THE

HERMETIC MUSEUM,

RESTORED AND ENLARGED:

VOLUME II

MOST FAITHFULLY INSTRUCTING ALL DISCIPLES OF THE SOPHO-SPAGYRIC ART HOW THAT GREATEST AND TRUEST MEDICINE OF

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

MAY BE FOUND AND HELD.

NOW FIRST DONE INTO ENGLISH FROM THE LATIN ORIGINAL PUBLISHED AT FRANKFORT IN THE YEAR 1678.

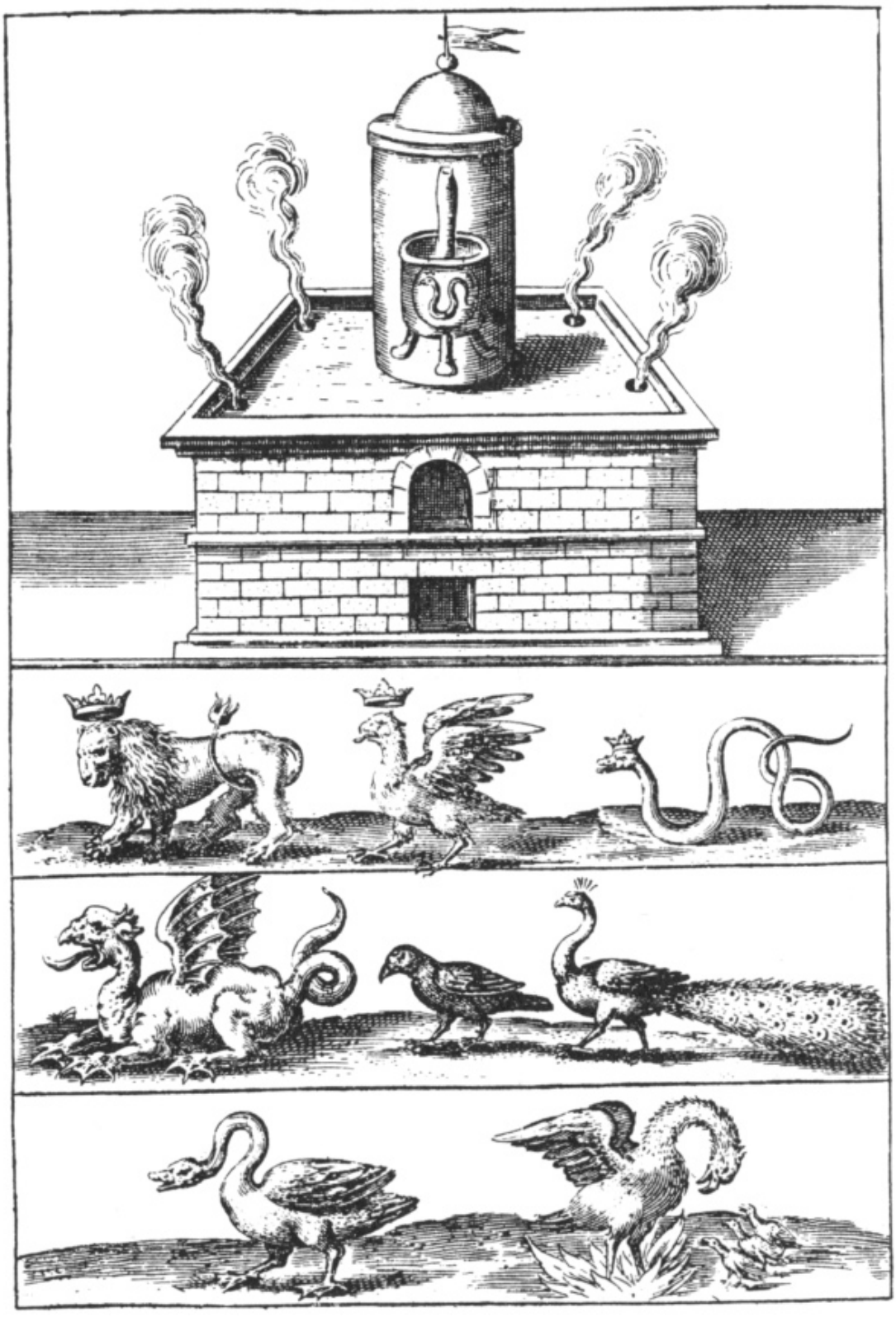
Translated by Arthur Edward Waite

Containing Twenty-two most celebrated Chemical Tracts.

London: J. Elliot and Co.

[1893]

Scanned at sacred-texts.com, May 2007. Proofed and Formatted by John Bruno Hare.



Frontispiece

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

VOLUME II.

p. 1

THE GOLDEN TRIPOD.

———

SECOND TRACT.

———

THE

CHEMICAL TREATISE

OF

THOMAS NORTON,

THE ENGLISHMAN,

CALLED

BELIEVE-ME,

OR

THE ORDINAL OF ALCHEMY.

p. 2

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.

p. 3

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 prophetical 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.

p. 4

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.

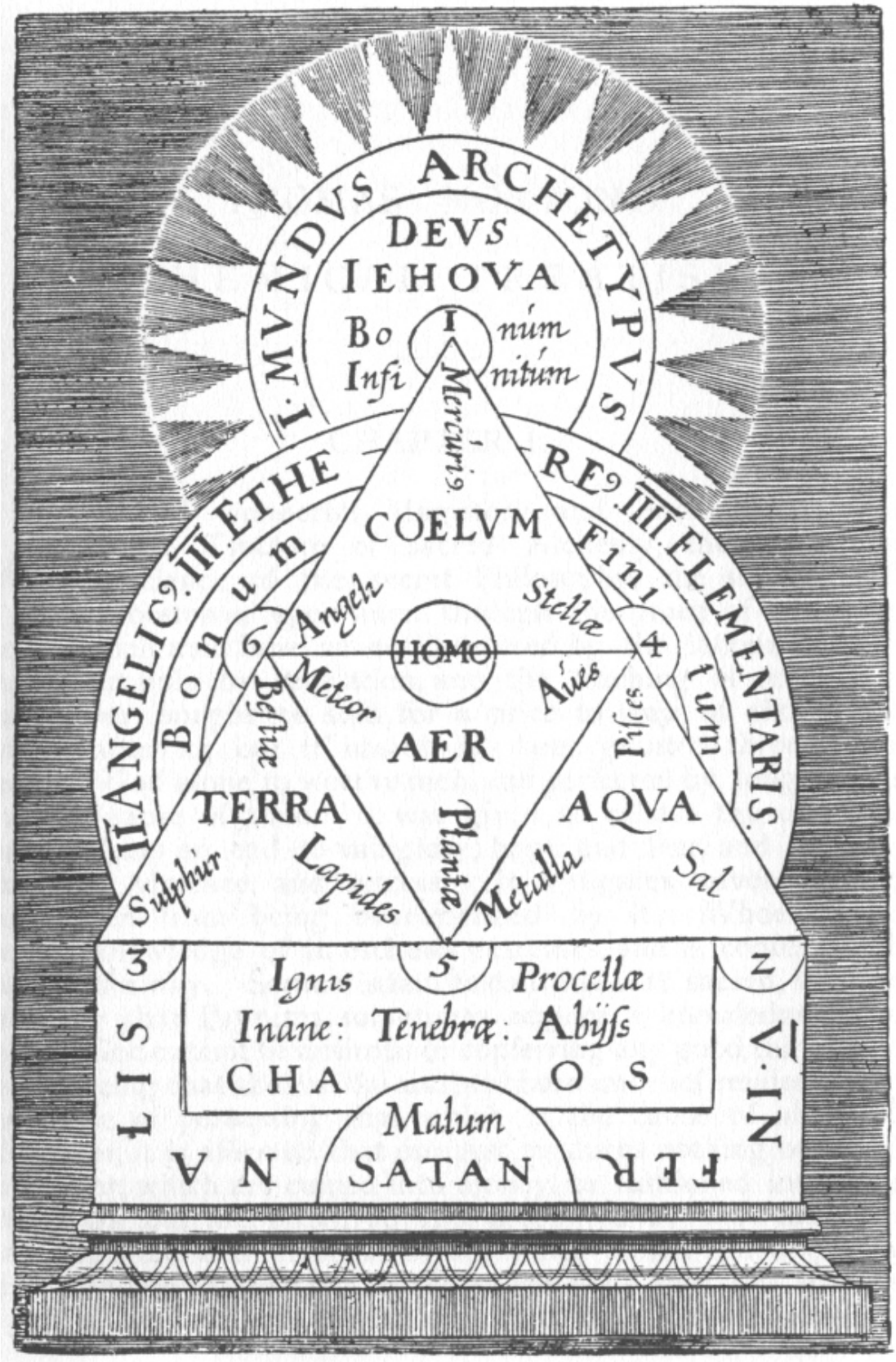
The fourth chapter will treat of the gross part of the work, which is foul and little suited to delicate persons.

