes.<sup>39</sup>

64. (47) Whoever wishes to know the method of compounding *chin i huan tan* (gold fluid returned medicine) ought to begin by seeding and planting it in his own garden. It is needless to borrow the help of blowing or fanning (the fire): the *tan* will ripen naturally and emerge from the true womb.

65. (48) Do not consume your energy in practicing wrong and not-genuine methods, or adopt no-death instructions from other schools. The wine of continuing-life is added to the pot from time to time, and from the *ting* you will receive the liquor of returning-soul.

66. (49) Snow-mountain produces *li hu* 醴醕 (a reddish spirit) which will be poured into the creating furnace of Eastern *yang*.<sup>40</sup> When *Chang-ch'ien* 張翥 succeeds in passing over the mountains of *K'au-lun*, he is then able to see *Ma-ku* 麻姑.<sup>41</sup>

67. (50) If a man does not understand *yin* and *yang*, or host and guest, he will not be able to recognize whether their relations are close or not. Those who try to make use of their wives' essence

will close the door to success. I do not know how many persons have failed in this way.<sup>42</sup>

68. (51) There are numerous living things each of which will return to the place from which it came. Returning-to-origin and fulfilling heaven's will mean imperishable. The people usually do not understand the process of realization-of-constancy and back-to-the-initial-form, and often procure unfortunate results by practicing wrong methods.

69. (52) *Ou Yeh* 歐冶 (a sword smith) gave oral instruction to his disciples in the method of making swords. The spiritual sword *Mo Yeh* 鑞邪 (produced by them) derives its unconquerable power from the control and proportioning of the elements of *chin* (gold) and *shui* (water). After it was made, it knew the will of the person (who wore it) and killed devils at distances of thousands of miles with the lightning's speed and with the lightning's glare.<sup>43</sup>

70. (53) By drumming on a bamboo pipe, summon the tortoise to swallow the *yü chih* 玉芝 (plant of long life). By thrumming on a lute, call down the phoenix to drink the *tao kuei* 刀圭 (a small scepter?).<sup>44</sup> Forthwith a golden light appears throughout the body (of the compounder), and he will not discuss his art any more with the common people.

71. (54) The medicines when put together must be of the same sort in order to form a picture. *Tao*, when in the sense of *hsi i* 希夷 (unusually easy of access), will coincide with the doctrine of nature. After a single grain of the efficacious *tan* has been taken into the stomach, a man will then know that his life is not controlled by heaven.

72. (55) The glorious *chin tan* can be prepared and finished in any convenient day. The instruc-

cause of the stimulation of the real, the unreal gives a picture; the real, being stimulated by the unreal, become effective.

<sup>39</sup> *Tzū-yeh* says that *Hua-ch'ih* is the place where the medicines are produced, and that the finished banquet is the collection of a sufficient quantity of them.

<sup>40</sup> According to *Hsieh Tao-kuang*, snow-mountain means white color giving a picture of *chin*, hence it means also *chin tan* the taste of which recalls that of *li hu* spirit, a reddish liquor.

<sup>41</sup> *Chang-ch'ien*, according to *Hsieh Tao-kuang*, is a man-horn representing *yang*, and *Ma-ku* a woman-horn representing *yin*. Their meeting means the union of *yin* and *yang*. At the peak of *K'au-lun* there is supposed to be a door which admits to *hsian* (mystery).

<sup>42</sup> *Hsieh Tao-kuang* says that certain persons have tried to make use of their wives' essence for compounding *yin* for attaining long life, and that this is like extinguishing fire by putting more wood on it.

<sup>43</sup> *Shang-yang-tzū* says that the sword was made neither from vulgar gold nor from vulgar iron, but that it was a spiritual sword comprising the foundation of heaven and earth and the backbone of *yin* and *yang*. *Hsieh Tao-kuang* says that this stanza is a metaphor for compounding *tan*.

<sup>44</sup> *Tzū-yeh* says that *yü chih* and *tao kuei* are names of medicines, and that the drumming on the bamboo pipe and the thrumming on the lute are the harmonious music of the mutual attraction of *yin* and *yang*. *Hsieh Tao-kuang* says that the tortoise is the black Tiger and the phoenix the pink Dragon.

tions of the ancient *hsien* should be followed. If anyone says that the compounding takes three years or nine years, his intent is only to make excuses and to stretch out the time.

73. (56) The learning of the great medicine is sometimes easy and sometimes difficult. It depends partly on us and partly on the will of heaven. If one does not perform good works and spread virtue in the *yin* district, his work will be handicapped frequently by groups of devils.

74. (57) It is the time that the three bodies (heaven, earth and men) steal from each other. *Tao tē* (Way of Virtue) is the secret key to becoming *shên hsien* 神仙 (immortal). A multitude of changes ends in tranquility, and all solicitude now ceases. The rationalization of one's body proves *wu wei* (not-doing).

75. (58) The Book of *Yin fu* (Amulets for *yin*) contains a little more than three hundred words, but the Book of *Tao tē* uses just five thousand for its marvelous exposition. From ancient times down to the present there have been countless *hsien* of above who all have acquired the truth from these same sources.

76. (59) Even if your intelligence is above that of *Yen-tzū* 顏子 and *Mün-tzū* 閔子 (two of the most clever pupils of Confucius), yet, merely with constrained conjecture, you will not be able to succeed (in *tan*) unless you have a true teacher. For the work of *chin tan* in case oral instructions are lacking, where and how can you fertilize the fecund womb?

77. (60) To begin with, a man should have a trained clear mind. The three thousand merits (of the medicine) will enable him to live as heaven does. The *ting* will arrive naturally for the cooking of the Tiger and Dragon.<sup>45</sup> The compounder should not devote too much time to his family or be too strongly attracted to his wife and sons.

78. (61) Anyone who has not yet compounded the *huan tan* (returned Medicine) should work promptly at compounding it. As soon as he has succeeded, he ought to be contented. If he has a

never-satisfied desire, he will some morning acquire unavoidable misfortune and disgrace.

79. (62) Regard the dead gate as the living gate. Do not take the living door for the dead door. Whenever a man understands the nature of death and comprehends the principle of topsy-turvy-ness, he sees that misfortune may result in kindness.

80. (63) Misfortune and happiness are each dominated by the other. They seem moreover to pursue one another through their influences. If a man can change the nature of life and death, misfortune will be changed into happiness as easily and as quickly as the turning of a hand.<sup>46</sup>

81. (64) Learning and conduct should be mingled with common things and united with light. Behold! a circle is a circle and a square is a square. No one foresees brightness and dusk, distress and equanimity. How can a man determine his going or stopping?

### PART III

#### TWELVE IRREGULAR POEMS IN THE WEST-RIVER-MOON FORM SYMBOLIZING THE TWELVE MONTHS

West means the direction where the *chin* element is found. River means the element water.

Moon means the utility of *tan*.<sup>47</sup>

82. (1) The internal medicine resembles closely the external medicine. Communication with the inside is just as indispensable as with the outside. The heads of the *tan* come into union, and reveal that they are of the same sort. The *win* 溫 and *yang* 養 (tempering and tonic properties) which the medicines possess are the two actions.

(1a) There is the true natural fire within the furnace of which the glorious red lasts forever. The regulation of the external furnace should be done patiently. Nothing will surpass the supreme mystery of the true seed.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> *Hsieh Tao-kuang* says that *yang* controls life and is known as happiness. *Yin* controls death and is known as calamity. The decrease of *yin* increases *yang*, but *yin* grows at the extremity of *yang* and thus each dominates the other. This is known as the *Tao* of constancy.

<sup>46</sup> The name of the verse form means west-river-moon. There is one poem extra, thirteen altogether, the extra one symbolizing the extra month which occurs in certain Chinese years.

<sup>47</sup> *Hsieh Tao-kuang* says that when the *Tao* comes from within, the arrangement of furnace and *ting* are external; when *Tao* comes from without, *k'an* (a *kuai*

<sup>48</sup> *Weng Pao-kuang* says that *Lü Tung-jin* 呂洞賓 (a *hsien*) has written a verse as follows: "There are three thousand hidden roads in *P'êng lai* (one of the three supernatural islands of the Eastern Sea, cf. *Ambix*, I, 109 (1937)). When a man walks through all of them, he will come back from the clouds step by step. Since the virtue for the *yin* district has been accumulated, a man will surely meet the *chên jên* (from whom he will receive instruction)." Therefore the statement here says that the *ting* functions naturally.



83. (2) This very *Tao* is supremely wonderful and holy. What I fear is that your fate may be too scant for you to receive it. As early as the morning after the blending of mercury and lead,<sup>49</sup> you will see signs of the formation of the mysterious pearl.