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 grevious 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.


I. MVNDVS ARCHETYPVS
DEVS
IEHOVA
Bo num
Infi nitum
I
Mercurio
II. ANGELICO. III. ÆTHE
Bonum
REO. IIII. ELEMENTARIS.
Finitum
COELVM
Angeli
Stellæ
6
HOMO
4
Meteor
Aues
Bestiæ
Pisces
AER
TERRA
AQVA
Sulphur
Lapides
Plantæ
Metalla
Sal
3
5
2
Ignis
Procellæ
Inane: Tenebræ: Abyss
CHA
OS
V. INFERNALIS
Malum
SATAN

THOMAS NORTON'S

CHEMICAL TREATISE.

CHAPTER I.

A MOST wonderful Magistery and Archimagistery 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 Magistery. 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 Magistery 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 Magistery 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 Magistery 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 Magistery, 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

p. 15

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

p. 16

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 proficients 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 he 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 hip 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 it 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 the 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 gayest 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; neverthelesss, 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. Rut

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, f 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 Magistery. 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 grevious 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 and 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.

p. 46

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

p. 47

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 signalized 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, he 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

p. 51

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 circumspectly 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

p. 52

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. 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 beset 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!

p. 68 p. 69

THE TESTAMENT

OF

CREMER,

ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER. AND BROTHER OF THE BENEDICTINE ORDER.

p. 70

A TETRASTICH ON THIS WORK.

By M. M.

"Either the meaning of the Author or the letter of his writings is deceitful. Be on your guard, therefore. Everywhere a serpent lurks among the flowers. Yet scorn not a friend who spoke as plainly as he might. Beneath the shadowy foliage of words is concealed the golden fruit"

"OF"

"TRUTH."

p. 71

THE TESTAMENT

OF

CREMER, THE ENGLISHMAN,

ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER, AND FRIAR OF THE BENEDICTINE ORDER.

I HAVE attempted to give a full and accurate account of Alchemy without using any of those obscure technical terms, which have proved so serious a stumbling-block in the way of many students of this Art. I am here describing my own experience during the thirty years which I spent and wasted in perusing the writings of authors whose whole ingenuity seemed to have been concentrated upon the Art of expressing thought in unintelligible language. The more I read the more hopelessly I went astray, until Divine Providence at length prompted me to undertake a journey to Italy, and caused me to be accepted as a disciple by that noble and marvellously learned Master Raymond, with whom I remained for a long time. In his eyes I found such favour that he not only unfolded to me a partial knowledge of this Great Mystery, but at my most earnest entreaty, accompanied me to this island of England, and lived with me here two years. During his stay he thoroughly instructed me in the whole secret of the work. Subsequently, I introduced my noble master to his most gracious Majesty King Edward, who received him kindly and honourably, and obtained from him a promise of inexhaustible wealth, on condition that he (the King) should in person conduct a Crusade against the Turks, the enemies of God, and that he should thenceforward refrain from making war on other Christian nations. But, alas, this promise was never fulfilled, because the King grossly violated his part of the contract, and compelled my dear master to fly

p. 72

beyond the seas, with sorrow and grief in his soul. My heart still burns within me when I think of the unjust treatment which he received, and I have no more earnest longing than once more to behold his bodily presence. For the model of his daily life, and the purity and integrity of his mind, would move the most inveterate sinner to repentance.

In the meantime, rest assured, most blessed Raymond, that I and my brethren day by day pour out our prayers before God on your behalf. All wisdom is derived from God, and ever ends in Him. Any one who desires knowledge should ask it of Him, for he gives liberally, and without upbraiding. The height and the depth of all knowledge, and the whole treasure of wisdom are given unto men of God, because in Him, and to Him, and through Him are all things, and nothing can happen without His will. In beginning my discourse I invoke the help of Him Who is the source and origin of all good things. May the bright light of His Spirit shine in my heart, and guide me into all truth; also enabling me to point out to others the true path of Knowledge! May this prayer be granted by Him who is enthroned on High, and rules and governs all things, world without end! Amen.

"In the Beginning was the Word. . . . . .full of grace and truth."

———

Prayer.

Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God, deign to bless and sanctify the fire which we unworthy men, by invocation of Thy only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, presume to bless. Hallow it, most gracious God, with Thy benediction, and let it tend to the good of the human race, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Good Lord, Creator of the Red Light,
Who dividest the times by certain seasons,
When the Sun vanishes, fearful Chaos comes again:
Oh Christ, restore the light to Thy faithful people! p. 73

Though Thou hast studded heaven's floor with stars,
And inlaid it with the bright lamp of the Moon,
Yet Thou dost teach us also to strike light out of flints,
And to fan it into life out of the stone-born spark.

Thou art the true light of the eyes, and the light of the senses;
A mirror Thou art of things without and of things within.

Accept this light which I bear, ministering,
Tinged with the unction issued from the peace-bearing virgin.

To Thee we come, great Father, thro' Thine only Son,
In whom Thy glory visibly shines forth,
And through Him, the Blessed Comforter,
Whom Thou didst send forth from Thy great heart.

In whom Thy Brightness, Honour, Light, and Wisdom,
Majesty, Goodness, and Mercy
Dwell with us throughout the Ages,
And draw us up to the Fountain of Light. Amen.

CHAPTER I.

How to prepare the living water which constitutes the life of our Art.

Take three oz. of tartar of good claret, strong and pure. Add to it five oz. of Petroleum, two oz. of living sulphur, two oz. of orange-coloured Arsenic, three oz. of Rabusenum, two oz. of willow charcoal. Mix and distil all these ingredients in the "Bath of Neptune," in a well-stoppered glass jar. Let this jar be about one cubit high, and carefully closed to prevent any of the spirits or smoke from evaporating. When you see it turn of a pale colour, take it out of the furnace, and let it cool. You ought to be able to prepare it in about four days. Be careful not to inhale its smell, for it is deadly poison. This water should be kept in a stout well-stoppered glass jar, and used according to the directions given in the following chapters.

The *other water* should be twice distilled out of the urine of an unpolluted youth of eighteen; if he be polluted, the water will have no vitality.

CHAPTER II.