(2a) If a determined scholar wants to learn *Tao*, he may live in a city or hold office at the same time without any inconvenience. The work is easy and the medicine is not far away. If the secret is disclosed, it will be so simple that every one may get a good laugh.

84. (3) The white Tiger is of the utmost value at the beginning. *Hua ch'ih* (beautiful Pond), *shên shui* (spiritual water) and *chên chin* 眞金 (true gold). We ought to be grateful for the profound kindness of heaven which gives us medicines which are not the vulgar materials.

(3a) If a man desires to compound the *tan* of the nine-changes, he must first build up *hsin* (heart). (The medicine) must be collected at a particular time, and distinction must be made between that which floats and that which sinks. Great care must be taken in the firing to prevent any danger.

85. (4) If you want the true lead to detain (fix) the mercury, in addition to their own affinities, the house-keeper<sup>50</sup> must be taken into account. Since wood and gold<sup>51</sup> are separate things from one another, they have no chance to meet unless a matchmaker lead them to it.

(4a) Wood possesses obedience and the property of loving gold. Gold is compassionate and also tends to attach itself to wood. Since happily they kiss each other, swallow each other and marry

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having *yang* properties) and *li* (a *kua* having *yin* properties), lead and mercury, have their place within. The external medicine is *chin tan* which is formed in a two-eight furnace. The internal medicine is the *chin i kuan tan* which is compounded in the stomach. Then *tan* or *yang-tan* is used to stain or capture the *yin*-mercury of the body. *Shang-yang-tzû* says that the internal medicine relates to *hsing* (nature of men) whereas the external medicine controls both *hsing* and *ming* (will of God).

<sup>49</sup> *Tzû-yeh* says that *chin tan* consists merely of mercury and lead. Lead is found outside whereas mercury is obtained from within the body.

<sup>50</sup> *Hsieh Tao-kuang* says that the house-keeper symbolizes the true *ch'i* of the compounder.

<sup>51</sup> According to *Hsieh Tao-kuang*, gold symbolizes lead and is external, wood symbolizes mercury, and is internal. Therefore these two things are separate things.

each other, it is found that the man is carrying a womb.

86. (5) To whose family does *ch'a nü* (elegant lady) of two-eight (age?) belong? Where is the *lang chün* (husband) of nine-three? They say that they are the fluid of wood and the essence of gold. When they come into contact with earth, they all change into a body of three.<sup>52</sup>

(5a) Again, they borrow the help of *ting kung* 丁公 (fellow-old-man) in compounding. Then the husband and the wife unite together with loving affinity. *Ho ch'ê* (river-car) dares not make the least delay and conveys them to the peak of the *K'un-lun* mountains.<sup>53</sup>

87. (6) The seven changes of red cinnabar restore the initial state. The nine returnings of the *chin i* 金液 (gold fluid) return to the truth. It is not necessary to count the hours, but success depends upon the adjustment of the *wu hsing* (five elements).

(6a) At the beginning, there is only a single dose of quick silver. When it flows through repeatedly, and sufficient *yin* and *yang* have been counted, it will naturally penetrate to God and go in and out without deserting *hsüan* (mysterious) and *pi'ün* (female).

88. (7) The female substance is held within the male. *Yin* embraces the essence of *yang*. The medicine will be produced by the harmonious action of the two and converts a man into a soul of a *hsien* or of a sage.

(7a) Believe (the miracles of) a grain of *chin tan* of *Tao*. When it is eaten by a snake, the snake is transformed into a dragon. If eaten by a cock, the cock changes into a roc or a phoenix and flies away into the clear region of True *yang*.

89. (8) The heaven and earth have been in the states of *pi'ün* and *l'ai*.<sup>54</sup> In the morning and the evening, we should pay attention to *l'un* and *ming* (the heads of compound *kua*, hence starting substances). They are similar to the spokes of a wheel which converge into the hub, and similar to the waters (from many rivers) which pour down

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<sup>52</sup> According to *Shang-yang-tzû*, *ch'a nü* is the mercury of *li* (a *kua*); *lang chün* is the lead of *k'au* (a *kua*). Earth causes them to unite into one thing. *Tzû-yeh* says that earth is the go-between.