Take the water of an unpolluted youth after his first sleep for three or four nights, until you have three pints. Put it each night into a well-stoppered stone jar; remove the sediment. Strain out one pint of the thinnest and purest part of the liquid. Add two glasses of very strong vinegar, two oz. of quicklime, half-an-ounce of the "living water," of which the preparation has been described above. Put the mixture into an earthen pot, and place over it an alembic or distilling vessel, rendered airtight with clay. Let it stand one day and one night before you put it on the fire. Then expose it to gentle heat, and let it distil continually for five or six days and nights. Thus let it flow by

drops; carefully lute your glass receptacle so that neither spirit nor smoke may escape, and when the liquor distilling assumes a blue or pallid colour, then abstract nothing further.

CHAPTER III.

Smelt eight oz. of clear, hard iron ore, having no blemishes, in three or four parts, over a fierce charcoal fire; extinguish it with so much of the Virgin water described in the second chapter as may be necessary for the purpose. Then take three oz. of tin, heat it for a short time in the fire, and steep it in the Virgin water. Pound the iron ore and the tin very small on a marble tablet, and when it begins to cool feed it with some of the water aforesaid. Pour the whole into a narrow-necked glass bottle, and seal it up with lead. Put it in a safe place, and in October you should fill a water-tight box (about one yard in height) with fresh horse dung, and thrust your glass vessel into it. Next to the bottle let there be a layer of unslaked quick-lime. Shut the lid of the box closely, and never look at the mixture but at the time of the full moon. Its colours will continue to change until it becomes fixed and hardened. Then it is precipitated towards the bottom of the vessel. When it has been in the box twelve weeks, it should be quite black. You may then take it out, and keep it till the twentieth day of March, when it should be once more pounded small, according to the directions given below.

p. 75

CHAPTER IV.

About the fifteenth day of March take three oz. of quicksilver, and add to it half-an-oz. of "living water." Pass the quicksilver five times through a strainer purged with lye and well dried. Melt two pounds of lead, and pour it into a pot. When it becomes liquid, thrust into it a thin round skewer, and when the lead is still warm, but already fixed, remove the skewer, and pour in the quicksilver instead. When the whole mass has cooled turn it out on a slab of marble, pour some oil over it, pound it small, divide it into three parts, mix each with small pilules of soot. Leave them in a closely sealed vessel for eight days, stamp them to powder, and nourish this powder with a liquid compounded in equal proportions of vinegar and "Virgin water." Put the soft paste which must thus be formed into a high glass distilling vessel. Close up the upper part of the vessel with clay, and tie it up with a piece of leather or parchment. Then plunge it into a wooden box, containing glowing coals of juniper wood and oak, and a twentieth part of iron filings. To test the degree of the fire before inserting the vessel put in it a piece of dry paper. If it catches alight the fire is not too hot, but if the thin shreds which remain of the paper after burning are also consumed, then the heat is excessive, and the door must be opened till the temperature lowers; when it

has become properly warm, carefully add to it a spoonful of "living water" (described in the first chapter). But take care that the still is only three-quarters covered with the coals, in order that you may, whenever the moon is full, be able quickly to remove the cover, and see how the work is progressing. Whenever you perform this, add a spoonful of "living water." At first the colour of the mixture should be black; afterwards it will become white, and will pass through various changes of colour. When the mixture turns solid or fixed, its colour should be red of a somewhat dark tinge, and it should also be saline and heavy, no longer flowing or bubbling up towards the top of the vessel. It ought to be treated in the manner suggested for forty weeks, beginning on the twenty-fifth of March. By the end of this period the mixture will have become so hard as to burst the vessel. When this happy event takes place, the whole house will be filled with a

most wonderfully sweet fragrance; then will be the day of the Nativity of this most blessed Preparation. Remember, that the iron box with the coals ought to be enclosed in another wooden box, of which the object is to preserve the compound from the noxious influences of the air.

CHAPTER V.

Take two pounds of pure and soft lead, two pounds of pure tin, and melt them in the above-mentioned well-covered clay jar. Place the whole on a wood fire, and keep it in a moderate blaze for three hours. Remove the "foam" of the metallic ore, till the whole mixture is pure and transparent, then add to it a fourth part of an ounce of the Red Stone powdered. Stir it gently with an iron spoon until the whole mass turns red. Leave the jar for seventy-two hours, and during the last three hours expose it once more to the gentle heat of a blazing wood fire. While it is still liquid you can mould it into any shape you please; when it hardens you have before your eyes the Consummation of the whole work. Mind you lift up your hands in grateful prayer to the Giver of all good gifts. So be it.

CHAPTER VI.

How to prepare a fire proof clay jar in which to melt the metal.

Take well-tempered potter's clay, or the white earth which is called Taxonium; mix it with a tenth part of horse dung. When the jar has been formed, and is half dried, cover it with thin filings of red or caldarium copper and fine powder of red arsenic. When it is quite dry, smear all its

lower part with saltpetre dissolved for twelve hours in the "living water" of our first chapter.

How to prepare the Clay.

Make the "clay" which you are to use for stopping up your vessel and keeping it air-tight, of bitumen, or quicklime mastic, and the white of eggs, well mixed with a little white Armenian bolus. Let your petroleum be clear, pure, and yellow. Your Rabusenum should be clear, and of a bright vermilion.

It is my wish that Brother Alexander, and Richard, of this our Monastery, should copy this Testament in the name of the Most Blessed Trinity, and preserve it carefully.

In the first place, let them diligently keep the secret from all greedy and nefarious persons, and reveal it to none but the Abbot and Prior, for the time being, of our Monastery. Nor should it be made known to them until they have sworn on the four Gospels that they will not reveal it to any men in power, or to any of the inferior brethren of our Monastery.

Moreover, it is my wish that the Art be not actually exercised in this our Monastery, except to save it from penury and ruin—a contingency which is not likely to happen, seeing that I leave to it so great a treasure of precious metals. I also enjoin upon you who are in authority in this house, to wit, the Abbot and Prior, to have this my last will and testament copied once in every sixty years, in order that it may not become illegible, either through the ravages of time, or through a change in the form of those written characters which render man's thought permanent.

Furthermore, I command you not to betray the secret of the preparation of the Red Dragon's Blood, or the quantities of substances required, or the manner of their treatment, or the time when the work should be taken in hand, to any human soul, except to the persons named above; and I adjure you to keep and preserve intact, inviolate, and unbroken the trust committed to you, in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as you will one day have to answer me before the judgment seat of Christ. Whoever does not observe this my mandate, let his name be blotted out from the Book of Life.

Magnesia is the smelted ore of iron. When the mixture is still black it is called the Black Raven. As it turns white, it is named the Virgin's Milk, or the Bone of the Whale. In its red stage, it is the Red Lion. When it is blue, it is called the Blue Lion. When it is all colours, the Sages name it Rainbow.

But the number of such names is legion: and I can only mention these few. Moreover, they were only invented for the purpose of confounding the vulgar, and hiding this mystery from the simple. Whenever you meet with a book full of these strange and outlandish terms and names, throw it aside at once: it will not teach you anything.

p. 78

Rabusenum is a certain red substance and earth coming forth with water, which flows out of minerals, and is brought to perfection in the month of July in a glass jar exposed to the heat of the sun for 26 days.

p. 79

THE NEW

CHEMICAL LIGHT

**DRAWN FROM THE FOUNTAIN OF NATURE
AND OF MANUAL EXPERIENCE.**

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A TREATISE

CONCERNING

SULPHUR.

———————

[THE AUTHOR'S ANAGRAM]:

"*Divi Leschi genus anno*."

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.

p. 80 p. 81

PREFACE.

*Upon all genuine Seekers of the great Chemical Art,
or Sons of Hermes, the Author implores
the Divine Blessing and Salvation.*

———————

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 mystery 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 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 distil ling vessel of glass, and is day by day wondrously changed by the quickening fire, until all the different colours resolve them selves 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."

==========

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 we, 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. 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.

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 neighbours. 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 must follow her, but if we would improve on her performance, we must know in and by what it is ameliorated. For instance, it 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, as to make a tree out of a dog or any other animal.

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 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 soon. 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.

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 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 lifeof metals while they are still in their ore, and the fire of smelting is their death. But the first matter of metals is 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.

FOURTH TREATISE.

How metals are produced in the Bowels of 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 vapour 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.

FIFTH TRACT.

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 sublimes 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, chrysopras, 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 unctuosity 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 water, 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.

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 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 ifs 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

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.

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 multiply 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 recognisable 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.

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.

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 mutally 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.

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 Philosopher's 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 let us advance from theory to practice.

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 will 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 he somewhat smaller; it should also be of glass, in the form of a vial or egg. But know, above all things, that the 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 yet 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 high 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 it 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 by 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 bath ears, let him hear, and he that bath sense, let him understand.

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, arid 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.

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

p. 106

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 eye. 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 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

p. 108

centric sun again raises and sublimes 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

p. 109

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.

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 as it is permitted me to do,

p. 110

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.

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

p. 112

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 six 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), 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 tree, 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 writings 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 Phœnix 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 Phœnix, 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. May God shew to you, gentle reader, the full interpretation of my dreams! Farewell!

To the Triune God be Praise and Glory!

p. 116

A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

MERCURY, THE ALCHEMIST, 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 you 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—or 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 bf 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:*

p. 123

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

p. 124

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 riot 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!

NEW CHEMICAL LIGHT.

SECOND PART.

CONCERNING SULPHUR.

THE AUTHOR'S ANAGRAM:
Angelus Doce Mihi Jus.
(Angel, Teach me Right.)

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 snow 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.

p. 130

CONCERNING SULPHUR.

———

The Second Principle.

SULPHUR is by no means the least important of the great principles, since it is a part of the metal, 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.

p. 131

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.

p. 132

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 saltness 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 hew 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. I f 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; your 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 extracorporal, 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 skilful 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 begining, 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),

p. 143

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 elements, 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.

p. 144

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 amalgamates 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 sophistical 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. We do 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 ecstacy, 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! Flow 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 ft 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 tyrrannously? *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 everywhere, 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 quarrelling, until at last they began to fight. Salt dealt Sulphur a grevious 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 nut 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, always 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 marvellous 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 iii 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.

THE END.

==========

p. 159

AN

OPEN ENTRANCE

TO THE

CLOSED PALACE

OF THE

KING.

BY

AN ANONYMOUS SAGE AND

LOVER OF TRUTH.

———————

p. 160 p. 161

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

p. 163

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 anything 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.

p. 164 p. 165

CHAPTER I.

Of the need of Sulphur for producing 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 overwise 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, fæces, 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 sec 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,

p. 168

"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 he 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 unmatured 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 he 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 Magistery.

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 unmatured 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 Magistery.

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

p. 175

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 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 contemptuously 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 acceptation. 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

p. 180

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.*, heated with

p. 181

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 saltness 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.

p. 182

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 ½ oz. of gold, and one oz. of mercury; and if you have to add ⅓ 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.

p. 183

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 go 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 1½ 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 versâ*. 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

p. 190

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 *other* substance 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 loth day, and gradually intensify till all be at last completed in black of the deepest dye, which the 50th 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

p. 194

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 he 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 keep 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

p. 196

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.

A

SUBTLE ALLEGORY

CONCERNING THE

SECRETS OF ALCHEMY

VERY USEFUL TO POSSESS

AND

PLEASANT TO READ.

BY

MICHAEL MAIER.

THE SECRETS OF ALCHEMY.

———

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 forbad 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 thé 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 Phœnix. 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 Phœnix 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 Phœnix. 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 whose 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 Phœnix 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

p. 210

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 Phœnix 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 Phœnix, 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 Aegeus, 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 Phœnix 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 Phœnix 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 *Ortus* 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 Phœnix. 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 nut 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.

p. 221

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 Phœnix and where I could obtain possession of it. When I reached the place to which he directed me, I found that the Phœnix 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 Phœnix, 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

p. 222

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 "

p. 223

"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*."

THE

THREE TREATISES

OF

PHILALETHES.

I.
THE METAMORPHOSIS OF METALS.

II.
A SHORT VADE MECUM TO THE CELESTIAL RUBY.

III.
THE FOUNT OF CHEMICAL TRUTH.

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 proficients 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 Magistery, 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 laboratories 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

Bega. 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 co-operation 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, Riplæus, 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 educed 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 (*i.e.*, 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 educing 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, *i.e.*, 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 semi-philosophical 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.

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 Englishman, Flamellus the Frenchman, Sendivogius, the author of the "New Light," the anonymous author of the "Arcanum of Hermes," who also wrote*Enchiridion Physicæ Restitutæ*, 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; 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 is 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 coupe 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

so 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 Treatise, *viz*., the renovation or multiplication of gold and silver.

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, inchaotive 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. Inchaotive 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 tyrany of the impure, and obtains the mastery over it, we have inchaotive 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.

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.

p. 239

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.

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 watery fœtus; this fœtus 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.

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.

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 co-operation 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.

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.

A

BRIEF GUIDE TO

THE

CELESTIAL RUBY.

———

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 Magistery, 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. 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 Magistery 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 Magistery.

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-magic, 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 is 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 reincrudated.

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 albefaction 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 unmatured 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 Magistery, and do not blame me if you fail to understand my words. . . . Our Stone is produced from one thing, and four mercurial substances, 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.

p. 256

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 Magistery. 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

p. 258

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 Magistery), 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.

THE FOUNT

OF

CHEMICAL TRUTH.

OUR Magistery 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 Magistery—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 geld, 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 Magistery, 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 Magistery, 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 kneedeep 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 Magistery. 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 Magistery." Thus everything, from beginning to end, is accomplished, not by sophistical 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."

p. 270 p. 271

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."

p. 272 p. 273

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.

p. 274

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

p. 275

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 sympathic 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, translucid 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

½ grain of the powder, with which I transmuted 9¾ 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:

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.