<sup>53</sup> According to *Hsieh Tao-kuang*, two-eight is a *yin* number, *ch'a nü* is the true mercury of our body; three-nine is a *yang* number; and *lang chün* is *yang tan*. Earth is the pot and *ting kung* is fire. *Ho ch'ê* is water.

<sup>54</sup> Two of the compound *kua*, no good and good, chaotic and quiet, unhappy and happy, etc.

into the sea. The secret lies in removing, adding and utilizing.

(8a) Get one (grain of *tan*) and you will be sufficient for thousands (of affairs). Do not make distinction between south, north, west and east.<sup>55</sup> Fail and fail again; but build upon your previous achievements. The valuable things of life should not be toyed with.

90. (9) At the time of the winter solstice, a single *yang* appears with the returning of the *kua* of *fu*. After every three decades of days, another single *yang-gao* 陽爻 is added to it.<sup>56</sup> However, within the month, the *kua* of *fu* (return) (the *kua* of the winter solstice) comes to pass in the shortened cycle of the moon and tide.<sup>57</sup> At the end of the full moon and at the close of the *kua* of *ch'ien* (the month with six single *yang*), the sign of the growing of the *kua* of *kou* 姤 (meet) (the month with one single *yin*) may be seen.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> *Tzu-geh* says that the efficacy of the medicine makes all things fuse into one and return to *T'ai chi* (primordial) and *T'ai chi* has no direction.

<sup>56</sup> A *gao* is a line of a *kua*; a *yang-gao* is an unbroken line, a *yin-gao* a broken one.

<sup>57</sup> According to *Hsieh Tao-kuang*, a single *yang* grows up at the winter solstice. Its *kua* is *fu*, 復, which has a single *yang-gao*. After thirty days, another *yang-gao* increases. The *kua* then becomes *lin* 臨 (arrive), 臨. Again, thirty days more, the *kua* changes into *tsai* 泰 (peace, stable), 泰, having three *yang-gao*. Again, thirty days more, *ta chuang* 大壯 (great-strong), 大壯, having four *yang-gao*, is the *kua*. The *kua* of *kwei* 夬 (pure name of the *kua*, no other meaning), 夬, with five *yang-gao*, forms in the following thirty-day period. The *kua* of *ch'ien* 乾 or pure *ch'ien* (heaven), 乾, with six *yang-gao* is known as full and is formed in April. After the extremity of *yang*, *yin* begins to grow. At the time of summer solstice, a single *yin* appears with the *kua* of *kou*, 姤 (meet), with one *yin-gao* 陰爻. In the same manner with thirty days as the period, the successive *kua* are *tan* 遁 (retire), 遁, with two *yin-gao*; *p'i* 否 (unstable), 否, with three *yin-gao*; *kuan* 觀 (view), 觀, with four *yin-gao*; *po* 剝 (to tear-away), 剝, and *k'un* 坤 (mother, earth), 坤. After the full *yin*, *yang* grows up again and the cycle is repeated. This is known as the fire and season of the year.

<sup>58</sup> The sages are able to alter this system, according to the same commentator, by condensing the fire and time-cycle of a year into one month. The first day of the moon is taken as the *kua* of *fu*, 復; thence with appropriate *kua* until the fifteenth of the moon, when

(9a) A day in its turn is divided into periods of winter and summer.<sup>59</sup> The single *yang* begins to grow up at midnight. At noon, a single *yin* comes with the representation of *kou* of the *hsiang* series. A man who prepares medicines ought to know morning and night.

91. (10) A man who fails to recognize the *wu hsing* (five elements)<sup>60</sup> and the four signs is certainly one who will be befuddled to differentiate cinnabar, mercury, lead, and silver. He has never even heard of the principle of the fire and the season for compounding *tan*, and he dares to say that he is a great devotee of Taoism.

(10a) Never considering his mistake, he teaches others in turn, and teaches mistakenly. He ruins the mercury of others by misleading them into an uncharted port. How can one have the heart to do this?

92. (11) The virtues must be built more than eight hundred times. The good works of the *yin* district must be performed as many as three thousand times. External objects and the self, enmity and love, should be treated as of equal importance. They will then fulfill the original will of the *shên hsien* (immortals).

(11a) Since (the body is) invulnerable to harm by tiger or by rhinoceros, by sword or by arms, and unburnable by unexpected fire, the priceless amulet, after it descends upon (the body), can go (with it) to heaven where it acts to protect the harness, the carriage, and the chariot (of its possessor).