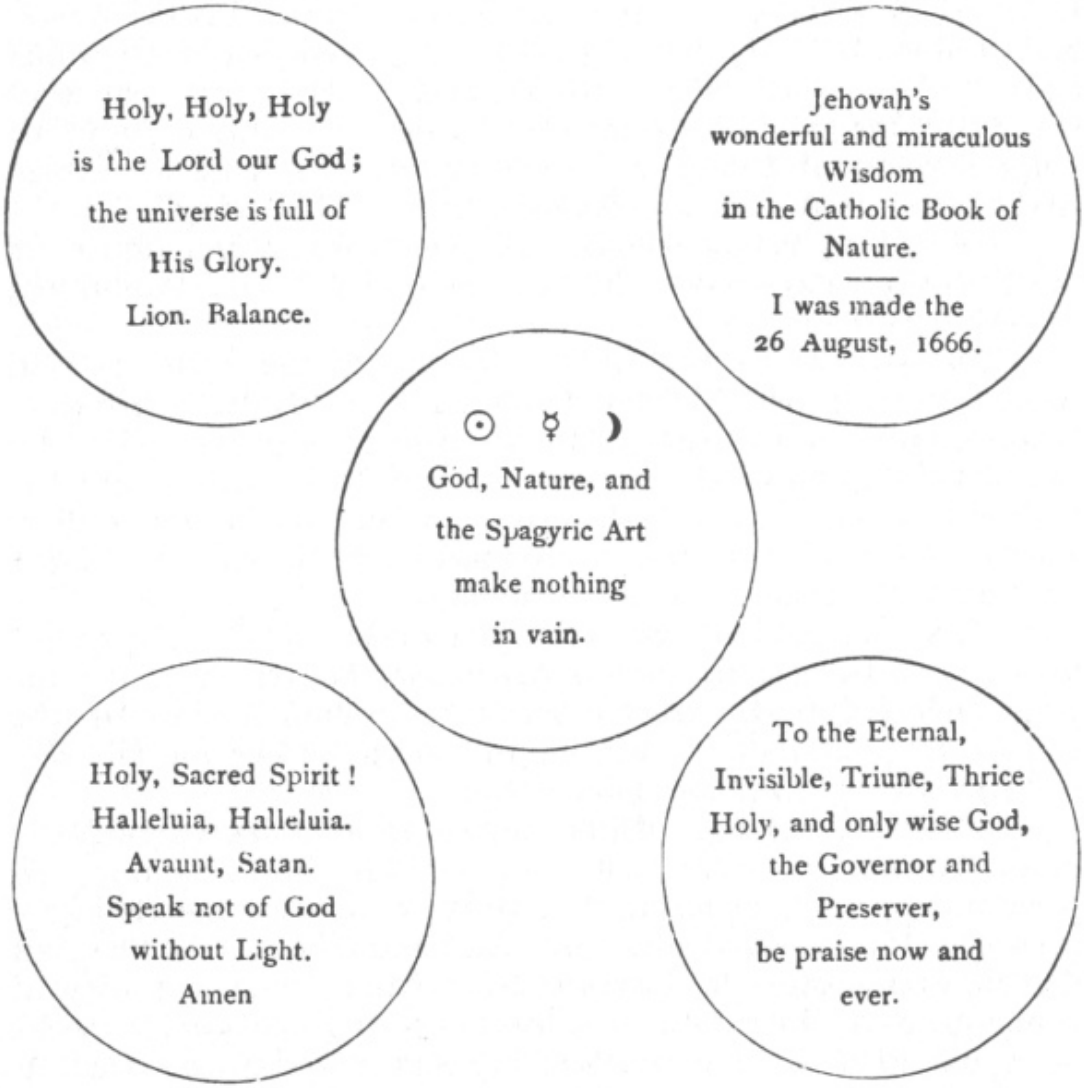
On the 27 December, 1666, in the forenoon, there came to my house a certain man, who was a complete stranger to me, but of an honest, grave countenance, and an authoritative mien, clothed in a simple garb like that of a Memnonite. He was of middle height, his face was long and slightly pock-marked, his 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:—

p. 285



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

p. 286

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 Magistery; 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.

p. 295

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.

p. 296

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 ycu. 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 Magistery, 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.

==========

p. 301

THE

ALL-WISE DOORKEEPER,

OR

A FOURFOLD FIGURE,

EXHIBITING ANALYTICALLY TO ALL THAT ENTER THIS MUSEUM THE MOSAICO-HERMETIC SCIENCE OF THINGS ABOVE AND THINGS BELOW.

p. 302 p. 303

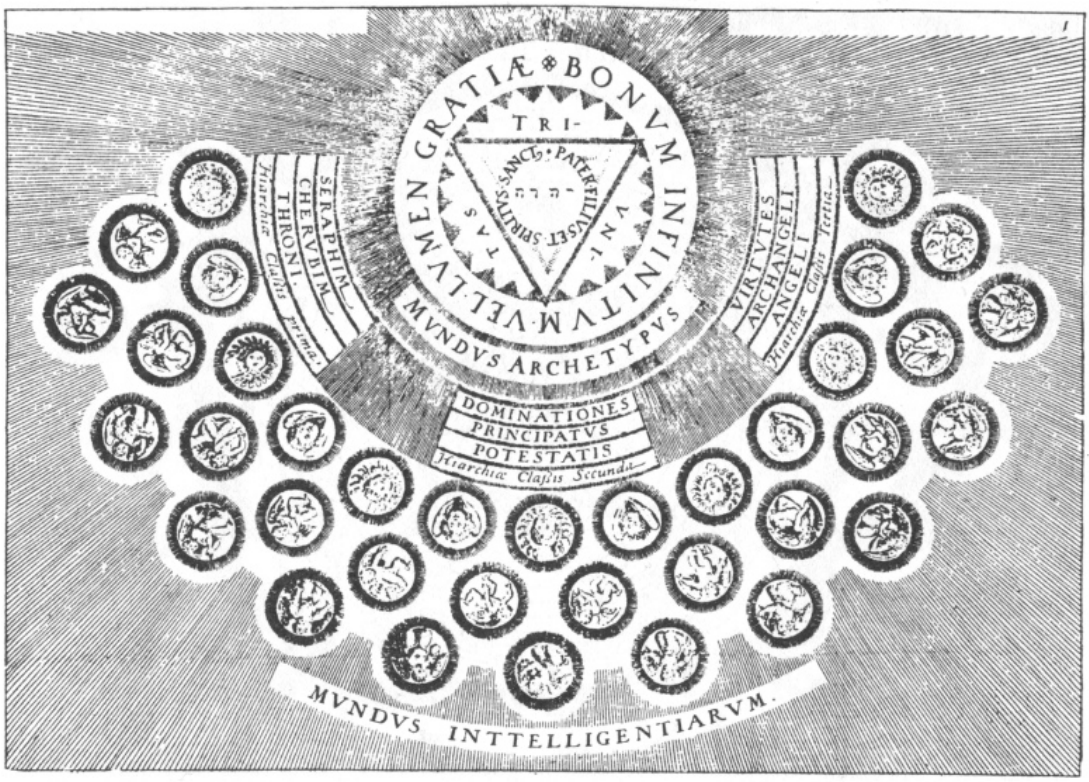


FIGURE I.

FIGURE I.

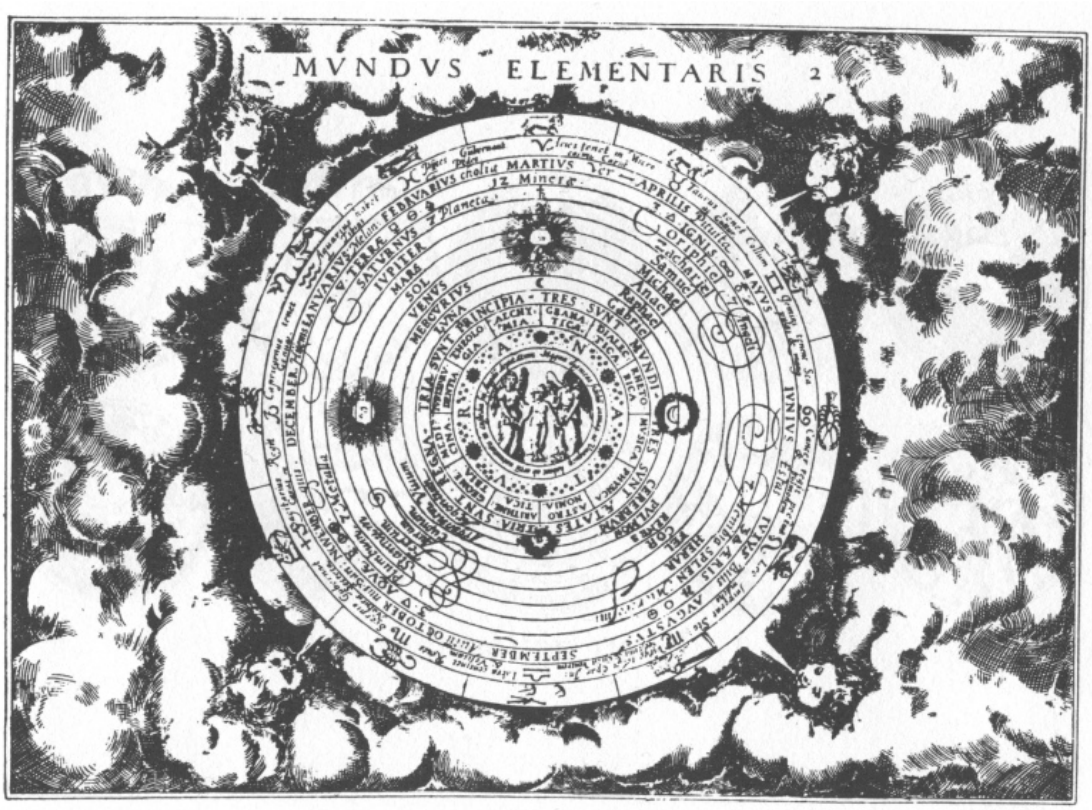


FIGURE II.

FIGURE II.

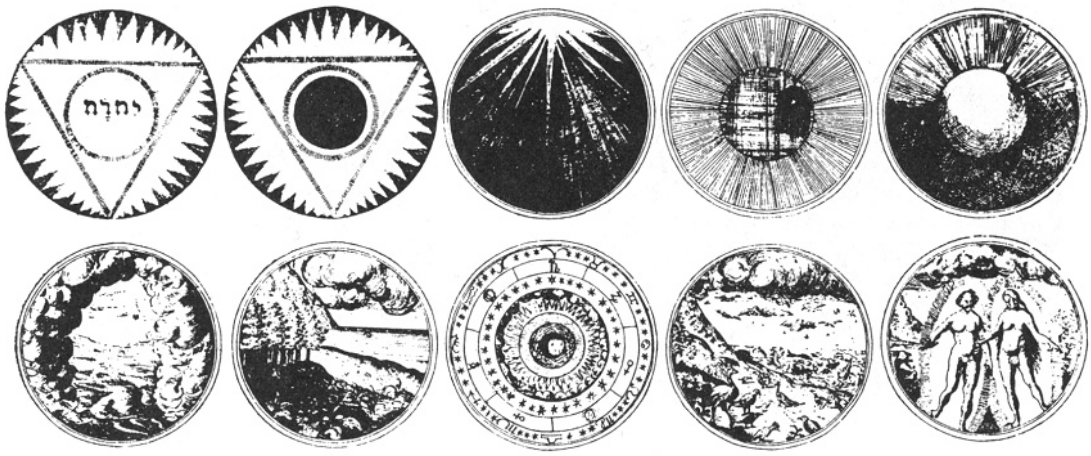


FIGURE III.

FIGURE III.

p. 308 p. 309

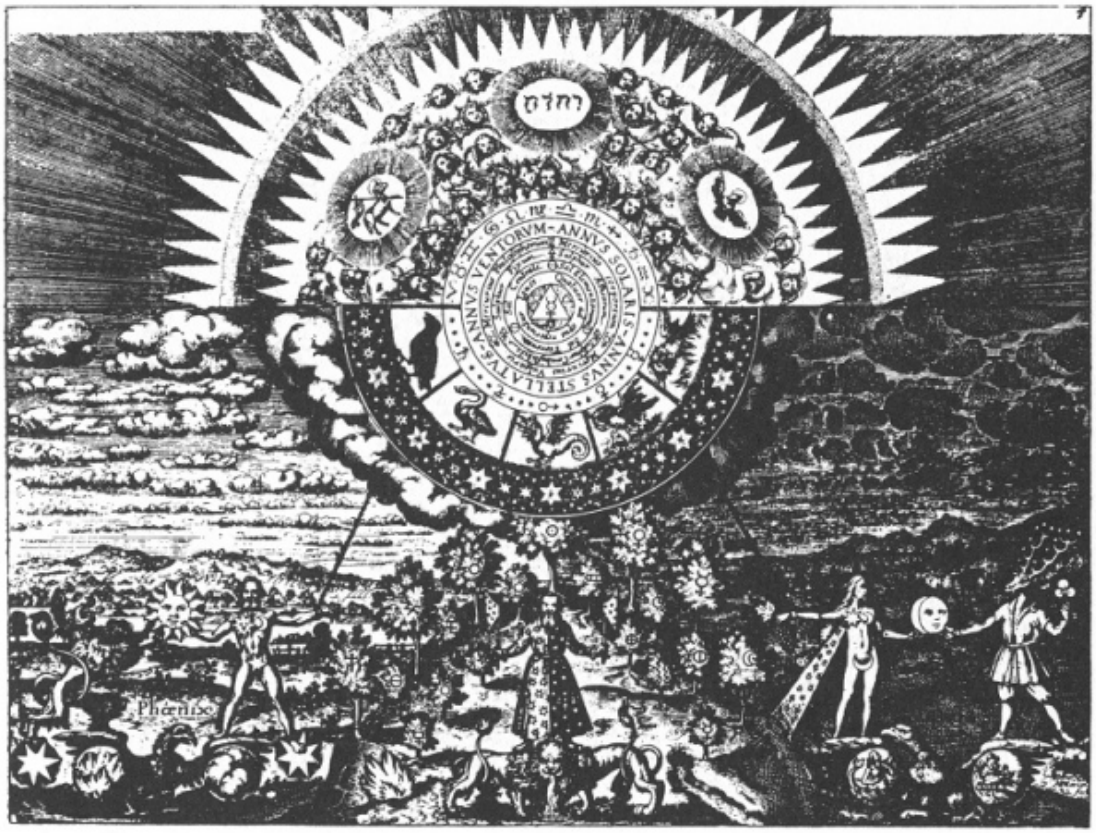


FIGURE IV.

FIGURE IV.

THE ALL-WISE DOORKEEPER.

———

A KEY TO THE FOURFOLD FIGURE,

———

FIGURE I.

BONUM INFINITUM VEL LUMEN GRATIÆ = The Infinite Good or the Light of Grace. TRIUNITAS = Trinity in Unity. יהוה, = Jehovah. PATER, FILIUS, ET SPIRITUS SANCTUS = Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. MUNDUS ARCHETYPUS = The Archetypal World. SERAPHIM, CHERUBIM, THRONI = Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones,*i.e.*, *Hierarchiæ, Classis Prima* = First Class of the Hierarchy. DOMINATIONES, PRINCIPATUS, POTESTATES = Rulers, Principalities, and Powers, *Hierarchiæ Classis Secunda* = Second Class of the Hierarchy. VIRTUTES, ARCHANGELI, ANGELI = Virtues, Archangels, Angels, *i.e.*, *Hierarchiæ Classis Tertia* = Third Class of the Hierarchy. MUNDUS INTELLIGENTIARUM = The World of Rational Beings.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, LORD GOD OF HOSTS;
ALL THE EARTH IS FULL OF HIS GLORY.