93. (12) (The constellations of) the Weaver and the Herdboy love each other. Tortoises and snakes do the same according to the principle of

the *kua* of pure *yang*, 乾, is assigned. So two and a half days here are equivalent to thirty days of the previous cycle. In the sixteenth of the moon, a single *yin* grows, therefore the text says that at the end of the full moon or at the close of *ch'ien*, the growth of *kou* (with a single *yin-gao*) may be seen.

<sup>59</sup> The sages again, according to *Hsieh Tao-kuang*, shorten the cycle by putting the month-cycle into a single day. The day is divided into four seasons, i. e., summer, winter, etc. A single *yang*, the *kua* of which is *fu*, 復, appears at midnight. By noontime, a single *yin*, the *kua* of which is *kou*, 姤, grows up. This is known as the increasing and decreasing of *yin* and *yang*.

<sup>60</sup> *Shang-yang-tzu* says that lead, mercury, cinnabar, silver, and earth are the *wu hsing* (five elements) of *hsuan tan* (returned medicine) and that the *ch'ien*, *k'un*, *k'an*, and *li* (*kua*) are the four signs of creation.

nature.<sup>61</sup> The *shan* (toad) and the *wu* (crow),<sup>62</sup> at the time when there is no moon, unite together and enjoy (their) beauty. The two forces help one another and revolve around each other.

(12a) Originally, (the two forces) resulted from the skillful utilization of *ch'ien* and *k'un*. How many, however, are able to go so deeply into this bottomless gulf? The separation of *yin* and *yang* is a great fault; and how then can we make (our life) as long as heaven and as wide as the earth?

94. (13) *Tao* is the supremely priceless valuable medicine of the material body. Successful compounding leads to endless changes; it makes it possible for one to ascend to meet the *chên tsung* 眞宗 (true men) and further to solve the (problem) of *wu shêng* (non-living) by its skillful use.

(13a) There is no need to wait until another life or for future generations (in order to see the effect). Before you is the Buddha who proves to you the possibility of penetrating to God. Since *Lung nü* 龍女 (Dragon Lady),<sup>63</sup> has acquired success, who afterwards can advance farther?

#### PAIR IV

Five Poems of Two Rhymes Symbolizing the Five Elements of Lead, Mercury, Cinnabar, Silver, and Earth

95. (1) Even if you are able to apprehend the

<sup>61</sup> *Tzû-geh* says that the Herdboy and Weaver belong to heaven. They meet once in a year by crossing the bridge formed by the magpies over the Silver River or milky way. Tortoises and snakes are bodies of the ground, yet they also manifest the two forces. The sun and the moon unite once in a month. All of these are mutual attractions of *yin* and *yang*.

<sup>62</sup> *Shang-gang-tzû* says that *shan* and *wu* are the moon and the sun.

<sup>63</sup> *Shang-gang-tzû* tells a short story of how *Lung nü* acquired *Tao*.

true nature of Buddhism (i. e., to become of a Buddha), you will not be able to avoid giving up your body here and acquiring another body there.<sup>64</sup> What can be better than compounding the great *tan* at the same time? Then you can overcome *wu lo* 無漏 (no leak) to become a *chên jên* (true man, *hoien*).<sup>65</sup>

96. (2) Rebirth, the taking of the place of the spirit of an embryo, a change of home and a return to a former residence, these are known as the four fluids. If one can make the Dragon surrender and the Tiger obey, how can the house which is built of true gold become ruinous?

97. (3) The mirroring of the form and the holding of the breath, these are (the ways of) realizing the wonderful *fa*. They are difficult for the beginner, but become a smooth road later. Even if you can travel through thousands of countries in a moment, why do you change your home back to your former residence?

98. (4) The Buddha teaches the people how to attain the supreme happiness, but the supreme happiness is situated in the direction of *chün*. Probably the material manifestations are actual facts. The other two are not true, and are not to be considered.

99. (5) Common speech often tells about the *Tao* of consenting sages. A man should search deeply into this matter. If he seeks in ordinary affairs according to the principle of topsy-turvyness, then the dust and the sand of the broad earth all become precious.

<sup>64</sup> Because a Buddha can not transform his body into non-material.

<sup>65</sup> According to *Tzû-geh*, this suggests that a man should learn both *hsing* (nature of man, essential for becoming a Buddha) and *ming* (life, essential for becoming a *hoien*).

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