———

MARCELLIUS PALINGENIUS (in Zod. Vit., Book ix.): Great Father of Gods, Highest Power of the World, than whom Thought knows nothing greater; far from the bodily world, yet forming all Bodies, those which cannot change,

and those which are destroyed by the lapse of time; Beginning without a beginning; Fountain from which all manner of good things flow forth; Ruler and Multiplier of Nature; Who comprehendest All Things, yet art comprehended of none; Infinite Majesty, Goodness, Wisdom, Life, Order, Beauty, Perfection, Mind, Truth,—Light, Way, Strength; dwelling nowhere, and yet dwelling everywhere; immovable, yet constantly moving all things: Of whom, To whom, and Through whom are all. things; always remaining the same, unchangeable through all time: Greatest of Causes, who, revolving according to a fixed law the starry heavens, dost govern the circle of human Destiny; King of Kings, waited on and worshipped by thousands

of Angelic Hosts singing joyous Hymns in the Infinite Domain of Light, beyond the uttermost borders of the [lower] World, where is the fit abode of true Archetypal Things; Thee I worship, to Thee I pray, Thee I reverently adore. Deign to look on me with gracious eye, and hear my voice when I cry to Thee. Send to me the rays of Thy Light, dispel the darkness of my soul, weighed down by the grossness of a mortal body. Grant me to find the Right Way, lest hurtful error, vain credulity, and blind opinion drag me headlong to the ruinous domain of falsehood. For if without Thee a mortal mind or human strength strive to rise upward, their waxen wings are melted, and they fall headlong, like Icarus of old. Without Thee, I cannot see the hidden depths of Divine Truth, or the art and skill by which salvation is attained. Grant unto me, therefore, most gracious King of Kings, that I may know Thee and please Thee; then that I may know myself, what I am, the reason of my life on earth, whence I came, and whither I am going, what is my duty in this life, and what I must eschew—so that when Lachesis has finished the thread of my life, and the last hour has cast my weary body into the Tomb, Death may be unto mc a grateful rest, and the haven of peace.

p. 313

FIGURE II.

MUNDUS ELEMENTARIS = Elementary World.

The First Circle contains the Zodiacal Symbols.

SECOND CIRCLE.

Capricornus tenet Genua = Capricorn holds the knees.

Aquarius habet Tibias = Aquarius rules the thighs.

Pisces gubernant Pedes = The Fishes govern the feet.

Aries tenet in Microcosmo Caput = Aries holds the head of the microcosm.

Taurus tenet Collum et Guttur = Taurus holds the neck and the throat.

Gemini tenent Scapulas et Manus = Gemini hold the shoulders and the hands.

Cancer regit Pectus et Pulmonum = Cancer rules the breast and the lungs.

Leo imperat Stomacho = The Lion governs the stomach.

Virgo tenet Hepar, Intestina, et circa Ventrem = The Virgin holds the liver, the intestines, and the parts about the stomach.

Libra cantina Renes et Vesicam = The Balance contains the reins and the bladder.

Scorpio gubernat Naturæ Secreta = The Scorpion governs the secret parts of Nature.

Sagittarius regit Coxas = Sagittarius governs the thighs.

THIRD CIRCLE.

JANUARIUS, FEBRUARIUS, *Melancholia* = January, February, Melancholy.

MARTIUS, *Ver* = March—Spring.

APRILIS, *Pituita* = April—Phlegm.

MAYUS = May. JUNIUS, *Æstas* = June—Summer.

JULIUS, *Bilis* = July—Bile.

AUGUSTUS = August. SEPTEMBER, *Autumnus*= September—Autumn.

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, *Sanguis* = Sanguine Temperament.

DECEMBER, *Hiems* = Winter.

p. 314

FOURTH CIRCLE.

Mineræ = Minerals. IGNIS = Fire. ÆRIS = Air. AQUÆ = Waters. *Metalla* = Metals. TERRÆ = Earth.

FIFTH TO ELEVENTH CIRCLES.

The Seven Planets.	*The Seven Angels.*	*The 7 Members of Microcosmus.*	*The Seven Metals.*
SATURN.	*Oriphiel.*	SPLEEN.	*Lead.*
JUPITER.	*Zachariel.*	LIVER.	*Tin.*
MARS.	*Samuel.*	DIAPHRAGM.	*Iron.*
SUN.	*Michael.*	HEART.	*Gold.*
VENUS.	*Anael.*	REINS.	*Copper.*
MERCURY.	*Raphael.*	LUNGS.	*Quicksilver.*
MOON.	*Gabriel.*	BRAIN.	*Silver.*

TWELFTH CIRCLE.

TRIA SUNT PRINCIPIA, TRES SUNT MUNDI, TRES SUNT AETATES, TRIA SUNT REGNA = There are Three Principles, Three Worlds, Three Ages, and Three Kingdoms.

———

THEOLOGIA (Theology). ALCHYMIA (Alchemy). GRAMMATICA (Grammar). DIALECTICA (Dialectics). RHETORICA (Rhetoric). MUSICA (Music). PHYSICA (Physics). ASTRONOMIA (Astronomy). ARITHMETICA (Arithmetic). GEOMETRIA (Geometry). MEDICINA (Medicine). JURISPRUDENTIA (Jurisprudence).

NATURA = NATURE.

INMOST CIRCLE.

Magna dignitas fidelium animarum ut unaquæquæ habeat, *etc*. = It is the great honour of faithful souls, that from their very birth an angel is appointed to preserve and keep each of them.

The Author of the "Handbook of Physical Science Restored" writes as follows:

§ 1. God is an Eternal Being, an Infinite Unity, the Radical Principle of all things. His Essence is Infinite Light. His Power—Omnipotence; His Will—Perfect Goodness; His Wish—Absolute Reality. As we strive to think of Him, we plunge into the Abyss of Silence, of infinite Glory. § 2. Many Sages have held that an Archetypal World existed long before the world of sense, when the Archetypal Light began to unfold Himself, and set forth in an Ideal World a counterpart of the Divine Mind. This belief is borne out by the words of Hermes Trismegistus, who says that when God changed His form, the universe was suddenly revealed and put forth in the Light of Actuality—this world being nothing but a visible Image of a Hidden God. This is what the Ancients meant when they said that Pallas leapt forth in divine perfection from the forehead of Jupiter, with the aid of Vulcan (or Divine Light). § 3. The Eternal Father of All Things, being not less wise in the ordering, than powerful in the creation, of the world, has made the whole Universe to cohere by means of secret influences and mutual subjection and obedience, things below being analagous to things above, and*vice versâ;* so that both ends of the world are nevertheless united by a real bond of natural cohesion. Thus Hermes tells us that things below are the same as things above, and that things above are analagous to things below. § 4. He who

looks upon Nature as anything but the constant expression of God's Will, is an Atheist; every smallest part of the great universe is constantly vitalized and conserved by the Spirit of the Divine Master, and there is no life or existence apart from His consciously exerted Will. It was He that in the beginning moved upon the face of the waters, and brought forth the Actual out of the Chaos of Potentiality.

FIGURE III.

FIRST CIRCLE.

יהוה = Jehovah, *i.e.*, A Ω = Alpha and Omega

SECOND CIRCLE.

Genesis, i. 2.—The earth was empty and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

THIRD CIRCLE.

Genesis, i. 2.—And the Spirit of God moved the face of the waters.

FOURTH CIRCLE.

Genesis, i. 3, 4.—And God said: Let there be light: and there was light. . . . And God saw the light that it was good.

FIFTH CIRCLE.

Genesis, i. 4, 5.—And He divided the light from the darkness. And He called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

SIXTH CIRCLE.

Genesis, i. 6-8.—And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

And God called the firmament Heaven, and the evening and the morning were the second day.

Psalm xxxiii. 6.—By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

Psalm cxlviii. 4, 5.—Praise the Lord, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the Lord: for He commanded, and they were created.

Daniel, iii. S9, 60.—Praise the Lord, ye heavens; bless Him and magnify Him for ever. O ye waters that be above the firmament, praise ye the Lord: bless Him and magnify Him for ever.

SEVENTH CIRCLE.

Genesis, i. 9-13.—And God said: Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called He seas: and God saw that it was good.

And God said: Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth: and it was so.

And the earth brought forth grass and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

And the morning and the evening were the third day.

Psalm, civ. 5, 14.—Who laid the foundations of the earth that it should not be removed for ever. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man; that he may bring forth food out of the earth: and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart.

EIGHTH CIRCLE.

Genesis, i. 14-19.—And God said: Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and days and years.

And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

And God made two lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; He made the stars also.

And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness.

And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

Sirach, xliii. 1.—He made the lofty firmament in its glory, and the stars, a vision of beauty. The eastern Sun announces the day. It is a wonder of the Most High. Great is God who created it, and bade it run its course Moreover, the Moon shines throughout the world, in due season, dividing months and years. It waxes and wanes in wonderful guise. The host of the stars shines gloriously in the firmament of heaven. God, the Most High, has commanded them to light up the world. By the word of the Lord they are fixed, and do not neglect their vigils.

NINTH CIRCLE.

Genesis, i. 20-23.—And God said: Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

And God blessed them, saying: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

Psalm civ., 24.—O Lord, how manifold are Thy works: In wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches. So is this great and wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts. There go the ships; there is that leviathan whom thou hast made to take his pastime therein. These all wait on Thee, that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season.

TENTH CIRCLE.

Genesis, i. 24-31—And God said: Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, after his kind: and it was so.

And God made the beast of the earth, after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the, earth, after his kind; and God saw that it was good.

And God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the

sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him: male and female created He them.

And God blessed them, and said unto them: Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

And God said: Behold I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

———

GEORGE RIPLEY, in the Prologue to his "Twelve Gates," says: O incomprehensible Light, glorious in Majesty, the brightness of whose rays obscures our lights: O Unity in the substance, and Trinity in the Godhead. Merciful purifier of souls, who dost exalt us from this troublesome vale of vanity to heaven. Infinite power and wisdom, unspeakable goodness, sustain and govern me day by day so that I may displease Thee in nothing. O Thou with whom are all treasures of wisdom and knowledge, out of whose infinite mind this universal frame sprang forth in a moment of time—when heaven and earth were made by Thy word, and all that is in them by the breath of

Thy mouth—grant unto me grace to know Thy blessedness and Thy goodness. In no other way shall I come to the knowledge of the Blessed Stone. As Thou didst make all things out of *one* chaos, so let me be skilled to evolve our microcosm (little world) out of *one*substance in its three aspects of Magnesia, Sulphur, and Mercury!

p. 320

FIGURE IV.

יהוה = Jehovah.

ANNUS SOLARIS =The Solar Year. ANNUS STELLATUS = The Year of the Stars. ANNUS VENTORUM = The Year of the Winds.

Mercurius Philosophorum = Mercury of the Sages.

Mercurius Corporeus = Corporeal Mercury.

Mercurius Vulgaris = Common Mercury.

Sulphur Combustibile = Combustible Sulphur.

Sulphur Fixum = Fixed Sulphur.

Sulphur Æthereum = Volatile Sulphur.

Sal Terrenum = Earthy Salt.

Sal Elementorum = Elementary Salt.

Sal Centrale = Central Salt.

Ignes quatuor ad opus requiruntur = Four kinds of fire are requisite for the work.

Phœnix = Phœnix *Aquila* = Eagle.

———

BY THE WORD OF THE LORD WERE THE HEAVENS ESTABLISHED, AND THEIR HOSTS BY THE BREATH OF HIS MOUTH. THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD HAS FILLED THE WORLD. ALL THINGS ARE SATISFIED WITH THY GOODNESS, O LORD. THOU TURNEST AWAY THY FACE, THEY ARE TROUBLED. THOU TAKEST AWAY THY SPIRIT, THEY DIE AND RETURN AGAIN TO THEIR DUST. THOU SENDEST FORTH THY SPIRIT AND THEY ARE

CREATED, AND RE NEWEST THE FACE OF THE EARTH. THY GLORY IS FOR EVERLASTING.

———

THE EMERALD TABLE OF HERMES.

It is most true, it is without error, it is the sum of verity: That which is beneath is like that which is above, and that which is above is like that which is below, for the performance

p. 321

of the wonders of one thing. As all things were created from the Mind of One, so all things arose by modification of this One Thing. It is so with our Substance. Its father is the Sun, its mother the Moon. The Wind bore it in its belly. The earth is its nurse. The father of all, the Thelema of the whole world, is here. Its strength is undiminished if it is changed into earth. Separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, gently, but with great skill. It rises from earth to heaven, and again descends to the earth, and receives the strength of things above and of things below. Thus you have the GLORY OF THE WHOLE WORLD, and all darkness will flee away from you. This is the strength of every strong thing: it overcomes every subtle thing, and penetrates all solids. IN THIS WAY WAS THE WORLD CREATED. These are the wonderful modifications, the manner of which I have described. Hence I am called Hermes Trismegistus, having the three parts of the wisdom of the whole world. I have now said all I have to say concerning the operation of the Sun.

———

ADDENDUM.

The verses which accompany the frontispiece to the first volume may be translated thus: The things that are in the realms above are also in the realms beneath; What heaven shews is oft found on earth. Fire and flowing water are contrary one to another; Happy thou, if thou canst unite them: let it suffice thee to know this!

The Cross on the title-page of "The Golden Tract" bears the following inscription: All Glory is a Birth in the Sand. The Stone unites in itself all blessings.

The Symbol at the end of the Preface contains, within the second circle, the names of the four elementary natures, Air, Fire, Earth, and Water, and in the central circle the words—Marvel of Nature.

The inscription on the Emblem which accompanies the title page of "The Golden Age Restored" should be read thus: There are three marvels—God and Man—Mother and Virgin—Three and One. The Centre in the Triangle of the Centre.

p. 322

The Symbol which accompanies "The Book Alze" contains these words: Visit the interior parts of the earth: by rectifying thou shalt find the Hidden Stone.

The inscription on the Symbol of the Seventh Key of Basil Valentine signifies: The Seal of Hermes. Winter. Spring. Summer. Autumn. Water. The Salt of the Philosophers. That upon the Symbol of the Tenth Key: I am issued from Hermogenes. Hyperion elected me. Without Jamsuph I am compelled to perish.

In the second volume, the Diagram which accompanies "The Ordinal of Alchemy" may be explained as follows:

Mundus Archetypus = Archetypal World.

Deus Jehovah Bonum Infinitum = God Jehovah the Infinite Good.

ii. Angels. iii. Ether. iiii. Elements.

Bonum Finitum = finite Good.

Cælum = Heaven. *Angeli* = Angels. *Stellæ* = Stars.

Homo = Man. *Meteor* = Meteors. *Aves* = Birds.

Bestiæ = Beasts. *Pisces* = Fishes.

AER = Air. TERRA = Earth. AQUA = Water.

Planetæ = Planets. *Lapides* = Stones.

Metalla = Metals. *Sal* = Salt.

Infernalis = That which is under the earth.

Ignis = Fire. *Procellæ* = Winds. *Inane* = The Void.

Tenebræ = Darkness. *Abyssus* = Abyss.

CHAOS, MALUM, SATAN = Evil.

The inscription on the Medal in the text of "The Golden Calf" reads: The Divine Metamorphosis exhibited at Prague, Jan. 15, 1648, in the presence of his most sacred Majesty, Ferdinand III. *Nummi Crassities:* The thickness of the Medal.

FINIS.